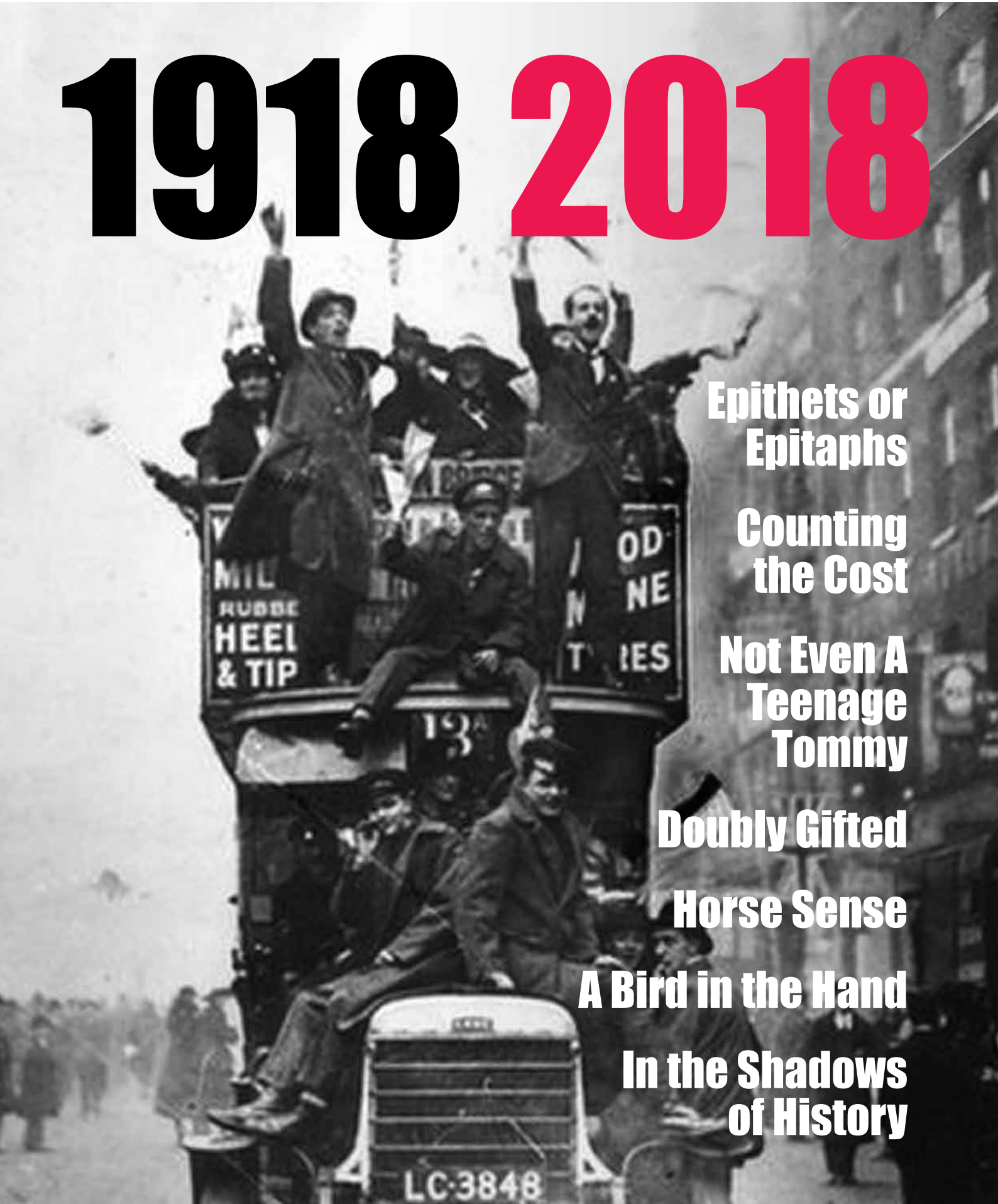


# 1918 2018



**Epithets or  
Epitaphs**

**Counting  
the Cost**

**Not Even A  
Teenage  
Tommy**

**Doubly Gifted**

**Horse Sense**

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**In the Shadows  
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## The Chairman

Tony Verey

What a pleasure to be home again and to welcome Justin the new Director to our most recent Council meeting at which he briefly outlined his plans for the future which will of course involve SOFNAM. Our speaker for the AGM on Nov13 as you will see has been booked and once again I would like to thank the team who have been responsible for organising our Events, Book Review and Newsletter for their hard work during the year which plays more than a significant part in the 'Friendship' of our title.

