

Orders &
Medals
Research
Society



CONVENTION 2022

Saturday 24 September 2022 at

Business Design Centre
52 Upper St
London N1 0QH

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WORLD RECORD

for a Victoria Cross to the Royal Air Force
£682,000 Achieved in April 2022



The historically important and unique posthumous 'Battle of Malaya'
V.C. group of five awarded to Squadron Leader A. S. K. 'Pongo' Scarf,
No. 62 Squadron, Royal Air Force

After almost a decade, Spink has sold another rare RAF Victoria Cross, setting a New World Record for a Royal Air Force Victoria Cross sold at public auction. 26 awards of the Victoria Cross to the Royal Air Force have been awarded to date, of which exactly half of them awarded posthumously. This V.C. group is a unique award to the Royal Air Force for this theatre of war. Four awards of the Victoria Cross for the Battle of Malaya, this the first by date of action.

For more information or to consign, please contact

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Timetable of Events

Saturday 10th September

Opening of the Virtual Exhibition & First Virtual Talk: Dr David Biggins –
The Siege of Wepener

Saturday 17th September

Second Virtual Talk: Ryan Darby -
The History of the Distinguished Conduct Medal

Friday 23rd September

7.00pm onwards – Informal Reception and Welcome Dinner, Hilton Hotel, Islington

Saturday 24th September

Opening Hours: 10.00am–5.30pm

10.00 Medal Fair & Exhibition opens

10.30–11.15am Peter Starling -

Mules, Molars, Medics and Matrons – Awards and medals to the Army Medical Services

12:10-12:30pm Paul Evans –

A Demonstration of The Ogilby Muster

3.00–3.45pm Simon Bendry -

Research using the records and archives of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

4.00pm Society Honours & Awards and Prize Giving



The Society would especially like to thank the following for their generous sponsorship of the Convention:

Speaker Sponsor: Spink & Son Ltd

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Welcome Dinner Sponsor: Noonan Auctions Ltd



The President's Welcome

ROBIN THOMAS



A very big welcome to our 2022 Convention, a moment of special significance since it's our first opportunity to hold a physical event since 2019.

There has been, as they say, 'much water under the bridge' since the last time we met in Nottingham in September 2019. The changes we have all witnessed in everyday life also affected the OMRS, leading us to adapt our operations accordingly. The global pandemic accelerated our existing path towards a greater use of digital technology, something that will continue apace. Whilst this may appear faintly horrifying to some of our older members, we cannot avoid the changes we see all around us in everyday life, evolving behaviour patterns in society at large and the availability of suitable technology.

A key challenge was how members could still maintain contact with each other and the Society under the restrictions imposed by lockdown. Immediately prior to the

pandemic we ventured into social media and now have nearly 700 participants in our Facebook chat group, and nearly 800 followers on Instagram. We also started a Newsletter in January 2020, delivered by e-mail and aiming to fill the gap between each quarterly *Journal*. The pandemic hit shortly afterwards, and our committee meetings became online via something none of us had heard of, called 'Zoom'. Many Branches also seized the opportunity to hold their meetings online, demonstrating the strength of our network and the camaraderie of our members. The success of these ventures has now led to the formation of a new Virtual Branch, with members able to participate from anywhere around the world, and I urge all of you who are unable for whatever reason to attend a physical branch meeting to participate.

A second, ongoing, challenge for the Society is how to remain relevant to anyone who might have an interest in our history, military affairs and research in general. This especially concerns younger people, many of whom embrace technology and are accustomed to interacting with the world via a screen, rather than in-person. This constituency is critical for the future of the OMRS; they are the collectors and researchers of the future and the ones who will, one day, be managing the Society and our Branch network. It is important that we create an environment that is conducive to their engagement with our hobby, so please go out of your way to welcome them to Branch meetings, share your considerable knowledge, and mention our online presence.

