



HAMPSHIRE LINK

FEBRUARY, 2015

CHARITY NO 219279

Hampshire welcomes Russian Arctic Veterans



As reported in the October edition of *Hampshire Link*, Brockenhurst Branch secretary, Mike Matthews, led a party of British Arctic Convoy Veterans to St Petersburg last year.

A few days before Christmas 20 Russians, including 9 veterans paid a reciprocal visit.

The oldest to arrive on December 22 was 96 and the youngest 86. They remained in the UK until December 27.

Bill Bates welcomed the veterans to Portsmouth in one of his last engagements as County Chairman.

“Their first port of call on Tuesday 23 was Edinburgh where Royal British Legion Scotland hosted a party. Then, on Christmas Eve, they travelled across the Highlands by coach to Inverness to enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner. On Christmas Day they moved on to Newcastle, the former home of the North East shipbuilders where the icebreaker ‘Krasin’ was built in 1917. Today the ‘Krasin’ is a museum in St Petersburg.

After an early morning flight the next stop was London for another very busy day. From London on December 27 it was on to Portsmouth by train for a reception on HMS Victory - a tot of Pusser’s Rum in Nelson’s cabin was followed by lunch on board Victory.

In the afternoon Margaret and I were privileged to represent the Legion at a medal presentation ceremony in the Royal Naval Museum where 36 British Arctic Convoy veterans from the Portsmouth area were presented with the ‘Ushakov’ bravery medal by a representative of the Russian Naval Attaché.

I then accepted a plaque (pictured above) on behalf of the Royal British Legion to commemorate the group’s visit to Hampshire. Mounted on the plaque was a fragment of a shell case, recovered in 2010 from the Liberty ship SS Thomas Donaldson sunk in the Barents Sea by a U Boat in 1945.

On the morning of Sunday 28 December the delegation departed the UK ready to reunite with their families for New Year celebrations in Russia”.

Bill Bates

BRANCH NEWS

Footballers embrace fundraising

Whether Premiership or local Sunday league, many soccer clubs have formed partnerships with their local Royal British Legion branches or Counties.

Eastleigh FC are a perfect example and not only did they give complimentary tickets and generous hospitality to Legion veterans for their Vanarama Conference home fixture against Chester in November but their players wore limited edition shirts emblazoned with the Poppy.



For the record Eastleigh won 3-2 and after their victory the club sold the shirts to their supporters for a donation. The Silverlake Stadium club had already raised £86 for the Poppy Appeal from collections held at the ground in November but earlier in 2015 they presented a further £300 to the Eastleigh, Chandlers Ford & District Branch following the sale of the Poppy shirts.

“We are proud to have honoured our veterans in this way and will continue to do so,” said Eastleigh FC Chief Executive, Mark Jewell. “We as a club wished to mark the centenary of the First World War last year and remember the sacrifices and commitment made by our Armed Forces both then and now.”

The season is drawing towards its close but many soccer clubs may still be prepared to allow their local RBL branch to hold a bucket collection before or after a game and during the game it would be an opportunity for branch members to cheer them on and help them up the league.

Bordon - reviewing and previewing

The Bordon & District Branch started 2015 with another highly successful Annual Dinner which will serve as a prelude to what is likely to become a sad year for the branch and the town. In July the Garrison say farewell to Bordon, ending an association that dates back to 1863.

The branch are already looking ahead to playing a prominent part in the Garrison Farewell Commemorations but on January 17 seventy-seven members and guests gathered at the Masonic Lodge to celebrate their achievements during 2014. The centenary of the outbreak of the First World War was commemorated on August 4 with a parade followed by a service at the town War Memorial and a barbecue.

Their Poppy Appeal activities enabled branch members and volunteer Poppy Appeal collectors to raise a magnificent £14,044 during the twelve month period that ended last Autumn.

Since October the new total has already reached £12,987 and once again this year, Bordon are playing host to the County Poppy Walk at the Alice Holt Forest Centre and that is bound to swell the Poppy Appeal.

An invitation is extended to anyone wishing to walk on June 7 and further information can be obtained by contacting bordon_rbl@btinternet.com

The branch will also have a stall at the *Farewell to the Garrison Festival* at the end of June and the 2015 Remembrance Sunday Service will again be at the Bordon War Memorial in November.