## The Editor

Robin Ollington

Welcome to the second issue of the year which, I am delighted to say, as has been on some occasions in the past is not "all my own work". We have received a series of articles from outside sources with more yet to appear which for an Editor is very encouraging. Do feel free to send me anything that you think would be of interest to our readers, either something you have written, seen or may have in your possession which you think would be relevant, after all it is your Newsletter. My thanks also to those of you who wrote appreciative letters concerning the obituary and well deserved tribute to the late Elizabeth Talbot-Rice.

# DOUBLY GIFTED

No sooner have we been told of the generous Malcolmson VC donation in our last issue, than here we are again recording yet another important gift to the Museum. This time it is an addition to the existing T.E. Lawrence collection featuring his robes and dagger. It is in the form of a pistol surrendered to T.E. Lawrence in 1916 by an Ottoman

Officer Ashraf Bey, a notorious individual known to have been responsible for the death of over 2,000 Armenians.

At the time of his capture Ashraf was leading a camel train with £15,000 in gold (over £8 million today) destined for the Ottoman garrison at Hedjaz, and the pistol was probably acquired by Lawrence during Ashraf's interrogation.



*Smith and Wesson .44 in calibre revolver, nd. Attached is a luggage label written by Capt (later Col) Lionel Gray explaining that the pistol was previously owned by a Turkish officer, Ashraf Bey, before being given to him by T E Lawrence in 1918. (NAM. 2017-06-13-1)*



*T E Lawrence in 1919.*

The .44 Smith and Wesson was later given to Capt. Lionel Gray later to work with Mark Sykes whose name has gone down in history with its connection to the Sykes Picot Agreement which set the political boundaries of today's troubled Middle East.

Generously presented by the Gray family, together with other personal archives, the pistol now joins the historic Lawrence display adding not only to its visitor interest, but also to the ongoing Lawrence legend. It is also testament to the generosity of those who see the Museum as the proper place in which these valuable items should be preserved for posterity.

# COUNTING THE COST

## 1914-1918

This year sees the commemoration of the end of one of the deadliest conflicts in human history and in addition to remembering the sacrifice of so many people, we should perhaps take a salutary look at some of the numbers involved during those momentous years and which shaped the future of our country.

**Total number of military and civilian casualties of more than 41 million (18 million dead, 23 million wounded)**

**Of the 6 million men mobilised in the UK over 700,000 were wounded.**

**On one day in September 1918 the total cost of ammunition expended at current prices was £191,857,595.80**

**A total of 2479 merchant ships were sunk with a tonnage of 7,759 more than all the other powers put together.**

**The final cost of four years of bloodshed came to £161, £181, £662, £800.**

**As a result of which the War Graves**



**Commission today has in its care 15,843 World War I cemeteries and memorials worldwide.**

Each year French bomb disposal specialists collect and destroy over 900 tons of unexploded munitions from the battlefield and since 1946 more than 630 of them have lost their lives where others have fallen in the field still adding to the toll.



## Epithets Or Epitaphs

Sergeant Majors have been renowned for their at times almost Shakespearean 'bon mots' on the barrack square. The following printable examples have been gathered from a variety of sources and may not only amuse the reader, but also evoke remembrance of other examples to be added to the collection.

"You could be a secret weapon... when the enemy sees you they will die of laughter."

"Call yourself a Guardsman...I've seen better on the end of a goods train."

"There's enough dirt down this barrel to fill a sandbag."