Technology has also allowed us to remove much of the manual administration of the Ribbon Bank by placing it online, making it significantly more available to members. It has also allowed us to resurrect much of the OMRS' back catalogue of books by using advances in print on demand, and I



would like to offer many thanks to Helion – our new joint venture partner, who are present with us today - for all their work in making this happen. Please do have a good look at their stand. Lastly, we are determined to enhance the research aspect of our offering to members by upgrading the Research Library on omrs.org. We have undertaken a significant addition from the Tamplin Archive, the Army Long Service & Good Conduct Medal, and there is a lot more to follow. Much of this material is hard to source elsewhere and is available to members only. Updates regarding what is being scanned will be provided in the *Journal* and Newsletter.

None of these initiatives could be realised without the considerable amount of time and effort of our volunteers world-wide, all given freely despite work, family and other commitments. I would like to give heartfelt thanks to them all for everything they

have done to move the Society forward and improve our offering. The Society is 100% run by volunteers so, without them, there would be no OMRS.

Much work has gone into making this Convention happen. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our distinguished speakers for all the time they have spent in preparing their talks and their willingness to impart their expertise to us, to our exhibitors for their considerable preparations in showcasing some star items from their collections for our enjoyment, and to our much valued friends from the commercial world for taking the time to join us for this major event in the Society's calendar. Lastly, many thanks are due to Drs Fiona Watson and Richard Emsley for finding our new venue and undertaking all the detailed arrangements necessary for this Convention to work.

I hope you enjoy your day!



2022 Speakers

Physical Speakers

SIMON BENDRY



Simon Bendry is the Head of Education and Engagement for Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and a long-time member of the OMRS.

Research using the records and archives of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

From the origins of record keeping in 1914 to access to the records in the 21st Century, the talk will give the audience a chance to discover more about the records and archives of the CWGC. The talk will introduce the work of the CWGC and its archives and enable collectors to develop an understanding of how CWGC records can be used to research medal recipients in their collections.

PETER STARLING



Pete Starling is a retired Medical Support Officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps having served for thirty years in military hospitals and medical units in Germany, Nepal, Hong Kong and UK and has taken part in various military operations. On retirement from the army in 1994 he held the posts of both Curator and then Director of the Army Medical Services Museum (now Museum of Military Medicine). He retired from the museum in March 2014 and is now the Honorary President of the Museum of Military Medicine.

Pete gained a MA at the University of Birmingham in British First World War studies and he holds the Diploma in the History of Medicine. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He has written various papers on military medical history and has recently authored *Mistaken Gallantry – The Medical Victoria Crosses*. He has led and guided tours to the battlefields of the First and Second World Wars, both in Europe, Gallipoli, the Far East and the Crimea War battlefields.

Pete has also taken part in various TV documentaries about the First World War and has acted as medical advisor to several TV dramas including *Downton Abbey*, *Birdsong* and *the Great War – The People's Story*.

Peter's talk is *Mules, Molars, Medics and Matrons – Awards and medals to the Army Medical Services*. The talk will feature some of the Honours, Awards and Medals in the two major collections of the Army Medical Services.

PAUL EVANS AMOT



Paul joined the Army Museums Ogilby Trust in 2018. With a background in library, archive and collections care and management, he has worked within several Regimental collections including the Royal Marines, Poole and the Suffolk Regiment Museum, Bury St Edmunds.

Paul has over 20 years' experience of working with military collections and has been a contributor to the *Who Do You Think You Are?* BBC television series, and has also appeared on *Salvage Squad*, *Hero in my Family*, *Building Britain* and *Great Railway Journeys*.

Paul is currently leading on training and collections development for The Ogilby Muster (TOM).

In this talk, Paul will introduce The Ogilby Muster (TOM). TOM is an online platform which gives users access to First World War archives held in Regimental Museums across the UK.

The project to create and launch TOM was led by the Army Museums Ogilby Trust, an independent charity responsible for supporting and promoting Army Museums in the UK. With over 75 participating collections, and with more set to join, TOM will eventually hold over 2 million items including some never-before-seen material. Covering the period 1900 to 1929, the platform contains documents, photographs, letters, diaries and more, all related to the British Army and the men and women who served.