Central Band in concert

One of the country's finest military bands, The Central Band of The Royal Air Force, have accepted an invitation from the Milford-on-Sea Royal British Legion and the Women's Section to present a concert at All Saints Parish Church, Milford-on-Sea on Saturday, March 7.

The concert, in aid of the Poppy Appeal, begins at 7pm and tickets are priced at £17.50 (concessions and under 16's £10). The admission price includes programme and refreshments.

Tickets are expected to sell quickly and are available from the Milford Community Centre Box Office (Monday to Friday 10am-4pm, Saturday 10am to 1pm), Sea Road, Milford-on-Sea SO410PG (Telephone: 01590 644861).

Tickets are also available from Mrs Jan England (Poppy Appeal Organiser) 'Rhosa', Kitwalls Lane, Milford-on-Sea SO41 0RJ (Telephone: 01590 642291 or email janengland@uk2.net Cheques to Mrs England should be made payable to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal and should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

The concert organisers justifiably point out that this will be a once in a lifetime event in Milford.

Memorial Branch extend invitation

Members of the Earl Mountbatten Memorial Branch extend a warm invitation to all members of the Royal British Legion who would like to attend their branch general meetings.

The opening meeting of 2015 was held at the Park Gate RBL Club in Southampton on January 31. It was well attended and a lively meeting followed by light refreshments.

The EMMB will meet on three further occasions this year, the meetings on April 25, July 25 and October 24 taking place at 2.30pm at the Romsey RBL Club.

COUNTY NEWS

Where to find us

If you haven't taken the opportunity to visit the Hampshire, Dorset & Isle of Wight Pop-In Advice and Information Centre can we remind you that it is open between:

10.00am and 4.00pm, Monday to Friday.

The postal address is:

104 Above Bar Street, Southampton, SO14 7DT

The telephone number is: **0808 802 8080**

Hampshire Royal British Legion members will, of course, be most welcome to pop in and say hello but if you wish to see Steph, our Membership Support Officer, a member of the Area Team or a County Committee member you are advised to make an appointment. As an Area team they often have to travel into Dorset or over to the Isle of Wight and may not always be available. They are also required to book a meeting room.

New County Chairman

John Smith assumed the position of County Chairman at the Hampshire County Conference on January 24, taking over from Bill Bates who had held the post for six years.

“I genuinely have mixed feelings about taking over from Bill,” John admitted. “He has served the County extremely well for many, many years but he will need to take it a little easier in the next few months and I regret that he was unable to continue. He has built a firm foundation on which we can build and I am looking forward to stepping up to this important job.”

For John, this follows six years of Legion service, as Secretary of Wellow, Chairman of Copythorne & District Branch and his four years on the County Committee, two as County Vice-Chairman.

Born in 1946, John began his working life as a teacher, becoming a headmaster six years before leaving the profession. While a head teacher he travelled the country playing 1st XV rugby for Worcester and from 1982 worked as a freelance BBC rugby commentator at Pebble Mill.

He left teaching in 1985 to join the BBC, working in local radio before moving to the BBC’s Regional Centre in Southampton as a deputy manager. In 1993 he moved on to national radio in London.

He spent 9 years with BBC Five Live as a sports producer, reporter, commentator and bulletin reader covering major sporting events at home and abroad.



He was selected as a member of the BBC’s Sony Gold Award winning team that was responsible for the radio coverage of the funeral of Princess Diana. He transferred to the BBC’s Ceremonial Events Team covering the Cenotaph ceremony, the Festival of Remembrance, Trooping the Colour and he produced the radio coverage of the Queen Mother’s funeral from Whitehall. This work brought him into close contact with our Armed Forces and the Royal British Legion.

Since retiring in 2002, John has supported the Legion at branch, county and national level. He recognises the importance of adapting to new Legion policies and practices and has high hopes for the County over the next year. “I would like to see the Hampshire Committee build stronger links with branches in the north and centre of the county, place a greater focus on a number of key issues that currently challenge us and, personally, I hope to encourage all Hampshire members to raise the bar in all that they do in the interest of our members and beneficiaries.”

Hannah Leppard
Area Administrator

Updating membership handbooks

The Board of Trustees have recently approved a significant number of amendments to the Membership Handbook.

