

Durrington

Walk to remember wars



By Christine Stock

Exercise *Wyvern Trench* is a small part of the army's contribution to the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the First World War and has now been running for some 12 months, during which many senior officers have attended along with scouts, local councillors (including Jane Scott, the leader of Wiltshire Council) and many other interested volunteers.

The most recent walk followed the 3rd Australian Division, who were stationed at Larkhill and having joined up after the initial rush of patriotism and patriotic fervour, avoided Gallipoli and the Dardanelles campaign.

During their time at Larkhill they trained extensively and carried out training exercise on Salisbury Plain designed to replicate the life they were likely to face in the trenches.

Exercise *Wyvern Trench* is a 'War Walk' designed by Major Jon Wort, a serving reservist, Richard Osgood (pictured), DIO senior archaeologist, and Richard Broadhead, author of many books on soldiers from Wiltshire.

The walk started at the old Bustard Pub and proceeded on to Salisbury Plain to visit the tree carvings on a plantation of beech trees from both the First and Second World Wars. Identified individuals have a story to tell behind the carvings and those are told in detail.

The next stop was the area of Salisbury Plain where the Australians carried out The Bustard Stunt, which was the most memorable training scheme in which the brigade took part in the occupation for three days of a system of trenches at the Bustard a few miles from Larkhill.

We then proceed after an al fresco picnic lunch to the site of mining operations that were to stand the Division in good stead for the battle of Messines in 1917 where the ANZAC Corps distinguished themselves in such fine order.

After lunch the tour moves to Durrington Cemetery to examine the role of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and to hear about individuals from both wars buried in the cemetery.

The tour is available to anyone who wishes to attend and details of the event can be found on Eventbrite at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/exercise-wyvern-trench-tickets-16660713643> or it can be arranged for specific interest groups, such as scouts, cadets village associations or companies. To find out more please contact: Jon Wort on 07753 816 598 or jon.wort@me.com or 1ARTYX-SW-MCI-MAILBOX@mod.uk.

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