Virtual Speakers

10th September

DR DAVID BIGGINS



David Biggins has been a member of the OMRS since 1978 and researches the Anglo Boer War 1899-1902. He has published four books on the Boer War and hosts the AngloBoerWar.com website, a free resource for collectors and researchers which contains 4,800 articles, 23,000 images and forum of 80,000 posts. When not researching, David lives in Dorset, England, with his wife and works as a lecturer in project management and business at Bournemouth University.

Siege of Wepener

David's talk used a slide deck to tell the story of the siege of Wepener which took place in April 1900 during the Boer War. The talk begins by explaining the background to the siege and then uses accounts, diaries and maps to explain how the siege unfolded. The next section discusses the Wepener clasp on the Queen's South Africa Medal. Finally, recent photographs from Wepener show the location of Wepener and what remains of the siege today.

17th September

RYAN DARBY



Ryan Darby, originally from South Africa but now in Australia, has been collecting for 35 years, focusing mostly on Boer War medals to South Africans, specifically those in interesting multi-campaign groups. When not collecting or thinking about medals, Ryan works to earn money for medals in a Microsoft-based consultancy focusing on project management solutions. And when Ryan can't find medals, he spends his money on flying airplanes. Ryan has published several articles in the OMRS Journal and Medal News, as well as presented at the OMRS in Canberra.

The History of the Distinguished Conduct Medal

The DCM is commonly thought of as a bravery or distinguished conduct award, but it did not start out in such a clear manner. As with most things it was about money. We will go through the origins, how it changed over time, and will have examples of the many lesser-known regulations and types



2019 Exhibition Awards

Best in Show – Nick Tucker – *Lest We Forget – The Sacrifice of One Family Name in the Great War, 1914–1919*

Best First Time Exhibitor (FTE) – Simon Eyre - *Researching WW1 Distinguished Service Medals*

Member's Choice – Mel Siddons – *The Derby's at the Dargai*

Gold

Open Class

Paul Brewster – *Meritorious Service Medals to the BSAP 1932-1980*

James Kemp – *For Service in Minor Naval Warlike Operations: A study of the Naval General Service Medal 1915–1962.*

Owain Raw-Rees - *Wanderings in Arabia*

Mel Siddons – *The Derby's at the Dargai - Members' Choice Award*

Nick Tucker – *Lest We Forget – The Sacrifice of One Family Name in the Great War, 1914–1919 - Best in Show*

Research Class

Simon Eyre (FTE) - *Researching WW1 Distinguished Service Medals - Best First Time Exhibitor*

Howard Williamson - *The Award of the Military Medal for the Campaign in Italy 1917 to 1918*

Silver

Open Class

Christopher Bacon - *The Wiltshire Regimental Care Committee and Prisoners of War.*

Roger Bragger – *Like Father Almost Like Son*

Martin Harrison – *The Municipal Year of 1977*

Danny Rees - *Heroes of Chernobyl*

Wayne Ratcliffe – *Berkshire Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa*

David Sowerby (FTE) – *Gloves On / Gloves Off*

Andrew Swanson (FTE) – *On Roll Not On Medal – Engraved for Mwele*

Stuart Wright (FTE) – *7th South Staffordshire Regiment – The Battle of Messines Ridge – June 1917*

Research Class

Richard Clay (FTE) – *Recipients of both the Military Cross and Military Medal 1916–1921 & 1940–1952*

Bronze

Open Class

R. John I. Scott – *For Bravery in the Field*

Online Exhibitors & Exhibition Awards

First let me thank and congratulate all the members who took the plunge and exhibited in the time between our last physical gathering in 2019 and now. Without their pioneering spirit we would have had an empty place in the calendar.

