



Solihull Military History Trail



Discover Solihull's Hidden Military History

Solihull may be best known today for its green spaces and shopping centres, but it also holds a rich and often overlooked military past. From wartime services in local parks and churches to buildings repurposed during the Second World War, the town has a proud tradition of remembrance and community resilience.

This curated Military Heritage Trail invites you to explore 11 key locations that reveal Solihull's role during times of conflict. Along the way, you'll uncover memorials, former military sites, and the local stories behind them — offering a new perspective on familiar streets.

Whether you're a resident or a visitor, this trail offers a thoughtful and educational way to reflect on Solihull's shared history and those who lived through it.

The trail is 2.3 miles long and takes around 54 minutes to walk (not including stops).

1. Solihull School (not open to the public)

Historic independent school with ties to the town's wartime and military history. It had an Officer Training Corps which, since 1948, has been the Combined Cadet Force. More than 100 Old Sils lost their lives in WWI and WWII.

Field Marshal and 1st Viscount of Alamein, Bernard Law "Monty" Montgomery visited Solihull School in 1949, fulfilling his promise to the then Headmaster, H. B. Hitchens, who had been the youngest Brigadier in the British Army.

In 1962, Queen Elizabeth II inspected the Combined Cadet Force guard of honour at Solihull School during an official visit to Solihull.

2. Malvern Park

A peaceful green space often used for commemorative events and community gatherings. A Drumhead Service was held in the park to mark VE Day in 1945.

Solihull's Volunteer Battalion was raised at Malvern Hall in 1797, comprising around 100 local tradesmen and farmers to defend Solihull, Knowle and Elmdon in case of invasion.

A bomb was dropped in Malvern Park on 19/20 November 1940, narrowly missing St Alphege Church.

3. St Alphege Church & Memorials at The Square (New Road)

Solihull's war memorial to those who died in WWI, WWII and the Korean War. It was unveiled on 19 June 1921, with around 500 attendees including dignitaries and ex-service personnel.

The Calvary war shrine (outside the church) is Solihull's original war memorial, designed by local artist, Elphege Pippet and unveiled at Easter 1917.

There are possible arrow-sharpening marks on the west door of the church — allegedly from the time when able-bodied men had to practise archery in the 14th/15th centuries.

Inside the church are a number of memorials, including a stained-glass window in memory of 2nd Lieutenant J. S. Wright, and the battlefield cross that marked the grave of Captain Clement Martineau.

4. Touchwood Hall

Former home of Capt. Clement Martineau, a casualty of WWI, a candle was kept burning in his memory by his mother. The site is now occupied by shops on Drury Lane.

5. The Manor House

A timber-framed house from c.1495, used as the local Home Guard HQ during WWII.

6. St Augustine's Church

A local Catholic church that provided wartime spiritual support. Features a war memorial rood cross and commemorative plate.

7. Former Evacuees' School

Now Boston Tea Party, the house was used as a school for evacuated children from Coventry and London from October 1941. In June 1942 it also became a hostel for evacuees who were unable to be accommodated in billets.

8. Blossomfield Road

Former Methodist Church used as a servicemen's club and US Army canteen during WWII.

9. Former Solihull Council House

A venue for military parades, during WWII the Council's command centre was in the basement of the building. Next door, what is now Lloyd's Bank housed the WWII Solihull Fire Guard.

10. Brueton Gardens

Opened in 1938 and used as a site for fundraising activities during WWII.

11. Quinet House

The Doctor's House, later to be named Quinet House, was the home and surgery of Drs Paul & Doris Quinet, who were much-loved doctors in Solihull village. Paul came to Solihull during WWI as a Belgian refugee and, apart from military service in the Belgian Army Medical Corps 1918-19, remained here for the rest of his life.

+ Extra Points of Interest

A. Tudor Grange Park

Used as a US Army HQ during WWII. Tudor Grange House was used as an Auxiliary Hospital during and after WWII.

B. Armed Forces Community Garden, Hillfield Park

A peaceful memorial site honouring the contributions of armed forces personnel.

