



Friends of The
FUSILIERS MUSEUM
— OF —
NORTHUMBERLAND



Victory in Europe
80th Anniversary
May 2025



Springtime at Alnwick Castle, view from The Pastures (Abbot's Tower far right)

News in brief

The museum's open season began on 28 March. We welcome Front of House members: Marcia, Peter, Mark and Hal. It is great to have them all back and meant that we could 'hit the ground running' for the Easter holidays!

A new display representing '**Women in the Fusiliers**' was installed on the First Floor of the museum in time for the 2025 open season. Our thanks to **Museum Development North** for supporting this project with an Open Grant. More on page 2.

The museum has replaced the gas cylinder and control panel for the **fire suppression system**, and had work carried out on the **fire detection system**. Both jobs required significant capital expenditure. We are grateful to Northumberland Estates for their help towards completion of these tasks.

The museum has now purchased the **shooting simulator** which was on 'sale or return' from InfoAktiv last season ... more capital expenditure! The simulator is a very popular addition for our visitors and, all being well, it should pay for itself by the end of this season.

Two of the museum's Tyneside Scottish sporrans are currently on loan to **Glenesk Folk Museum**. Read more on page 2.

Women in the Fusiliers

We are delighted to have completed the installation of our new displays representing women in the Fusiliers. The panels tell the story of the gradual integration of women into the army from the early 18th century to modern day.

The story begins with Phoebe Hessel who, disguised as a man, joined the Regiment to follow her lover into battle. We explore women's contribution to life in camp during the Peninsular War and continue to the formation of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, Auxiliary Territorial Service and Woman's Royal Army Corps. The displays are brought right up to date with women as Fusiliers today.

'Women in the Fusiliers', is funded by a Museum Development North (MDN) Open Grant, supported by Arts Council England.

The grant also helped us to replace some outdoor signage, which had been damaged at the beginning of last season. Our thanks to MDN, PLB Limited and Northumberland Estates for their help.



New display celebrating women in the Fusiliers

"Interested and pleased to learn that women at last have an opportunity to serve their country. Presented with opportunity and training to aspire to 'active' duties."

Visitor from Sheffield
April 2025



Left: Dress sporrán

Below: Day sporrán



Sporrans to Scotland

Two Tyneside Scottish sporrans have been loaned to the Glenesk Folk Museum, Brechin. The exhibition named "*Sporran The Humble Highland Purse*" opened in February and will run until the end of August 2025.

The dress sporrán and leather day sporrán from the museum's collection were worn by Captain Gordon McQueen, 23rd Battalion (3rd Tyneside Scottish), Northumberland Fusiliers.

Our sporrans are displayed alongside a sporrán worn by Garnet Wolseley Fyfe. Garnet, born in Edinburgh, later moved to Shiremoor, near Newcastle where he worked as a coal miner. Garnet joined the 20th Battalion (1st Tyneside Scottish) and served in France in the First World War. It is recorded that in 1915 Garnet's mother had no less than four sons, nine grandsons and a son-in-law all serving in various regiments!

You can learn more about the exhibition by following the link below

<https://www.glenesksfolkmuseum.org/>

"People are very touched by the human stories that bring the sporrán exhibits to life, none more than that of Garnet Wolseley, that is displayed with the sporrans you have kindly loaned to us."

Julie Cave
Museum Development Officer
Glenesk Folk Museum



FusilierStories, an ongoing project by Regimental Headquarters of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, continues to grow on YouTube, FaceBook and Instagram.

Visit @FusilierStories to view short films of stories told by real Fusiliers about real events from the history of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and antecedent regiments.

Visit our website

www.northumberlandfusiliers.org.uk

Contact us

Email: fusnorthld@aol.com

Tel: 01665 602152

Registered charity number: 273064



Victory in Europe

On 8th May 2025 we will celebrate 80 years of peace since the end of the Second World War

From the archive

The flag (pictured right) belonged to the Haggie family from Newcastle upon Tyne. It was used in 1945 to celebrate Victory in Europe. Eric Haggie, was around 7 years old on VE-Day. He went on to serve with the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers and in later life he was secretary of the Newcastle Branch of the Fusiliers Association.



