



## 10 wreaths – what should have been...

**THE ROYAL Warwickshire Regiment, which now finds its home in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, produced two Field Marshals, namely Viscounts Montgomery and Slim.**

Neither of these two distinguished soldiers had the pleasure of seeing the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire so we came up with the idea of laying the Montgomery and Slim Wreaths at the Bastion Memorial, together with eight wreaths for seven fusiliers and Trooper Munday from the Household Cavalry, who were all killed in Afghanistan on OP HERRICK.

On Saturday 28 March the Bishop of Warwick was to conduct a service at St Mary's, Warwick (which includes the Chapel of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment where the last Colours in the form of 2 RRF were laid up in October 2016) to bless the wreaths, after which they were to be transported to the north of Warwickshire to Polesworth Abbey where they would rest overnight.

HRH the Duke of Kent had kindly agreed to attend a service at the NMA on Sunday 29 March when the wreaths would be laid at the Bastion Memorial; his Royal Highness agreed to do this in his capacity as both Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and Colonel of the Scots Guards.

The escort of the wreaths on the Sunday morning from Polesworth Abbey to the NMA was to be conducted on bicycle by 10 former and serving members of the Household Division with the wreaths attached to their rucksacks. After the service we were scheduled to have a reception for the families of the fallen who were attending the service. Fundraising for the bicycle escort was conducted through justgiving.com and just over £6,000 was raised for the Army Benevolent Fund, the Fusilier Aid Society and the Household Division Charity.

As a result of COVID-19 both services and the associated events were cancelled but our donors stayed firm –



Simon Miesegaes (head of table) with Polesworth Abbey Knitting Group, generous donors to the Army Benevolent Fund

an early reflection perhaps on Captain Moore's achievement with his NHS fundraising.

Colonel John Rice of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, who runs the regiment's museum in Warwick, was instrumental in helping me organise the event; in addition, Colonel Bob Carruthers, former chairman of Warwickshire RFCA, was to organise the standard bearers and reception parties in the form of Warwickshire's army cadets.

Though a huge disappointment, I was delighted to be asked by John Rice to attend the Royal Warwickshire Regiment's Annual Service at St Mary's in October; the wreaths will be laid in the Regiment's Chapel.

What was particularly lovely about organising the event was working with a fellow High Sheriff, Ashley Brough (Staffordshire) – a good example, too, of High Sheriffs working closely with the Lord-Lieutenants. Tim Cox, Lord-Lieutenant and formerly High Sheriff of Warwickshire, helped me make contact with St James's Palace and, once His Royal Highness had confirmed that he would attend, Ian Dudson as Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire took responsibility for the 'recce' and ensuring that everything was set for the day.

As a final act of defiance, we sent out to all those who had been invited and who were going to attend a copy of the Twin Service booklet!

◆ Simon Miesegaes

*High Sheriff of Warwickshire 2019-20*



The Montgomery and Slim Wreaths