"Soldiers...I've seen better in a toy shop."

"So you took the King's Shilling? Well he got a pretty poor bargain."

"You've more creases in your tunic than an elephant's arse."

"I've seen better soldiers dipped in a boiled egg."

"I want you to lift your feet up 18 inches and drive them down two feet."

"Marquis of Dufferin and Ava Sir!" "Keep still...both of you!"

"You must be a Scot?" "Why Sir?" "Too mean to buy razor blades."

# STRANGER THAN FICTION

We are indebted to SOFNAM member Ken Embleton for sending the following epitaph to Sgt. William Lawrence of the 40th Foot that he discovered in the church yard at St. Nicolas at Studland in Dorset. As Ken says the military exploits described equal if not outshine those of the fictitious character Sharpe, created by Richard Cornwallis – where I wonder did his medals end up?

## TO THE HONOURED MEMORY of SERJEANT WILLIAM LAWRENCE

(of the 40th Regiment Foot) Who after a long and eventful life  
Peacefully ended his days at STUDLAND  
Nov 11th 1869  
He served with his distinguished Regiment In the war in South America 1805  
And through the whole of the Peninsular War 1808-1813  
He received a silver medal and no less than 10 clasps  
For the battles in which he was engaged  
ROLEIA VIMIERA TALAVARA CUIDAD RODRIGO  
BADAJOZ  
(in which desperate assault being one of the volunteers For the Forlorn Hope he was most severely wounded)  
VITTORIA PYRENEES NIVELLES OTTHES  
TOULOUS  
He also fought at the glorious victory of  
WATERLOO  
June 18th 1815  
While still serving with his Regiment during the Occupation of Paris  
by the Allied Armies Serjeant Lawrence married  
Clotilde Clairret  
At St. Germain-en-Laye who died Sept 26th 1853  
And was buried beneath this spot."



Picture by J H Clark

# One in 1400



This years Trooping the Colour saw an historic first in military turnout. For amongst the 1400 soldiers on parade that day one Coldstream Guardsman Charanpreet Singh Lali stood out as the first man ever to sport a turban instead of the traditional headgear of the Guards. Seen here, Charanpreet said that "He considered it a great honour to be the first turban wearing Sikh to be part of the escort and hoped it would help encourage others, not only Sikhs, to join the British Army".

## Date for your Diary

# AGM

Tuesday 13th November

Speaker: James Cowan

*"The Relevance of the Battle of Waterloo 1815 to Modern Warfare"*

## Cartoon Corner



"We just got McCulloch to play his pipes... that did the trick!"

# In The Shadows Of History 35

A continuing series in which we profile those who played a role in historical events but have now faded into the background.



## Will Dyson

1880-1938

Cartoonist – War Artist

cartoons, some 200, are held at the Cartoon Centre part of the University of Kent, amongst them the chilling prediction of 1940. In 2003 the Editor was contacted from Australia as to the whereabouts and condition of Dyson's grave reputedly at Hendon. This proved to be so, but the memorial had been removed in a cemetery clearance so the grave was unmarked. A rather wet damp visit

With this year's commemoration of the end of World War I 1914-18 followed by the Treaty of Versailles a year later, it is perhaps appropriate that we should remember Will Dyson the Australian cartoonist and War Artist who in that year presciently prophesied the failure of Europe's leaders to cope with peace and recovery culminating in the outbreak of the second great conflict of the century twenty years later. This chilling prophecy observed in his iconic cartoon "The Class of 1940". Born in Ballarat, Victoria, Dyson

although self taught was a highly talented artist and it was this skill that found him his first employment as a press cartoonist, but without much financial reward. Thus in 1910 he set sail for a brighter future in London as indeed this proved to be true, for his talent was soon spotted and he was appointed Cartoonist in Chief to the new Labour paper *The Daily Herald*. Given carte blanche by the Editor, his work soon began to be noticed covering all aspects of social and political life with great effect.

