

# Return to bridge to learn lessons of 1918

UK troops and allies mark end of First World War with battle study tour

Robert Fox in Sedan, France

BRITISH soldiers have marked the centenary of the end of the First World War with a study tour of the most significant battle sites in France in 1918.

Members of the 1st UK Armoured Division joined men and women from the forces of France, Germany, the US and Ireland for the four-day tour that ended at the fortress of Sedan.

It was the last objective of the American forces, which entered the allied battlefield with more than a million troops that year. Ironically, it was also where German Panzers broke through in the Second World War, in May 1940.

The studies held at 16 locations along the front focused on the potential for conflict in the present and future as much as the past. Lessons were drawn from the huge efforts by millions of



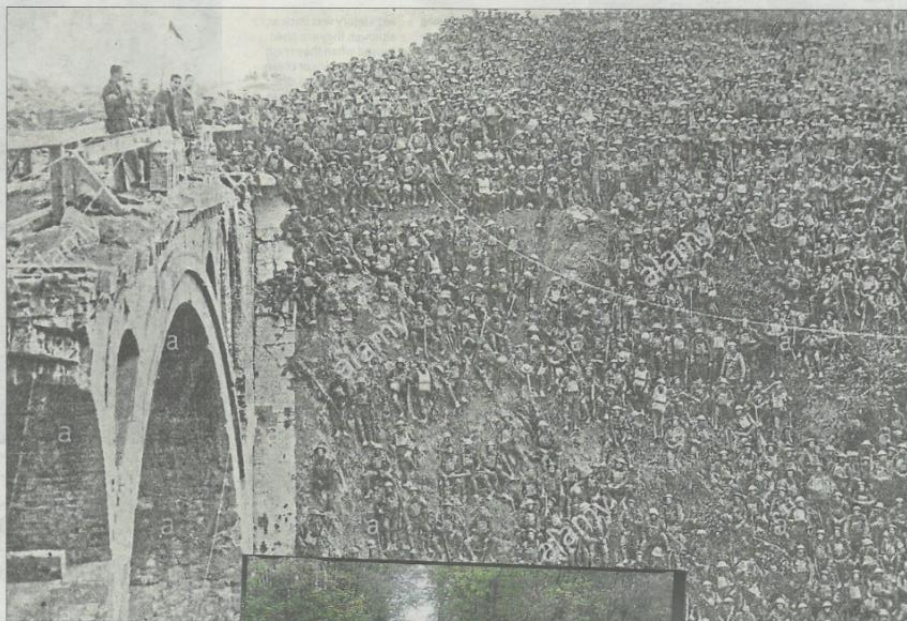
*We seem to have lost some of these skills in the past 10 years. We need them again*

Lt-Gen Patrick Sanders

allied troops in Europe and half a dozen theatres across the world in 1918, and the stubborn, often brilliant, delaying and defensive tactics by the German command and their allies.

Tensions today in eastern Europe, the Baltic and eastern Mediterranean featured in many of the discussions of tactics and strategy. "We have to learn the lesson of how the forces adapted for the huge challenges of 1918, and what they teach us for today," said Lieutenant General Patrick Sanders, Commander of the UK Field Army, hosting the event.

"We seem to have lost some of these skills in the past 10 years. We need them



again — especially as we are confronted by opponents operating at parity to us."

Each day, a visit was made to an iconic site in the national stories of the allies represented, including the Canadians and Australians.

The Riqueval Bridge across the St Quentin Canal was taken by Captain AH Charlton and nine men of the North Staffordshire Regiment on September 29, 1918. Their division, the 46 Midland, had suffered badly at Loos and the Somme. But this action was decisive. It was also the setting of one of the great photos of the Western Front, as Brigadier JC Campbell VC addressed his troops,



sitting on the devastated canal banks. Today it is sleepy woodland once more.

The village of Vauquois is a moonscape of craters and tunnels. It was a key observation point for the Meuse valley and Verdun. For four years from 1914 French and German troops fought over these

slopes and in tunnels, using more than 540 mines and thousands of tons of explosives — killing 8,000 men.

Overlooking the last battlegrounds of 1918, the Meuse-Argonne military cemetery is the biggest US site of this kind in Europe, and last resting place of 14,246

Iconic site: Brigadier JC Campbell addressing soldiers from the captured Riqueval Bridge and, inset, troops on the study-tour visit to the key crossing

soldiers. Here, a short ceremony was held at the grave of Corporal Freddie Stowers, one of only two African-Americans to be awarded the Medal of Honor, the highest US gallantry award, in the war. On September 28, 1918, acting as a platoon commander in the segregated 371 Regiment, he drove German machine gunners from a strategic hill in the Ardennes, only to die of his wounds hours later.

## A century of conflict: art trail around Canary Wharf commemorates fallen soldiers of the past 100 years

Lizzie Edmonds

AN ART trail created in remembrance of fallen soldiers has opened in London 100 years after the end of the First World War.

British artist Mark Humphrey has created 11 pieces for the Canary Wharf Remembrance Art Trail, each of which symbolises a different element of war from the past century.

The exhibition contains 11 works — reflecting the date of Armistice Day, the 11th day of the 11th month — of which four have not been displayed before.

One is dedicated to Nick Beighton, a British Paralympian, para-canoeist and former British Army officer, who lost both his legs after standing on an IED in Afghanistan in 2009.

Humphrey's work Every One Remembered, commissioned by the Royal British Legion four years ago, will also be in the display. The trail, created in asso-



ciation with the Legion, will support various charities.

Organisations including Combat Stress and the Poppy Factory will be collecting donations and promoting their work in Jubilee Place for the duration of the exhibit.

Londoner Mr Humphrey, 48, said: "The

Past and present: soldiers from the Royal School of Military Engineering with the piece Every One Remembered

artworks attempt to connect our generations of service personnel, from the Centenary Soldier, an unknown Tommy from the First World War, to Nick Beighton, a veteran from Afghanistan and paralympian. The trail confronts the idea about scars of war and healing in life, commemorating 100 years since the end of the First World War."

Matt Maer, group security director at Canary Wharf Group, said: "We are honoured to host the Remembrance Art Trail for a second time. The Poppy Appeal is strongly supported by those who live and work in the area and this is a beautiful tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice."

He added: "Service and sacrifice heavily resonates amongst our staff, so we are especially proud to host the exhibition on the estate."

● The exhibition is free and will close on Remembrance Sunday. For more information see canarywharf.com

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