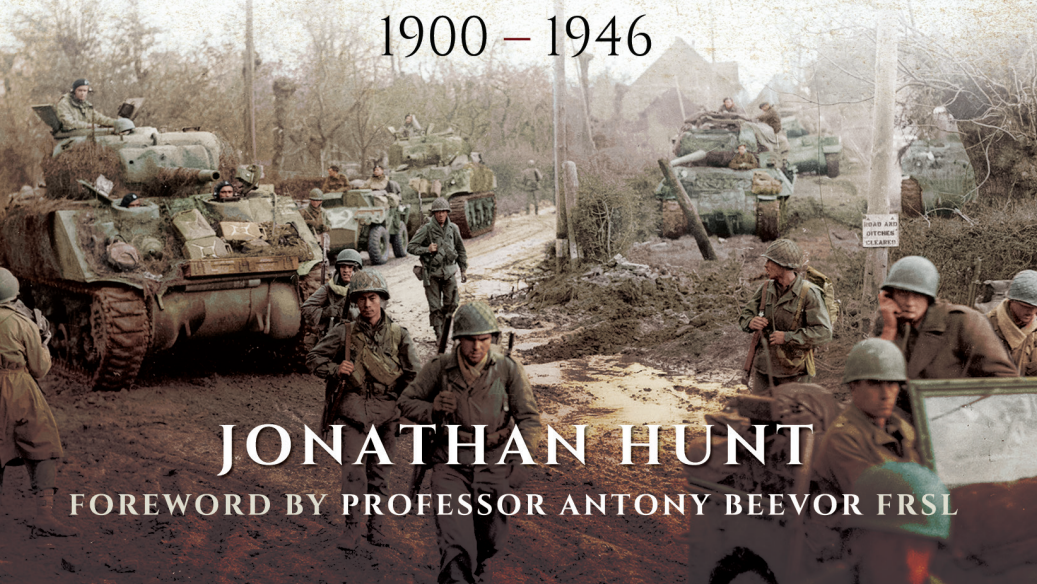




# HARD FIGHTING

A HISTORY OF THE  
**SHERWOOD RANGERS YEOMANRY**  
1900 – 1946



**JONATHAN HUNT**

FOREWORD BY PROFESSOR ANTONY BEEVOR FRSL

This account, following on from *Unicorns – The History of the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry 1794-1899*, covers the Regiment's war service between 1900 and 1946. During the Boer War the SRY formed part of the first volunteer unit to see active service overseas fighting the Boer Commandos, as cavalry.

For its role in the ill-fated 1915 Gallipoli campaign, where the Regiment served as infantry, it was awarded the King's Colour. They reverted to cavalry in Allenby's victorious campaign against the Turks defeating a well-armed and trained army.

At the outset of the Second World War the Regiment travelled with their horses to Palestine only to be re-trained as coastal gunners during the first siege of Tobruk and the fall of Crete. Some were posted to serve as special forces in Ethiopia raising a patriot army. In 1942, they were converted to armour and fought through from Alamein to Tunis before returning to North-west Europe for D-Day in DD (amphibian) tanks and the advance to Germany. In so doing they won thirty Battle Honours and 159 awards including eighty-three for gallantry. Major actions included El Alamein, the D-Day Landings and the Siegfried Line.

General Sir Brian Horrocks later wrote '*no armoured regiment can show a finer record of hard fighting.*' Hence the title of this invaluable regimental history.



**JONATHAN HUNT** is a retired solicitor. He joined the Territorial Army in 1963 and transferred into the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry Squadron of the Royal Yeomanry in 1969. After commanding the Squadron from 1975 – 1978, he took over the Royal Yeomanry at the age of 36. During his command, 1979 to 1982, the Regiment was NATO assigned and regularly exercised in West Germany. He was awarded the OBE and retired in 1995 as a full Colonel.

He was the Honorary Colonel of the Sherwood Rangers from 1994 to 2004 and has been Chairman of the Old Comrades Association since 1993. He wrote the companion volume *Unicorns - The History of the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry 1794 – 1899* [Pen and Sword Books Ltd]

He is married and has two sons.

*'Few, if any, Yeomanry contingents did more brilliant work than did [3rd Imperial Yeomanry]. From 24 March 1900 to 4 April 1901 the regiment was in action on thirty-nine occasions, fifteen of which were general engagements. Total miles marched 3,173.'* – **Walter Richards**

**FIRST WORLD WAR:** GALLIPOLI, GREECE AND PALESTINE AS CAVALRY, INFANTRY AND MOUNTED INFANTRY

*'The twin qualities of cavalry spirit and professionalism, which envious regiments might attempt to regard as mutually exclusive, lay at the heart of the Sherwood Rangers and their hugely impressive performance in both world wars. The priority was to get the job done, and done well, and having as much fun as possible in the circumstances.'* – **Antony Beevor**

*'A galloping horse is a very difficult target or we should have had far greater losses ... . We found out here and confirmed later in Palestine, that if there were no natural obstacles or wire it is possible for bodies of mounted troops in open order to gallop through extremely heavy frontal fire with few casualties.'* – **Hugh Tallents**

**SECOND WORLD WAR:** PALESTINE, NORTH AFRICA, NW EUROPE, AS CAVALRY, COASTAL GUNNERS, AND IN TANKS INCLUDING AMPHIBIANS

***El Alamein:** Here the Sherwood Rangers distinguished themselves by finding a gap in the enemy defences; as a result an attack was made which completely broke through and started the rout of the Afrika Korps.* – **History of 8th Armoured Brigade**

***Tebaga Gap:** 'My very best congratulations to the NZ Corps and 8 Armoured Brigade on the splendid results achieved by the left hook. The results have led to the complete disintegration of the resistance of the enemy and the whole Mareth position is now in our hands.'* – **Montgomery**

***D Day:** 'For D-Day, the regiment was one of those selected to swim their Sherman tanks into the beach, a truly terrifying experience in such rough conditions.'* – **Antony Beevor**

*'The most cheerful troops I have encountered were those on the Reich border. They were men of a County Yeomanry Regiment, the first troops back from the Middle East to land on D Day, and the first Yeomanry Regiment to land on D Day. And they are now the first British troops to enter Germany.'* – **Frank Gillard on the BBC**