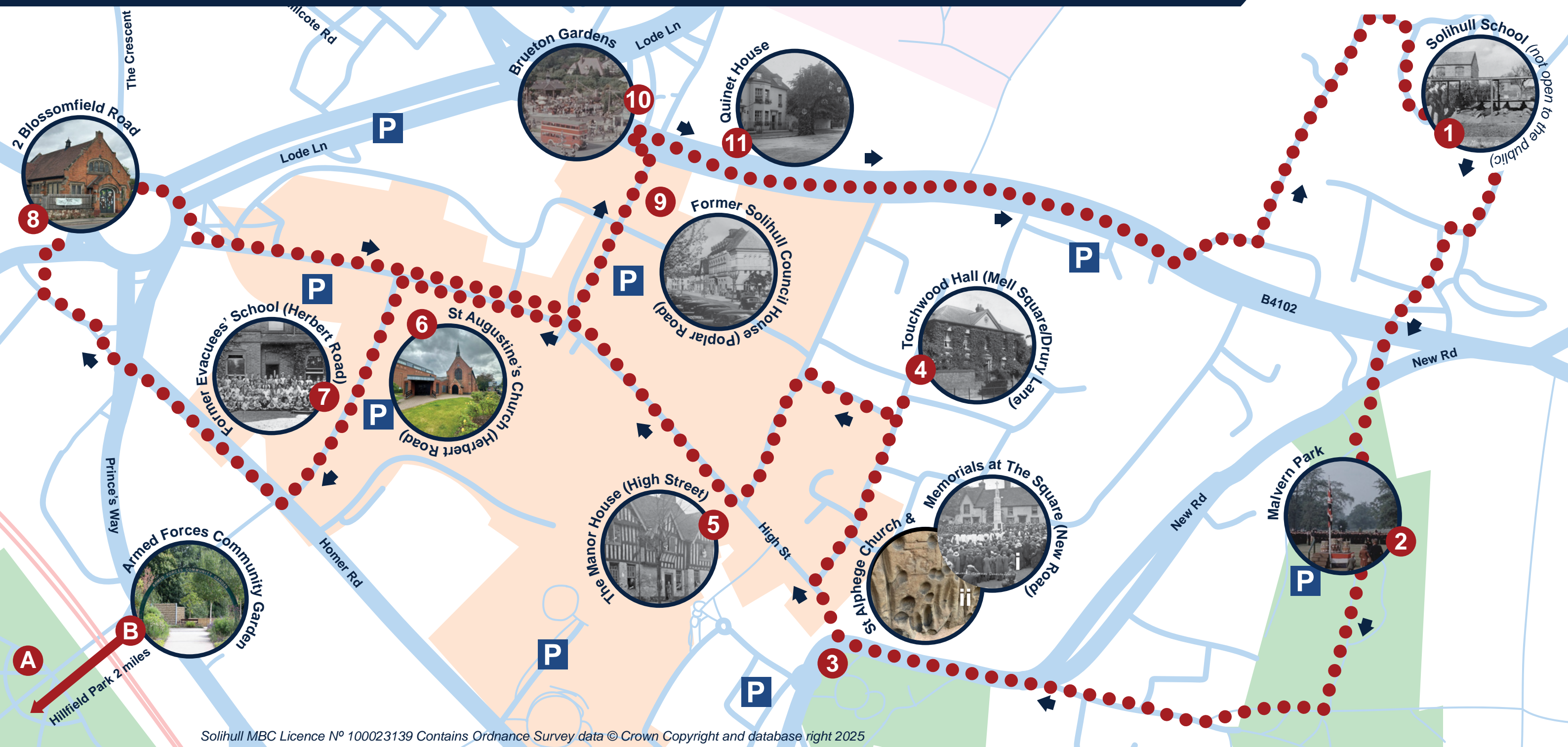
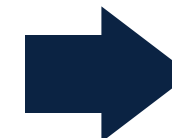
1. Solihull School (not open to the public)
The miniature rifle range at Solihull School. Pupils' rifles were apparently fitted with a Morris tube that fired a round of smaller diameter and lower charge, allowing a shorter rifle range.

2. Malvern Park
Believed to show the Drumhead Service held to mark VE Day in Malvern Park, on Sunday 13 May 1945.

3. St Alphege Church & Memorials at The Square (New Road)
i. The unveiling of Solihull's war memorial, 19 June 1921
ii. Possible 14th/15th century arrow-sharpening marks on the west door of the church (the alternative theory is that the marks are from a medieval practice of harvesting holy stone dust for use in folk medicine).

4. Touchwood Hall (Mell Square/Drury Lane)
Touchwood Hall, Drury Lane c.1910.

Read more
about each
site overleaf



5. The Manor House (High Street)
"The Grand Cleaning" of the Manor House, October 1944. Undertaken by pupils from Solihull High School for Girls, whose headmistress, Miss Flora Forster, played a key role in saving the house from redevelopment in 1945.

6. St Augustine's Church (Herbert Road)
St Augustine's Church, present day.

7. Former Evacuees' School (Herbert Road)
Evacuees from Coventry outside Eastcroft, Herbert Road, c.1942.

8. 2 Blossomfield Road
2 Blossomfield Road, present day.

9. Former Solihull Council House (Poplar Road)
Poplar Road, 1949, showing the former Council House.

10. Brueton Gardens
Brueton Gardens during Wings for Victory week, 5-12 June 1943, which had a target of raising £600,000 for 10 Lancaster Bombers and 40 Spitfires.

11 Quinet House
Decorated for the Coronation in 1902, the former home and surgery of Drs Paul & Doris Quinet.

+ Extra points of interest
A. Tudor Grange Park
B. Armed Forces Community Garden, Hillfield Park

Trail Distance: 2.3 miles / 3.7 km
Trail Time (without stops): around 54 minutes walking