



PRESS RELEASE

Appeal for Oxfordshire Memories and Objects from the Second World War to the 1970s from the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum (SOFO) in Woodstock is planning a new 1930-1970s Oxfordshire exhibition and is now appealing to the public for help filling new displays with local stories and mementos.

The new exhibit will link the home front and domestic experience more closely with the county's military history and tell the stories of the women and children living in close proximity to the various military bases and locations that feature so heavily in the area's history.

One example is a child's necklace given to a young Oxfordshire girl during the Second World War, having been made by a German POW held at a local camp. Local POWs often made toys and children's playthings to sell for a little extra cash. The necklace was kindly donated to the museum by Rosemary Warner from Witney.

A set of dog-tags also planned to feature in the upcoming exhibition form a reminder of one young man's time in the Stalag Luft III camp, now in Poland, and infamous as the location of 'The Great Escape'. Sgt Leslie Mitchell from Woodstock was captured aged just 19 after his plane came down in 1940. He remained a prisoner until 1945. All the time he kept in touch with home, and the letters sent to him provide a fascinating insight into war-time Oxfordshire.

SOFO Museum would be delighted to hear from anyone that could help with this appeal by donating their own objects, photos and stories. Please contact SOFO at: oxfordshirehome@sofo.org.uk. Alternatively, stories and images can be uploaded to the SOFO website directly by going to: <http://www.sofo.org.uk/storiesofconflictcounty/>

SOFO also plans to take boxes of objects out into the community for reminiscence and outreach work with objects, magazines, photographs and music to reflect a number of themes, including:

1. Childhood
2. Home Sweet Home
3. Working Week
4. School Days
5. Saturday Night Out
6. Celebrations and Jubilations
7. Keep the Home Fires Burning (WW2)
8. We're All Going on a Summer Holiday
9. Hobbies and Gardening
10. Local Oxfordshire Life - Town and Gown, Farming, Markets, Transport

Vicki Wood, SOFO's Education and Outreach Officer, says:

"We are looking to local people to help us find the stories and mementos for the displays and reminiscence boxes. Do you have small objects or photographs of domestic life in Oxfordshire from about 1930 to 1970? We're looking for ordinary items that are typical of each era – perhaps baby clothes, children's toys, empty tins and packets, and items from the home. Perhaps you have diaries, letters or memorabilia from family members who lived through the Home Front in the Second World War, post-war National Service or the Cold War?"

SOFO Museum would also like to thank Owen Mumford for sponsoring our reminiscence work.

Press Photography Opportunity:

On Friday 31st August 2018 a considerable donation of material to SOFO will be made by the family of Charles Jacobs MBE, a Private in the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars during the First World War and a Pioneers Corp Major in the Second. The donated materials will include medals from WW1 and WW2, German memorabilia, his WW2 camp bed, a photographic record of the War Trials at Ravensbruck Concentration Camp, as well as his MBE - awarded just after the war. He was a life-long Oxford man originating on Osney Island, and Charles' pre-WW1 QOOH uniform had been donated to SOFO a number of years ago. His family are thrilled to find a home for the rest of this collection.

SOFO and the family of Charles Jacobs welcome a press presence on the day, which provides an opportunity to photograph the process of the museum accepting donations of items for the upcoming exhibition, as well as the unique collection itself.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

About the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum:

The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust (SOFO) museum opened during the summer of 2014 and was officially opened by the Princess Royal.

Sitting in the grounds of the Oxfordshire Museum, the site now offers two fascinating museums for visitors of all ages to explore and engage with.

SOFO uses the material of the two county regiments, the Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars (QOOH) and the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, to act as starting point for reflecting on the county's rich and diverse military heritage. These collections contain over 3,500 objects and 7,500 archive items. The regimental collections date back to the late 18th Century and reflect the local regiments' involvement in major conflicts such as the War of American Independence, the Peninsula War, the Boer Wars, the Great War and World War II, together with less well known events such as the New Zealand war of 1864 and the Brunei emergency in the 1960s. They comprise weapons, equipment, clothing, flags, musical instruments and regimental silver as well as extensive personal memories, diaries, letters and photographs.

The breadth of the collections has allowed us to present and contribute to a wide range of historical themes and mark key anniversaries, for example the 2015 bicentenary of Waterloo and centenary of the Great War.

For further information, images and interviews contact us:

Call: 01993 810 212

Email: peggy.ainsworth@sofo.org.uk

duncan.parsons@sofo.org.uk

Social Media

Twitter: @SOFOTrust

Facebook: Facebook.com/SoldiersofOxfordshire

Website

www.sofa.org.uk/

<http://www.sofa.org.uk/storiesofconflictcounty/>