

Worcester Yeomanry to commemorate the centenary of the battles of Qatia and Oghratina

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A young museum visitor adds to the poppy wall of remembrance at Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum

At 11.00am, the Worcestershire Yeomanry will commemorate the Centenary of the battles of Qatia and Oghratina which saw the loss of nine officers and 101 other ranks with a special commemorative service at Worcester Cathedral.

At 2.45pm members of the Worcester Yeomanry invite members of the public to join them in the unveiling, by the Lord Lieutenant for the County of Worcestershire, Lieutenant Colonel P Holcroft LVO OBE and dedication by the Squadron Padres of a bespoke memorial created by sculptor and mosaic artist Victoria Harrison at Cripplegate Park.

Qatia 100 is part of the Worcestershire World War One Hundred project. Supported by £353,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Worcestershire World War One Hundred is one of the largest programme of events across England commemorating the First World War involving cultural and heritage organisations countywide through until 2018.

Descendents of Worcestershire Yeomanry, who served at Qatia or during The Great War are invited to contact Worcestershire Yeomanry with a view to joining them on 23 April as well as to share their stories ahead of a special exhibition giving a full account of the battles at the Worcester Soldier Gallery from 21 March until 30 May 2016.

Colonel Stamford Cartwright MBE, TD, Curator of Worcestershire Yeomanry Museum and Chairman of the Comrades Association, said: "We are delighted to be announcing our plans for commemorating the role of the Worcestershire Yeomanry at the battles of Qatia and Oghratina. We are encouraging descendents of those who served with the Yeomanry at Qatia and the campaign in Egypt and Mesopotamia to join us to remember the gallantry and sacrifice of the Yeoman who fought 100 years ago."

Dr Adrian Gregson, Worcestershire World War One Hundred Project Manager, said: "23 April is a significant date in Worcestershire's military history and an important moment to remember the sacrifice of the Worcestershire Yeomanry 100 years ago. This is just one of the many events taking place as part of the Worcestershire World War One Hundred project which directly commemorates the role Worcestershire played at the front as well as reminding us the impact such loss of life had on the home front."

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: "The impact of the First World War touched every corner of the UK. HLF has already invested more than £70million in projects – large and small - that are marking this global Centenary. Thanks to National Lottery players, Worcestershire World War One Hundred will enable the local community to explore the continuing legacy of this conflict and help local people to broaden their understanding of how it has shaped our modern world."

Notes to editors

About the battles of Qatia and Oghratina

The small isolated garrison at Oghratine had been ordered to protect a party of Royal Engineers on a well-digging expedition, when at dawn on 23 April 1916 they were attacked by over 3000 Turkish troops, including a machine gun battery of 12 guns. The defending troops repulsed the first attack but were forced back by the weight of the onslaught.

The victorious Turkish troops then advanced to reinforce another attack taking place against the Yeomanry's small garrison at Qatia. Qatia fell to the Turkish forces with the loss of all of the Yeomanry's officers except Major WH Wiggin who was wounded and managed to withdraw with about half the squadron.

About Worcestershire Yeomanry

The Worcestershire Yeomanry was formed in 1794 to protect the United Kingdom against the threat of an invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte.

In 1887 the Regiment was given a new title by Queen Victoria, The Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars. During its period of service to the country and the county, the Regiment fought in battles

and wars across the world including The Boer War from 1900 -1903 and The Great War 1914-1919 in Gallipoli, Egypt, Palestine and Syria - where they made a cavalry charge to capture guns, the last cavalry charge of this type in British Military History. During the Second World War 1939-1945 the Regiment served in Northern Europe, Palestine and the Far East.

Throughout the history of the Regiment from 1794 to 1956 the Officers and Soldiers were volunteers from Worcestershire who gave their time to train for a possible emergency or future war.

More information can be found on the [Friends of the Worcestershire Yeomanry Museum Facebook page](#).

About Worcestershire World War One Hundred

Cultural and heritage organisations from across Worcestershire have come together to commemorate the 100th anniversary of World War One with an outstanding four-year programme of events and activities under the banner Worcestershire World War One Hundred. The programme, which received the largest HLF grant outside of London for a project commemorating the First World War, will commemorate the role Worcestershire played in the First World War and tell the stories of Worcestershire people, their involvement with and personal legacy from the War.

For more information visit the [Worcestershire World War One Hundred project website](#).

About the poppy sculpture and Victoria Harrison

The nine-foot high commemorative poppy sculpture designed and created by Victoria Harrison will provide a lasting memorial to the Worcestershire Yeomanry in Cripplegate park. The sculpture has been funded by Councillor Richard Udall and the Worcestershire County Council Divisional Fund and supported by Worcestershire Stone Masons of Hylton Road, Worcester.

In April 1916 the regiment was protecting the eastern side of the Suez Canal where they were responsible for patrolling the whole of the Qatia water area, a vital part of the military supply process.

Victoria grew up in the North East of England where she gained a Fine Art Degree specialising in Environmental Sculpture. Whilst a student she continued to find herself drawn to the vitality and versatility of the world of mosaic. Find out more about her work on the [Living Mosaics website](#).

Further information

To contact the Worcestershire Yeomanry with your ancestors stories contact Colonel Stamford Cartwright on tel: 012531 640608 and via email: stamfordstmfcr@aol.com, or Mr Barry Weaver on tel: 01384 637036 or email: bazannweaver@talktalk.net.

For further information please contact Helen Annetts, PR on behalf of Worcestershire World War One Hundred, on tel: 07779 026720 or via email: HelenLAnnetts@hotmail.co.uk.