It is important that Branch Secretaries keep abreast of the changes to this important document. The handbook provides guidance on the effective and efficient running of the Legion; nationally, at County level and within branches.

Secretaries are asked to update their copies of the Membership Handbook.

Important request

There is concern that four branches; Bitterne, Damerham & Western Downland, Gosport & Alverstoke and Wickham, have still not completed and returned the branch accounts that should have been with the Hampshire Membership Support Officer by September 31.

A number of branches have failed to return their MS1 forms. These documents should have been completed, signed and returned to the Membership Support Officer by the end of December and not only are they causing additional administrative difficulties in the Area Office but they are now delaying the printing and publication of the County Handbook.

We ask, therefore, that the following branches now forward their completed MS1 forms to the MSO:

Andover, Curdrige, Botley, Damerham & Western Downland, Dummer, Eastleigh & Chandlers Ford, Herriard & Lasham, Houghton, Portsmouth South, Preston Candover, St Mary Bourne, Twyford, Hale Woodgreen & Braemore.

Missing trophies

For the last six months members of the County Committee have been engaged in a frustrating search for 14 missing Sports Trophies.

Thanks to the efforts of branch officials the five bowls trophies have been returned to the Area Office but 9 remain on the 'wanted' list. These cups are Royal British Legion property and although the County sports competitions are no longer held, the trophies are too valuable to write off.

We would like to retrieve the following trophies:

Darts - Singles	Snooker - Singles
Darts - Pairs	Snooker - Pairs
Darts - Team 4	Dominoes - Team 5
Billiards - Singles	Pool - Singles
Cribbage - Team 6	

If anyone can throw any light on the whereabouts of any of these trophies or identify the last holder(s) please contact the Hampshire County Chairman on 01794 323 487.

WHAT'S ON

Our Membership Support Officer, Steph Harris, is inviting applications for three forthcoming courses.

BRANCH TREASURER'S COURSE - March 21 & 22, 2015

To be held at the Area Office, 104 Above Bar Street, Southampton, SO14 7DT
Apply by February 20, 2015

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S COURSE - April 18 & 19, 2015

To be held at the Area Office, 104 Above Bar Street, Southampton, SO14 7DT
Apply by March 20, 2015

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE COURSE - TBC (April, May, June or July requested)

To be held at the Area Office, 104 Above Bar Street, Southampton, SO14 7DT
To be confirmed

Course profiles can be obtained from the Area Office.

POPPY APPEAL

Poppy pat on the back

At the opening County Committee meeting of 2015, Clare Peppiatt (County Fundraiser South & IOW), reported that the Hampshire Poppy Appeal total at January 30 stood at an amazing £1,432,474.

This is an incredible start to the 2014-2015 Poppy Appeal and very sincere thanks go to Clare and Dave Moore, their county-wide team of Poppy Appeal Organisers and our army of Poppy Appeal collectors. It has long been our hope that we would pass the £1.5m barrier in Hampshire. Clearly, thanks to you all ... that is now well within our grasp.

Long service recognised



Winchester's Derek Green wears three hats, serving his branch as chairman, welfare representative and Poppy Appeal Organiser.

His work, as a PAO for almost 40-years, prompted a visit from Dave Moore (Hampshire County Fundraiser North) and merited the presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation to the former County Committee member.

EVENTS DIARY

Prepare for 'Victory'

Hampshire will be playing a prominent part in celebrating the 70th anniversary of V.E. Day in May.

Rushmoor Borough Council and the Aldershot Garrison are planning a major parade through the town on Saturday, May 9 to which veterans and Standard Bearers are invited. Jim France (Area Manager), Steve Forward (County Parade Marshal), Dave Moore (Hampshire County Fundraiser North) and officials of the Aldershot Branch are involved in early negotiations.



The Council and the Garrison are also planning a Commemorative Service to be held in the Garrison Church on May 10.

Plans are well advanced for a V.E. Day party to be held in the Guildhall Square in Southampton. The County team are working with Southampton City Council and other partners to provide a party for around 200 Southampton veterans and Blitz survivors. The entertainers will include a 17-piece 'Victory' big band and vocalists.

Clare Peppiatt (Hampshire County Fundraiser South) is discussing V.E. Day plans with the Portsmouth City Council and Dave Moore (Hampshire County Fundraiser North) has similar plans for Winchester. Further details of all these activities and plans for V.J. Day events will feature in future editions of the *Hampshire Link*.