The Members voted online for three Member's Choice awards: For the best exhibit; and For the best use of technology in presenting an exhibit; and Best Overall Exhibit (combined votes of the best exhibit and best use of technology).



The 2020 Online Exhibition Winners were:

Best Exhibit: Jim Kemp - *The Fateful Night of 16th December 1910.*

Highly Commended: Chris Bacon - *Mystery Bomber*, and **Meurig Jones** - *The QSA and other medals.*

Best Use of Technology: Winner David Doorne - *Let Not The Deep Swallow Them Up.*

Highly Commended: Jonathan Smith - *British Orders – The Documents*, and **Meurig Jones** - *The QSA and other medals.*

Best Overall Exhibit: Winner David Doorne - *Let Not The Deep Swallow Them Up.*

Highly Commended: Jonathan Smith - *British Orders – The Documents*, **Meurig Jones** - *The QSA and other medals*, **Chris Bacon** - *Mystery Bomber* and **Jim Kemp** - *The Fateful Night of 16th December 1910.*

List of Exhibitors

Chris Bacon – *Mystery Bomber*

Simon Bendry – *The Award of the Single British War Medal to the British Army in the First World War*

Taff (Mark) Collins – *The Meritorious Service Medal to the Welsh Regiment (Immediate and Annuity Awards)*

Taff (Mark) Collins – *Operations on the Nile 1889 - No Clasp Undated Egypt Medals to the Welsh Regiment*

David Doorne – *Let Not the Deep Swallow Me Up*

Jonathan Smith – *British Orders – The Documents*

Meurig Jones – *The QSA and Other Medals.*

James Kemp – *The Fateful Night of 16th December 1910. The Story of a London Policeman who was there.*

Andy Pattison – *The DSO: To adequately reward the distinguished service of officers in war*

Owain Raw-Rees – *The Awards of Viscount Kirkwall and his Brothers*

John I. Scott – *For your tomorrow we gave our today*

David Seeney – *The Road to Dunkirk*

Mel Siddons – *“Vlakfontein” A Disaster for the Derbyshire Regiment*

David Sowerby – *Final Recommendations” - Proposed commendations for Gallantry and Meritorious Service to the Royal Artillery in the Boer War - July 1901 to June 1902*

Andy Taylor – *Lt Col W. F. Chipp – The Herefordshire Regiment’s most decorated soldier*

The 2021 Online Exhibition Winners were:

Members’ Choice Award - Best Exhibit - Anthony Martin - *Following in the Footsteps of Lions: The Battle of Alma 20th September 1854;*

Members’ Choice Award - Best Use of Technology - James Kemp - *Researching Metropolitan Police Jubilee & Coronation Medals.*

List of exhibitors

Charles Ameresekere – *Air Vice Marshal Rohan Amerasekera DFC & Bar, the First Ceylonese to Command the Royal Ceylon Air Force*

Charles Ameresekere – *Ceylon Medal 1818, a Rare Medal Awarded for Bravery During the Rebellion in Ceylon in 1817-18*

Philip Evans – *A Sailor, a Sub, and a Bridge*

Martin Heyes – *Victoria Cross and George Cross Awards During the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong, 1941-45*

James Kemp – *Researching Metropolitan Police Jubilee & Coronation Medals*

Philip Kerry – *John Martin’s Copper Waterloo Medal*

Anthony Martin – *Following in the Footsteps of Lions: The Battle of Alma 20th September 1854*

Owain Raw-Rees – *An Arabian Tour - An Introduction to the Awards of the Arabian Peninsula*

Jon Toohey – *British Wound Stripe - Decoration or Distinction?*



2022 Members' Exhibits

Non-Competitive

- NC1 **Graham Cartwright** – Ribbon Branch Display
- NC2 **Anne Samson** – Great War in Africa Association
- NC3 **Andy Miles** - Helion Books
- NC4 **Paul Evans** - Army Museums Ogilby Trust
- NC5 **Gail Lees** – Society Ribbon Bank