The two service booklets (left) were kept in a scrapbook compiled by Colour Sergeant Graham Worswick Hargreaves who served with the 2nd Battalion Royal Northumberland Fusiliers in Greece from December 1944 until the end of the war. A Service of Thanksgiving for Victory held by the 2nd Battalion in Volos, on 13th May 1945 was spontaneously attended by Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens who had been appointed Regent by George II who was exiled in London.

Some Fusiliers' thoughts about Victory in Europe Day

Extract from 'Diary of a Soldier' By Major Hardy Parkhurst

"Some of us retired to bed early to prepare for today [VE Day] but towards midnight the noises and alarms grew in crescendo ... Soon we were down again in the mess, and we had an uproarious time. There was singing, dancing drinking; we went quite crazy and I remember one officer having his hair shampooed with Guinness! The ordinary reality of day seems hard to reconcile with its historic significance."

**2nd Battalion
Royal Northumberland Fusiliers**

From the Diary of The Reverend George Fox M.C.

"On the morning of 4th May cease fire came to the armies in N.W. Europe which meant that for us the war had finished.

It is impossible to record in any detail one's reactions to all this – there are two words which are in the forefront of my mind; one is thankfulness, and the other a sense of security. No longer will the odd shell come out of the blue and do its worst."

**Chaplain, 8th Battalion
Royal Northumberland Fusiliers**

Lieutenant R J Randall writing to his mother, May 1945

"I am sorry it is a week or so since I last wrote to you but I have been very busy indeed ... the occupation has started in earnest and as you can imagine Germany is in a state of complete chaos ... Did you do anything on V.E. day? It must have been grand fun for anyone in London and we all wished we were there. For us over here it was just like any other day, busy working, but we did manage a drink of whisky in the evening."

**No.2 Independent Machine Gun
Battalion
Royal Northumberland Fusiliers**

Second World War object handling will be presented by volunteers in the museum on **Thursday 8th May**, Victory in Europe Day.

On **10th May** our volunteers will be out and about presenting object handling at RAFA House in Rothbury where the Royal British Legion is holding a Teddy Bear's Picnic to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE-Day.

We must also remember

"There are many of our poor fellows in the Far East still to be liberated after years of captivity in the hands of a cruel and unscrupulous foe, and in the hour of our triumph let us not forget this."

St George's Gazette, May 1945

Next newsletter: Victory in Japan

Volunteer activity

Our team of volunteers donated 1151 hours towards helping the museum in 2024. Here are some examples of what they have been doing:

- Removal of objects from the Pottery Room to temporary storage to allow the inner walls of the Pottery Room to be fireproofed. Once workmen had completed the work ... everything had to be put back
- Completion of tidying of the medal drawers to create more space
- Work has begun to create a searchable index for the books in the archive library to assist with research
- Cataloguing
- Populating Modes - the electronic collections database.
- Answering research enquiries.
- Facilitating object handling sessions for visitors to the museum throughout the open season as well as providing outreach sessions.

Eyes on the battlefield

Volunteers David, Mark and Alan have completed the installation of a periscope in the dugout on the ground floor of the museum.

The scene visible through the periscope is a very realistic model of a trench which was made by volunteer, Mark. His daughter kindly painted the backdrop scene. The overall effect is excellent. Our young visitors are captivated by it.



Periscope being installed and the view through the periscope

Veterans' visit



David instructing the veterans

The museum hosted visitors from Launchpad, a registered charity, which offers support for veterans to help them to successfully transition from military to civilian life.

The small group arrived for an hour prior to the museum's normal opening time so that they could have the museum to themselves. Those that attended thoroughly enjoyed David's talk and handling the unfamiliar rifles of days gone by.

"The feedback from the veterans was really lovely, they really enjoyed handling the guns (as I knew they would!) and that shotgun game. It brought back good memories of their military service, and they enjoyed hearing about the history ...

They enjoyed the culture of the museum and seeing all those medals and clothing, also. We are 100% looking into coming back, just with more veteran's next time!"

Beth McNally
Activities Co-ordinator
Launchpad



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



**Community
Foundation
North East**



If you are interested in volunteering at the Fusiliers Museum of Northumberland please contact us

See our website
www.northumberlandfusiliers.org.uk
for further details