Following the outbreak of war, in 1916 he was soon off to the Front recording the life and agony of Australian soldiers as

Australia's First War Artist. Wounded twice he returned to the battlefield to continue his work which today forms part of the Australian War Memorial, and we are lucky to have some examples of his work at the Museum. Returning to Australia he was employed by Keith Murdoch as cartoonist at the *Melbourne Herald* – they in fact had worked together in France.

However, before long he returned to London in 1930 when he continued to make his name until his death in 1938. His wife Ruby also an artist had predeceased him in the Flu Epidemic of 1919. The largest collection of his



*With the 2nd Tunnellers, near Nieuport, Aug 1917. Coloured lithograph by Lieutenant W (Will) H Dyson, Australian Imperial Force, 1917. (NAM. 1999-04-90)*

finally confirmed its location and a fund was set up to provide a new memorial. This was designed by the Editor and, together with Lambeth College who ran a stone masons course, took it on as a project to create a new and lasting memorial. Amongst the contributors was Dame Elizabeth Murdoch, widow of Sir Keith who had known the Dysons. Thus on Anzac Day 2004 Australia's "radical genius" as he was called was at last provided with a fitting memorial unveiled by Australian cartoonist John Jensen together with the High Commissioner.



**The Tiger: "Curious! I seem to hear a child weeping!"**

# NOT EVEN A TEENAGE TOMMY

## Sidney Lewis, the youngest authenticated British soldier in World War I

Unbelievable as it may seem, especially in today's climate of child protection, the youngest soldier to see action on the battlefield of the First World War was a 12 year old boy Sidney Lewis who in August 1915 enlisted with the East Surrey Regt. Although army recruiters were known to turn a blind eye when it came to underage volunteers it may well have been Sidney's stature and maturity that got him through. Tall and heavily built for his age, he eventually grew to 6'2" well above the British Army's minimum height of 5'3". Having donned his uniform he saw action in the Battle of the Somme in 1916 with the Machine Gun Corps and was present at the famous action of Delville Wood.

Eventually a more than worried mother sent his birth certificate to the War Office demanding his release and he was sent home. He was awarded the Victory Medal – British War Medal and in 1918 he was back in uniform as a member of the army of occupation in Austria, finally leaving to become a police officer, and during World War II serving with a bomb disposal unit. His final years until his death in 1969 was as a more than "historic host" behind the bar at his pub in Frant, East Sussex. There were other young Tommies, but Sidney is the only authenticated one. While the claimant for the youngest serving soldier in WWI is a Serbian soldier who is reputed to have joined up at the age of eight!!



## Thanks for the Memory



Sapper Colin Reid



219 Field Coy R.E.

We are indebted to Nina Reid, widow of Bill Reid the Museum's first Director, for a collection of WWI photographs showing Bill's father Colin taken in Belgium at Namur where he saw service with the 'Indispensables' the 219 Field Coy R.E. This well worn and obviously much loved portrait was taken in January 1918 after three years in France in a very simple studio set up and without much time to clean oneself up judging by the boots. *If readers have similar photos that they would like to share with us and add to the archives we would always be pleased to see them.*

# A bird in the hand is worth...

We are grateful to In Pensioner Frank Mouqué for the following article

**W**ith the growing use of drones for all manner of operations including the delivery of drugs and other forbidden items to prisons, it is interesting to learn that the French military authorities have formed an anti-drone unit of winged warriors in the shape of four golden eagles. Aptly named d'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos and Aramis in honour of the Musketeers of Alexandre Dumas. Following drone over fly of sensitive areas including the Presidential Palace it was decided to emulate the example of the Dutch who, after the terrorist attack in 2015, created a unit of bald eagles.

The French however have opted for golden eagles with their hooked beaks and talons and incredible eyesight. Weighing in at 11 pounds they mirror the drone they are sent to destroy. Reaching an air speed of 50mph they are able to spot a target over a mile away and bring it down. Protection against the drone blades



and explosive is provided for their talons by specially designed leather and Kevlar (anti-blast) mittens.

