

We will remember them

To all whom we have lost this month. Our sincere condolences to family and friends.



Our mission is to safeguard the welfare, interests, and memory of those who are serving or who have served in the Armed Forces



Celebrating the 100th Birthday of Yateley Branch WW 2 Veteran Dennis Thatcher

On 29th May Dennis reached 100 years old and on 6th June Yateley Veterans arranged an afternoon tea at the Royal Oak in Yateley. Dennis was called up aged 18, commencing training with the Hampshire Regt on 15 Jun 1944. After 16 weeks training he was offered a training job as a sergeant but elected to go 'up the line'. He sailed to the Hook of Holland, then transported by road to the Dutch/German border. Along with 5 others he was transferred from the Hampshires to the 5th Battalion, Highland Light Infantry, part of 52 Lowland Brigade. Dennis says everyone mucked in together and he quickly felt at home there. Life on the line was a lottery. Dennis was shelled in the trenches, and he saw a young officer killed by a sniper. He was appointed as a runner for a 2nd Lieutenant – only seconds after he left that trench it was shelled, and 2 of his Hampshire mates, plus the officer were killed. That had a big effect on his small sub-unit. Of the 6 Hampshires moved to the HLI, 2 were killed, 2 injured and only Dennis and one other survived uninjured. At one point Dennis came face to face with a German soldier – whom he immediately took prisoner.

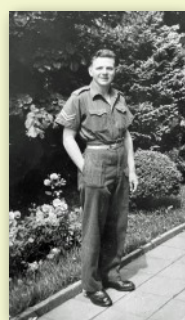


German units knew the war was over and Dennis remembers some snipers still operating in the Black Forest

After the War, Dennis stayed in the Army for a few years. He also went on a Physical Training Instructor Course, was trained in all the events in the Olympics at that time and was the top soldier on the course. Dennis was demobbed in 1947 and he married Muriel in 1948. For many years they ran the General Stores and Post Office in Frogmore. In 2008 they received a Diamond Wedding card from the late Queen. Sadly Muriel died in 2015.

About 70 veterans and families came to the Royal Oak to celebrate his 100th. A singer provided the 1940's type entertainment, and Dennis and Wendy (his partner) showed their ability on the dance floor. (They dance several times a week). Among those attending were many from the Yateley & Hawley RBL Branch, his MP - Alex Brewer, and the Mayor of Yateley. The Mayor of presented Dennis with 'Freedom of the Town' – an honour that has not been bestowed for more than 4 decades. We look forward to Dennis driving his sheep through Yateley! Thanks to Jason Cartwright who organised the afternoon, the Royal Oak for providing the food, and Stuart Bailey (County Councillor) who gave a grant.

Ish Thomson Chair Yateley & Hawley



His battalion moved through Germany, marching for about 3 weeks. When a mobile bath unit appeared, the first 12 men were led to the showers by pipers!

They made their way to the Rhine, under firing and shelling, and remained there for about 10 days. They crossed the Rhine on pontoons and continued east – fighting all the way. At the Dortmund/Ems canal they had to wait until the Engineers had built a bridge. They went across on Day 2. Dennis remembers the numerous bodies of British soldiers – the bank had been well defended by the Germans and it was a shock to see so many who had been killed on Day 1. This had a profound effect on Dennis who - remember - was only 18 years old. The Battalion was in Bremen when the war ended. They took 1,150 German POWs who were 'a ragged lot' – hungry, in a pitiful state, and glad the war was over. In contrast, Dennis recalls that they always had enough food, and plenty of stores. Not all



Past events of the Month

1 July 1916 First day of the Battle of the Somme

28 July 1917. The Tank Corps is raised. It replaced the Heavy Branch of the Machine Gun Corps.

July - October 1940. The Battle of Britain.

10 July 1943. Allies invade Sicily.

1 - 27 July 1942. First battle for El Alamein.

25 July 1970. US forces kill 119 North Vietnamese and Vietcong soldiers in South Vietnam.



A ceremony was held by Hampshire County Council Flag Raising for Armed Forces Week.

