

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

WRITING MILITARY MEMOIRS

Saturday 8 February 2025

Programme

Chaired by Professor Alison Baverstock

10.00am – Museum opens

10.15am – Introduction by Professor Alison Baverstock

- Aims and objectives
- Outcomes and benefits of writing a memoir
- Professor Meg Jensen (video contribution) on writing to relieve trauma and promote therapeutic benefits

10.40am – Why military lives spark particular interest

- General Lord David Richards, former Chief of the Defence Staff and author of *Taking Command* (Headline, 2014)

11.15am – Comfort break

11.30am – First-hand feedback: how it feels to write a memoir

- Patrick Hennessey author of *The Junior Officer's Reading Club: Killing Time and Fighting Wars* (Penguin, 2011)
- Bee Kenchington, author of *HMS Hood* (Arcturus Press, 2004), a memoir about her brother using inherited letters from various parties (recorded contribution)
- Alison Hill, author of *Pauline Gower, Pioneering Leader of the Spitfire Women* (The History Press, 2022).

12.15pm – Working with collaborators and publishers

- Tom Martin, author of *Falklands Gunner* (Pen & Sword, 2017)
- Charles Hewitt, CEO of Pen & Sword Publishers

1.00pm – Lunch break

1.45pm – Resources and support

- Professor Alison Baverstock explains how to start your writing journey, and why you might get more (free) support than you anticipate

2.00pm – Researching and writing military memoirs

- Dr Matilda Greig, National Army Museum: The History of Memoir Writing
- Hannah Tame, National Army Museum: Understanding the Role of the Archivist
- Dr Holly Greenland: Setting Your Writing Goals

3.45pm – What happens next?

- Closing questions and consideration of options

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Speaker Biographies

Rev'd Professor Alison Baverstock MBE (chair) is a publisher, a military wife and founder of www.readingforce.org.uk Her academic research into the value of writing memoir has been widely published. In particular, she has explored the significance of independent publishing as leading to an output that can hold memories – so the responsibility for hanging on to them is not a sole responsibility or burden.

Dr Holly Greenland is a communications expert who has recently completed a major research project on the practical and personality assets that characterise those taking part in effective independent publishing. Holly will share what she has learned and pass on her thoughts on how you can benefit. She will offer lots of practical tips as well as the opportunity to spot your particular motivation – and hence build both project and personal resilience.

Dr Matilda Greig is a Historian at the National Army Museum in London, specialising in the cultural history of warfare in the 19th century. Her research focuses on memory, war literature and material culture, with a particular interest in Britain, France and Spain during the Napoleonic Wars. Her first book was *Dead Men Telling Tales: Napoleonic War Veterans and the Military Memoir Industry* (2021).

After university, **Patrick Hennessey** went to Sandhurst where he won the Queen's Medal. Commissioned into the Grenadier Guards, he was deployed to the Balkans, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Falkland Islands, and saw active service in the Iraq War and Afghanistan. He retired from the Army in 2009 with the rank of captain, and is now a barrister. He is a regular media commentator on defence and legal matters.

After a degree in Business Studies, **Charles Hewitt** joined a London advertising agency. In 1996, he went on to lead Pen & Sword which had been founded by his father six years earlier. It is a decision he has never regretted. Today, the company publishes a wide range of eclectic titles as Charles pursues his ongoing goal of 'unserved niches' for effective publishing.

Alison Hill is the author of *Pauline Gower, Pioneering Leader of the Spitfire Women* (History Press, 2022) and a published poet. As a freelance editor, she has worked on several memoirs, some of which have included poetry as a means of reflection. She is a former poet in residence at Kingston University and a trustee of Reading Force

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Meg Jensen is Professor of English Literature and Creative Writing at Kingston University, and is part of the Military Writing Network. She also leads the Expressive Life Writing Project. She is currently working with civil society organisations and international partners developing storytelling projects for Ukrainian veterans, families of veterans and victims of conflict, and the internally displaced.

Bee Kenchington is the author of a memoir of her brother, who died on HMS *Hood* during the Second World War. The ship was launched in 1918 and sunk in 1941 with the loss of all but three of her crew of 1,418. Sixty years later, working from letters and historical documents, she decided to put together a record, so that those lost on HMS *Hood* are not forgotten.

General Sir David Richards, Baron Richards of Herstmonceux, was formerly Chief of the Defence Staff, the professional head of the British Armed Forces. He served in the Far East, Germany and Northern Ireland with the Royal Artillery, and internationally in East Timor, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, as well as with NATO. He is the author of *Taking Command* (2014, Headline).

Tom Martin is the author of *Falklands Gunner* (Pen & Sword, 2017). A second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery when the Falklands War began in 1982, he soon found himself heading to the South Atlantic. After the conflict, Tom became an Army pilot and flying instructor. During his 18-year military career, Tom served in the United Kingdom, Germany and Northwest Europe, Canada and the USA, the Caribbean, Kenya, Norway, Northern Ireland and the South Atlantic. After retiring from the Army in 1997, Tom became a commercial helicopter pilot.

Hannah Tame, is the Museum Archivist at the National Army Museum. She has worked with archive collections at organisations such as the Church of England, the National Maritime Museum and the British Library. At the British Library, Hannah worked on Labour MP Tony Benn's Audio-Visual Archive, which included his famous audio diaries from the 1940s to the 2000s. At the National Army Museum, Hannah is responsible for collecting unique archive material relating to the history and traditions of the Army, including unpublished accounts and memoirs. Hannah has a special interest in oral history collections and highlighting women's stories from the archive.