Open Class

- 01 **Stephen Grainger (FTE)** - *The Thin Blue Line*: The display and research of medals awarded by local authorities to UK Police forces prior to the introduction of national awards and occasionally found in 'official' groups.
- 02 **Owain Raw-Rees - Somalia** – *The Awards of a Failed State*: An attempt to document and display the awards of the Somali peoples from 1950 - the time of the British Somaliland Protectorate and Italian Administration of the United Nations Trusteeship, through to independence in 1960 as the Somali Republic, the 1969 military coup and declaration of the Somali Democratic Republic, to the nation's collapse in 1991.
- 03 **Lionel Digby** - *Did He Charge with The Heavy Brigade???*: This exhibition is dedicated to John Croft. He was the only Life Guard Trooper to go to the Crimean War.
- 04 **Simon Bendry** - *Creating a medal roll for 3rd Wessex Bde, RFA 1914-1920*: An explanation of how a medal roll for the 3rd Wessex Brigade, Royal Field Artillery was created using research and medals awarded to men who served with the brigade. The exhibit will also assess the scarcity of combinations of First World War medals and awards to those served with the brigade from 1908 to 1920.
- 05 **Rene Schurtenburger** – *Decorations of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*.
- 06 **Andy Pattison** - *Gallantry on the Somme in July 1916*: The Royal Artillery spent months preparing for the bombardment of 1st July 1916. There is a common misconception that they were in relative safety, miles behind the frontlines; however, many officers & men went over the top with the infantry, performing great acts of gallantry. This display illustrates the nature of their deeds and the types of awards bestowed upon them.
- 07 **Christopher Mellor-Hill** - TBC
- 08 **Wayne Ratcliffe** - The 2nd Btn (British) Imperial Camel Corps: Research into a battalion that has no formal history and no parent regiment. The Battalion was formed in theatre from volunteers and was disbanded just 30 months later. While there is much written about the Australian and New Zealand Battalions there is little at all documented about the British Companies. I have pieced together their history and have a good account of all the actions, based on over 50 gallantry awards.

Single Class

- S1 **Lloyd Brodrick (FTE)** - *A Rare Adornment: Some single-entitlement Victorian medals awarded to officers of the Royal Artillery*

Research Class

- R1 **David Sowerby** - *"20 Years' Service"* - The Volunteer Force Long Service Medal to the Essex Volunteer Artillery: A study of the awards of the Volunteer Force Long Service Medal to the different Batteries and Companies of the Essex Volunteer Artillery, including the full roll, award details and in-depth biographies of all 180 recipients.
- R2 **Meurig Jones** - *Odd Men. British Cavalry in South Africa 1899-1902*: Men who served in the war but, not with their parent regiment. What they did, the medals they earned and how to spot them.



- R3 Simon Eyre** - *City of London Police Jubilee and Coronation Medals 1887-1911* Creating a Medal Roll: The exhibit details the production and analysis of an alphabetical nominal roll for the awards of the 1887 Jubilee, 1897 Jubilee, 1902 Coronation and 1911 Coronation Police Medals awarded to the City of London Police.
- R4 Howard Williamson** - *The DCM Handbook 1914 to 1920*: A definitive Roll of the 25,073 Recipients of The DCM from 1914 to 1920. The Roll is ordered by Battalion or sub-unit of all regiments and Corps of the British and Dominion forces, and also includes MMs awarded to each battalion and sub-unit.

Dealers Attending

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OMRS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

President - Dr Robin Thomas

General Secretary - Graham Grist

Honorary Treasurer - Jon Toohey

Membership Secretary - Stephen Butler

Committee Members - Bob Barltrop, Dr Richard Emsley, Norman Gooding, Andrew Mann, Paul Murphy, Graham Pitchfork.

Executive Committee members can be contacted through the Society table.

NOTICE OF THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Orders & Medals Research Society will take place online on:

Saturday 29 October 2022 at 2.30 pm (UK time)

The link for the meeting will be distributed nearer the time.

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