At the Great Hall, Winchester, on Monday, 22nd June. Standard Bearers from across Hampshire attended the flag-raising event at Winchester. Representing Hampshire County were the County Patron, Lieutenant General Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL, and the County President, Colonel Andrew King. Sandra Fishlock representing Hampshire County Women's Section

Addressing the assembled soldiers and guests, Lord-Lieutenant Atkinson reflected that the flag raising "reminds us of the debt of gratitude" owed to members of the Armed Forces. He said: "Today is a very important occasion in the life of our county. All over Hampshire, flags will be raised in honour and support of our armed forces, veterans and serving personnel. These flags remind us of the debt of gratitude we owe to them all. Today, we remember the commitment of all who serve in His Majesty's Armed Forces, in this very unsettled world in which we live. Our military may not be at the forefront of the mind of the public as they were back in 1945, at the end of the Second World War, so the sacrifices sailors, soldiers, and aviators continue to make on our behalf may be taken for granted.

Therefore, it is more important than ever to remember all those who have served and continue to serve. Armed Forces Week, starting today and culminating in Armed Forces Day on Saturday (June 27), is a moment to say thank you, not just to serving regular and reserve personnel, but also to their families who stand beside them, every step of the way, as well as our cadets, cadet leaders, and veterans." Today, more than 137,000 full-time personnel serve in the UK Armed Forces, supported by nearly 32,000 reserves, with over 1,000 based in Hampshire to step in when needed.

"That is over 169,000 dedicated individuals helping to keep our nation secure. There are also more than 1.8 million veterans living in the UK, with nearly 90,000 living in Hampshire alone. By celebrating Armed Forces Week, we can all be sure that our Armed Forces feel seen, supported, and appreciated."

Standard Bearers present were Pete Pullin, Hampshire County SB, who carried the Union, Karen Graham, Hampshire County WS SB, Andy Dawes, Old Basing, who carried the County Standard, Karen Ralph, Sutton Scotney WS SB and Paul White, Lymington Branch SB Hampshire County Parade Marshal, Dave Graham overseeing us all. Pete Pullin



28 July 1917. The Tank Corps is raised

The origins of our armoured regiments started with the establishment of the Tank Corps on the 28th July 1917 so it is appropriate to look at its formation. The Tank Corps was raised from the Heavy Section of the Machine Gun Corps (MGC). In November 1916 the first tanks saw the light of day and initially comprised of eight tank companies in the MGC (HS). On the 28th July 1917 the Heavy Branch was separated from the MGC and by December 1918 there were 26 battalions, of which 25 were equipped with tanks. The Tank Corps saw much fighting on the Western front at Cambrai in November 1918. At the end of World War One the Tank Corps was reduced in size to a central depot and four battalions, (being the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th).

On 18th October 1923 the Tank Corps was awarded the title Royal and its name then changed to the Royal Tank Corps (RTC). It adopted the motto "Fear Naught" at this time and also adopted the black beret. In the early 1920s the RTC also had 20 armoured car companies, some of which were Yeomanry units, in its organisation. The RTC was renamed the Royal Tank Regiment on 4th April 1939 and was placed under command of the new Royal Armoured Corps. The eight Yeomanry armoured car companies of the RTR were activated and transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps. The training unit of the RTC was at their Depot at Bovington, where it still is to this day.

The RTR saw extensive action in World War Two, Korea, Bosnia, Herzogovena, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan in more recent times. Armoured units also deploy on NATO operations and some are currently in the Baltic States. dw



Overton Memorial in Photos



Petersfield Armed Forces Day



A small parade was held in Petersfield to celebrate Armed Forces Day on the 22nd June 2026. Present were Petersfield Mayor, Parade Marshal, Standard Bearer, members of Petersfield RBL and Town Council members. David Lloyd



The fourth battle of Cassino a part of Operation Diadem (the spring offensive in Italy 1944). General Alexander had enough resources to deploy the divisions under his command over a wider front than before as the terrain allowed it. His plan incorporated the best use of his artillery and Allied air power. The plan was to deploy the US Fifth Army and the British Eighth Army in the launch of this offensive while VI US Corps at Anzio would break out and threaten the German rear.

Operation Diadem was conducted by the Polish Corps that was under command. The intent was to threaten the German defensive line along a 20-mile front. The Allied deception plan convinced German General Kesselring to believe that a further amphibious operation was also planned. This made him decide to hold his reserves back from his overstretched frontline divisions. The operation required General Leese's Eighth Army up the Liri Valley along Route 6. The 4th British and 8th Indian Divisions were tasked to form a bridgehead for 78th British, 1st Canadian and 5th Canadian Armoured Divisions to exploit and break through. The reserve for this operation was the 6th Armoured Division. The two Divisions of II Polish Corps were tasked to fix the defenders of Monte Cassino on the right flank, forcing them to stay put. General Clark's US Fifth Army would deploy the French Expeditionary Corps on the coastal flank through the mountain passes on the coastal range. VI US Corps deployed at Anzio was tasked to break out and cut communications behind the retreating German forces.

