

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**THE QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT
MUSEUM TRUST COMMITTEE**

REPORT OF THE MUSEUMS & HERITAGE MANAGER

Report prepared by Simon Lace, Museums & Heritage Manager

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Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum Trust

Annual Report 2011

1. Evaluation of the refurbishment of the Regimental Museum in 2010 has been undertaken. The vast majority of visitors enjoy the new gallery and the average time spend there by each visitor has increased from one minute 35 seconds to over four minutes – a demonstration that the museum's new exhibits provide greater engagement for the visitor and reasons to dwell.
2. Over 65,000 in-person visits were recorded at the museum, making it the most highly visited military museum in Kent and one of the busiest in the whole of the South East.
3. Media interest in the Regimental Museum remains high. An item about the recent event to commemorate the Ulu Ambush of 1951 (Malaysian Insurgency), organized with the Queens Own Buffs Regimental Association, was shown on BBS SE News on 22nd October.
4. During the year over 300 items were donated to the regimental collection.
5. An important acquisition is the medals of WOII R.J Hayley. These include an MBE, GSM 1918-62 EII Near East, Cyprus, GSM 1962-2007 Borneo, Northern Ireland, Silver Jubilee Medal, Cadet Forces Medal with bar and the Pingat Jasa. They join the medals of his father A.J. Hayley which include GSM 1918-1962 Palestine, 39-45 Star, Africa

Star, Italy Star, Defence Medal, War Medal (MID), Coronation Medal 1953, LSGC and MSM and his grandfather J.D Hayley War Medal, Victory Medal, LSGC and MSM.

6. The project to record the memories of veterans of the Battle of Kohima (1944) has concluded. An audio-visual presentation has been prepared and will be installed in the Regimental Museum early in 2012.
7. Maidstone Museum staff continue to help veterans of the regiment. A notable example is Edward Stuart, captured during the Dunkirk evacuation. He contacted the Museum to establish what happened to his Platoon Sergeant. We were able to tell him that his comrade died of his wounds and is commemorated on the memorial at Dunkirk. In the course of conversation it transpired that he had not claimed his campaign medals as he felt that as a POW, he had not earned them. Museum staff helped him complete the necessary paperwork and he has now claimed his medals.