Training takes place under the supervision of the Military Falconer at the French Air Force base at Mont-de-Marsan in South West France where they are kept on standby 24 hrs a day.

## MAKING ONES MARK

### The Army relaxes tattoo regulations to help increase recruitment figures

**I**n the past the Army has had strict rules regarding the wearing of what is now called 'Body Art'. However with growing acceptance of tattoos by society it has been decided that designs will be allowed providing they are not visible in a passport styled photo when the soldiers top button is undone in an open necked shirt.

Needless to say, the design content is of importance and in no way must it be seen as offensive or obscene. Tattoos have always been a tradition in the Army and ranged from regimental badges or sweethearts names of the early days to the multicoloured productions made available today with the advance of tattoo technology. Tattoos however have not always been the prerogative of

the common soldier. In 1862 whilst visiting the Holy Land the future King Edward VII was decorated with a Holy Jerusalem Cross and his son the Duke of York later to become King George V and his brother the Duke of Clarence treated themselves to a dragon whilst on a visit to Japan in 1882.

The word tattoo itself is of fascinating origin.... the body art version originated in the 18th century and was first attested in the writings of Capt Cook as coming as a loan word from a Polynesian noun tatau, tatu meaning a puncture mark on the skin.

The military version

however is not so exotic in its origin and comes from an early 17th century Dutch phrase 'Doe dew tap toe' (Turn off the tap) a signal played by drummers or trumpeters to instruct innkeepers in the town to stop selling beer to the troops and for them to return to barracks. Perhaps the forerunner of today's 'Time gentlemen please'.



# Horse Sense

**W**hilst at Chelsea the museum displays the skeletal remains of Napoleon's horse Marengo. In Paris serious restoration of another mount Le Vizir has taken place at the Musee de l'Armee.

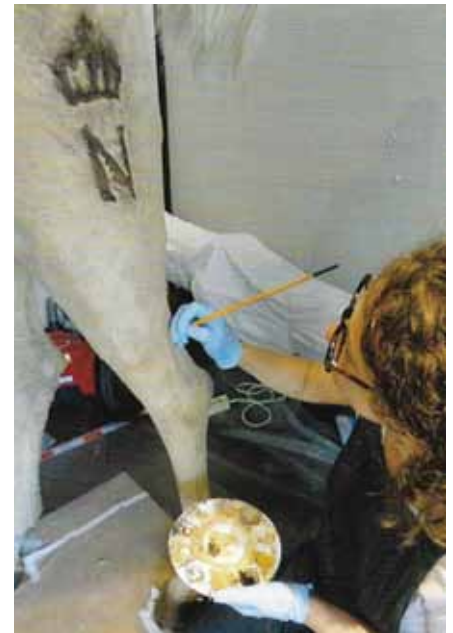
Born 223 years ago Le Vizir has had a chequered life. Presented to Napoleon in 1808 by the Sultan of Turkey the horse saw action with Napoleon at Iena in 1806 and Eylau in 1807. On his death in 1826 his skin marked with the brand of the Emperor was hidden from Royalist supporters. Taken to England in 1839 it was returned to France in 1868

For the next thirty years it lay forgotten in an attic in the Louvre until 1905 when it went to the Musee de l'Armee where displayed in unfavourable conditions it deteriorated. In April 2016 it was totally repainted and 43 cracks from the 1960s were repaired. In June of that year an almost medical examination



took place with radiography of its interior and metal structure including the discovery of six hooves. For more than a month two specialists in taxidermy and organic matter Yveline Huguet and Jack Thiney worked on the total restoration of the animal including bringing back the sparkle to its eyes which were made of Bohemian crystal and waxing its hooves.

By July 2016 the restoration, indeed transformation was complete and Le Vizir now appears in all his glory in a new specially created showcase



equipped with the latest technology for conservation so for Le Vizir it is a case of "Tally Ho" into the future.

*We are indebted to Gregory Spourdos and Le Musee de l'Armee for allowing us to use information and photographs for this article.*