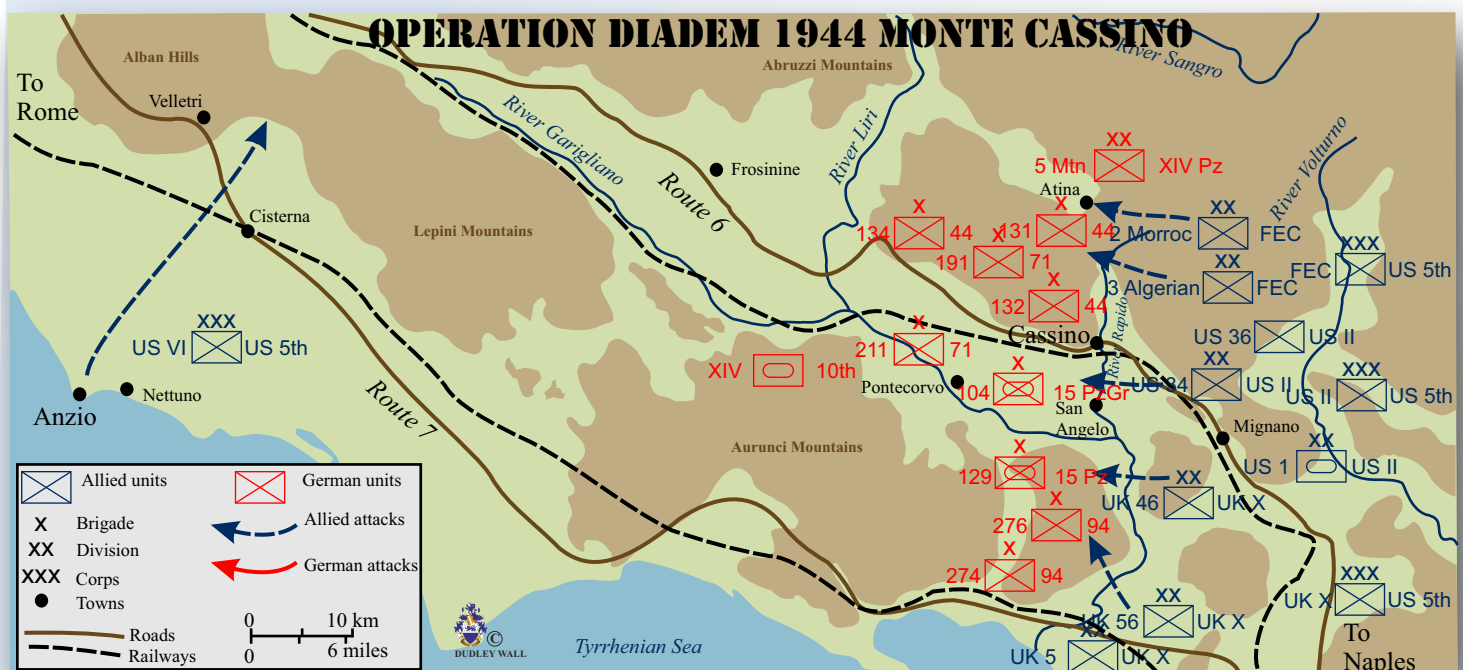
The attack started at 11h00 on 11 May. An artillery barrage

along the entire front was delivered and the Germans responded in kind. Divisions of the British Eighth Army advanced in thick mist encountering stiff resistance. Canadian and British tanks and infantry of British XIII Corps advanced on the Gustav Line and broke through. On the coast the Americans and French also advanced. By 13 May they also broke through the German defences on the Hitler Line on their front. They then attacked the next defensive position across the Aurunci mountains, six miles behind the Gustav Line. French mountain troops led the breakthrough.

In the area of Monte Cassino German paratroopers defended Monte Cassino against the Polish II Corps forces attacking them. Polish II Corps launched an attack in an encircling right hook from the north. They met very stiff resistance. The Polish Carpathian and Kresowa Divisions attacked on 16 May. Some areas of the Gustav Line in the Liri Valley below had been breached by the Allies and by the US Fifth Army further along the coast. On 17 May the German forces withdrew and the ruins of the monastery were abandoned. Other forces that participated were from the French territories of Algeria and Morocco, as well as the American forces to the south. British 5th, 46th and 56th Infantry Divisions were also part of the operation. (See the map below).

