

Front Line – home of The National Museum of Military Medicine and The Soldiers of Staffordshire and Mercia

Background

Four partners are coming together to create Front Line, a new Museum celebrating the history of military medicine and Staffordshire's long-standing Army heritage. Front Line will present the collections of the Army Medical Services Museum, the Staffordshire Yeomanry Museum and the Staffordshire Regiment Museum whilst providing a home for the future collections of the Mercian Regiment.

Army medicine has driven the progress of medical science, touching all our lives whether or not we have a personal connection to the Army. The Army Medical Services Museum's move to Staffordshire is an opportunity to share this heritage with new audiences and to relate it to the experiences of local soldiers. In addition, this unique collaboration provides an unrivalled opportunity to, not only safeguard the heritage of each partner, but to make the collections more accessible to wider audiences.

The Partners are seeking support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to develop the project and will be submitting an application for funding in August 2014. We are now looking to generate support from local stakeholders to help us realise this exciting project.

Front Line Museum

The proposition is to create a permanent exhibition which illustrates the heritage of all the partners through the past and present. The partners' collections are complementary and, taken together, offer a broad ranging view of Britain's military heritage.

The museum will be rich in personal stories, and combined with the objects and archives, they will relate to significant aspects of British, and indeed World, history. Personal stories will offer an insight into daily life as well glimpses of extraordinary situations, providing visitors with a tangible connection to past events.

Front Line Objectives:

- To conserve, and improve the condition of heritage collections thus ensuring their long-term survival
- To provide visitors with a better understanding of soldiers and their lives in the past and in the present
- To portray how actions of local Regiments and the Army Medical Services have impacted on British and local history and life
- To reflect that a shared sense of belonging lies at the heart of every Regiment and Corps
- To improve accessibility to the collections through multi-layered interpretation, making it more accessible to wider audiences and thus increasing engagement
- To create an education and activities programme which provides both formal and informal learning opportunities





Why here? Why now?

Front Line will be located on the existing site of the Staffordshire Regiment Museum, adjacent to the former Whittington Barracks, now the home of the Defence Medical Services. The Barracks site encapsulates over a Century of military activities. Its relevance to the Partners and the opportunities it provides makes this an ideal location for the new museum as outlined below:

- Defence Medical Services (Whittington) are now based on the site since moving from their previous site in Keogh Barracks, Aldershot
- Whittington Barracks has been home to the Staffordshire Regiment since the 1880s.
- The Headquarters of the Mercian Regiment, the modern day successor Regiment to which the Staffords now belong, are located here.
- The Staffordshire Yeomanry historically had one squadron based in Lichfield.
- The current museums have limited space and little storage, the display conditions of some collections needs to be improved, artefacts need to be made visible to the public and the inaccessibility of some of these collections needs to be overcome.
- The Front Line partnership will allow for greater efficiencies in conservation, collections expertise, training, educational activities through sharing collections, resources and facilities such as stores, workshops and archive spaces.



Impact on the Local Economy

Front Line will bring a number of benefits to the local area:

- Estimated 40,000 visitors per annum
- Enhanced educational offer and activities programme
- Conferencing and meeting facilities
- Annual events programme
- Opportunities for partnership working

Event Information

The event being held at Whittington Barracks on the 3rd July 2014 will provide further detail on the plans outlined above including initial design ideas, the proposed themes and stories to be illustrated through the exhibitions and projects costs and timescales.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions on the proposals to date all of which will help to shape the ongoing development of the project as well as to understand how the project may benefit you.