The eventual victory was clouded by Clark's decision to head for Rome instead of cutting off the retreating German Tenth Army as General Alexander intended. The fall of Rome took second place to the news of the D-Day landings in Normandy. Source 60th anniversary booklet and others.

DW



Camouflage

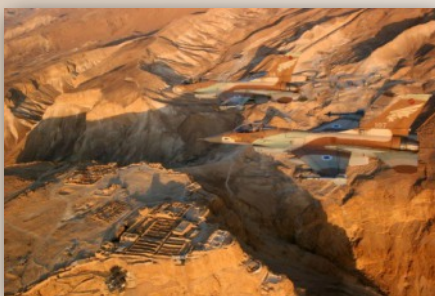
The use of camouflage techniques is part of the art of military deception. There are various ways to camouflage a person, vehicle, aircraft, ship or other object to conceal its presence on the battlefield or in training. The purpose is to get the enemy to think that the object is something other than it actually is, or to conceal or disguise it. The first conscious effort to camouflage soldiers was when riflemen were issued with green tunics as opposed to the bright scarlet tunics of the rest of the infantry. The reason for the scarlet tunics was purely by chance at the time. There was an abundance of red material available and so it became the main colour of the jacket. The Anglo Boer war of 1899 – 1902 saw the universal use of khaki uniforms in the field. This was done by British troops in India prior to arriving in South Africa. The khaki colour blended in well with the local surroundings, vegetation (dry and brown in winter) and soil of the bushveldt. The human eye is a primary sense of human beings and camouflage deliberately deceives the eye and therefore, the brain into believing something that is not what it is. The main principles of camouflage are the disruption of outlines, the use of counter-shading, or the prevention of casting shadows. Camouflage mimics the immediate surroundings allowing an object to blend in and not be noticed. Advances in uniform camouflage allows some concealment from infrared sensors at night. Material such as “CADPAT” (Canadian pattern) textiles help to provide concealment from radar. The intention is to protect personnel and equipment from observation by enemy forces.

Specific patterns and colours are not randomly chosen. A great deal of study goes into the production of a camouflage uniform. There are no straight lines in nature. Studies are done to determine the vegetation, foliage, the colour of wild animals, the seasonal changes, the time of day and night, soil composition and colour and also importantly, the build of military personnel. Animals tend to blend in with the vegetation in the wild and the correct combination of colours and patterns is important to get the right type of camouflage. The size of a person and the size of the camouflage pattern used, also need to be balanced to achieve concealment because distance from where a soldier is observed also plays an important role. This has led to the development of pixilated camouflage patterns.

Soldiers are taught to consider Shape Shine Shadow Silhouette in the field to prevent the enemy from observing them. It must also be said that movement plays an integral role in deception and camouflage. Movement is easy to detect and camouflage provides limited protection from visibility. Camouflage includes the application of colours and material (such as camouflage netting) to all military equipment including vehicles, ships, aircraft, gun positions and battledress, either to conceal it from observation (crypsis), or to make it appear as something else (mimicry).

The scientific approach uses steps in the development of a camouflage pattern.

- Determine the threat and the area of operations.
- Determine what is to be camouflaged.
- Determine the immediate surroundings.
- Analyse the vegetation, soil, compromise between urban and rural.
- The climate and seasonal colour changes.
- Develop a pattern and test it against the environment.
- Trial period of wear to determine effectiveness.
- If successful – adopt the pattern for use. DW



Israeli F16s flying over Masada. Photo internet



South African Camouflage Coy SA Engineers, making camo nets WW 2 Western Desert. IWM photo



Factory camouflage - the Boeing Plant 2 in Seattle USA. The roof is camouflaged to look like a village. IWM photo



HMS Helsingborg - Danish warship anchored off Gotska Sandoen. Two methods of camouflage - paint and shape. Photo off the internet.



Defensive pillbox above the North Baths outside Wick. Photo internet.



British khaki



British DPM



British desert DPM



Australian



USA tiger stripe



USA choc chip



US woodland



USMC digital



Rhodesian brush stroke



Rhodesian brush stroke



Angolan / Cuban lizard



Portuguese lizard



South African police



South African 1992

	EASTLEIGH	ASH
	Pavilion on the Park	Ash Manor School
	1 Kingfisher Drive, Eastleigh, SO50 9LH Point Of Contact: Dave Graham 07597 455112	Manor Rd, Ash, Aldershot GU12 6QH Point Of Contact: Dudley Howard 07810 261216

July	Sunday 12th	13:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 21st	18:45 - 20:00
August	Sunday 9th	13:00 - 15:00	<i>No Training as School is closed</i>	
September	Sunday 13th	13:00 - 15:00	TBC	
October	Sunday 11th	13:00 - 15:00	TBC	
November	<i>No Training</i>		TBC	
December	<i>No Training</i>		<i>No Training</i>	

2026 Competition Information

Comp	Date	Venue
Youth / WS	24th Oct	Crosfield Hall Broadwater Road, Romsey, SO51 8GL.
Adult RBL	25th Oct	

Current Hants Parade Information

Parade	Date	Venue
NF Airfields	5 th September @14:00	New Forest Airfields Memorial Bransgore, BH23 8EB
Mountbatten memorial	13th September @ 15:00	Romsey Abbey Church Ln, Romsey SO51 8EP

Please note: All Standard Bearers should try to attend two training sessions a year, and be physically fit enough to carry the Standard, as agreed when they signed the yearly MS1B Form. Please bring your sling, gauntlets, and Standard to training and wear casual dress unless requested otherwise.

Hampshire Parade Marshal: David Graham

E: Hampshire.ParadeMarshal@rbl.community

M: 07597 455112

Please remember if you intend to attend an event with your Standard, get permission from your Branch and ensure it is in the minutes. Short notice, ask your Chair

Postal Address for Hampshire County Committee - Hampshire & IOW MEO (or Name), Royal British Legion,
199 Borough High St, London SE1 1AA

RBL Website: www.BritishLegion.org.uk, County Website:
<http://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/hampshire>

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/groups/hantscountyrb1/

Facebook Email address - Hampshire.web@rbl.community

Poppy Appeal - www.facebook.com.poppy.HampshireRBL

ALL LEGION ENQUIRIES (including Welfare requests) should be directed to the national call centre - **0808 802 8080**

2026-27 HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COMMITTEE

Patron Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL Hampshire.meo@rbl.community

President Col A King Hampshire.president@rbl.community

Vice Presidents. B C N Soffe, R G Knight

Chair. R Moore Hampshire.chair@rbl.community

Vice Chair and Training Officer. J Davies Hampshire.CTO@rbl.community

Treasurer. G S Brown Hampshire.treasurer@rbl.community

County Secretary, Conference Secretary and Webmaster. A Mitchell Hampshire.secretary@rbl.community

Committee and Recruiting Officer. T Russell Hampshire.CRO@rbl.community

Committee and Youth Officer. A Dawes Hampshire.CYO@rbl.community

Committee and Conference Chairman. B Mansi Ringwood. chairman@rbl.community

Committee, Poppy Appeal Coordinator S Hampshire + Conference. P Prior

leconsolent.secretary@rbl.community

Conference Committee. P Cunningham, P Perkins, M Brunsdon

Parade Marshal. D Graham Hampshire.parademarshal@rbl.community

Deputy Parade Marshal. A Cassidy

County Standard Bearer. P Pullin ppullin@britishlegion.org.uk

Hampshire.stdbearer@rbl.community

Deputy County Standard Bearer. A Wells

County Youth Standard Bearer. A Neal

County Padre Reverend. D Roche

County Golf Organiser. R J Bourne

Independent Examiners. G S Brown, J Davies, P Prior, A Mitchell, M Brunsdon

County Management Board Chair, V/Chair, Treasurer, Secretary

Annual Conference Delegate. R Moore

Poppy Appeal Manager North Hampshire. C Hayward chayward@britishlegion.org.uk

Poppy Appeal Manager South Hampshire. C Smith csmith4@britishlegion.org.uk

Membership Engagement Officer. K Parkinson Hampshire.meo@rbl.community

Membership Engagement Manager. K Jeffery kjeffery@britishlegion.org.uk

Membership Council Representative. D Taylor dtaylor@britishlegion.org.uk

Hampshire Link. Col D Wall MSM (Rhod), MMM (SA) HampshireLinkDW@yahoo.com

Errors and Omissions Excepted