What's On.....

23 February 2015

Cluster Meeting for N.E.Branches
Farnborough RBL Club, Farnborough
7.30-9.00pm
Further details: 01794 323487

7 March 2015

Central Band of the Royal Air Force in concert
All Saints Parish Church, Milford-on-Sea
7.00pm
Tickets: £17.50 (Concessions £10)
Further details: 01590 642291

21/22 March 2015

Branch Treasurer's Course
Area Office, 104 Above Bar Street, Southampton
Further details: s.harris@britishlegion.org.uk

23 March 2015

Cluster Meeting for N.W.Branches
Old Basing RBL Club, Old Basing
7.30-9.00pm
Further details: 01794 323487

18/19 April 2015

Independent Examiner's Course
Area Office, 104 Above Bar Street, Southampton
Further details: s.harris@britishlegion.org.uk

7 May 2015

General Election

8 May 2015

Victory in Europe Day

9 May 2015

V.E.Day Parade through Aldershot
'Victory' Party in Southampton
Events also in Portsmouth and Winchester
Details to follow.

10 May 2015 - National V.E.Day

V.E.Day Commemorative Service
Garrison Church, Aldershot
Details to follow.

16/17 May 2015

National Conference 2015
Southport Conference Centre, Lancashire

7 June 2015

Hampshire County Poppy Walk
Alice Holt Forest Centre, Bordon
(Hosted by Bordon & District Branch)
09.30 start
Further details: 07758 881961

26 June 2015

Armed Forces Day

15 August 2015

Victory in Japan Day

27 September 2015

Hampshire Standard Bearer's Competition
Jubilee Hall, Bishops Waltham
Further details: 02380 693028

10 October 2015

Hampshire County Conference
Jubilee Hall, Bishops Waltham
Further details: s.harris@britishlegion.org.uk

1 November 2015

Hampshire County Festival of Remembrance
Venue to be confirmed
Further details: c.peppiatt@britishlegion.org.uk

7 November 2015

Festival of Remembrance
Royal Albert Hall, London

8 November 2015

Remembrance Sunday

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SIGNIFICANT DATES

There are a significant number of military anniversaries on the 2015 calendar that Royal British Legion Branches across Hampshire might wish to commemorate.

March 10	Neuvre Chapelle	Centenary of Somme Battle
April 15	Liberation of Belsen	70 th Anniversary
April 25	Gallipoli /ANZAC Day	Centenary of Gallipoli Campaign
May 8	V.E.Day - National celebration	70 th Anniversary
May 9	V.E.Day - Aldershot Parade	70 th Anniversary - Aldershot
May 10	V.E.Day - Commemorative Service	70 th Anniversary - Garrison Church, Aldershot
May 31	Battle of Jutland	99 th Anniversary of battle
June 25	Start of Korean War	65 th Anniversary
July 6	Battle of Britain	65 th Anniversary
August 6	Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima & Nagasaki	70 th Anniversary
August 15	V.J.Day	70 th Anniversary

***The Battle of Waterloo (June 18) and Trafalgar Day (October 21) are not included in the above list as there are no living dependants of these conflicts.

STANDARD BEARERS

Schooldays ... the best days of your Legion life!

For Hampshire County Parade Marshal, Steve Forward, and his team of Standard Bearers it is certainly the lull before the storm. As the list of Significant Dates above shows, our ceremonial teams face a busy few months ahead. The period of commemoration and celebration around the 70th anniversary of V.E.Day will prove particularly demanding.

Steve satisfies all requests for Standard Bearers with a very limited pool of carriers to call upon. It is hoped that more individuals will make themselves available when help is required.

Branch Officers are asked to encourage their Standard Bearer to attend a Standard Bearer's School during 2015. The schools are held monthly at Eastleigh and Lymington and we are soon hoping to add Aldershot to the options. Disappointingly, from almost 60 Branches only three or four individuals attend each session and our County Parade Marshal would certainly welcome more.

Sunday, March 8	Pavilion on the Park, Eastleigh	2.00pm
Monday, March 9	TA Drill Hall, Bath Road, Lymington	7.30pm
Sunday, April 12	Pavilion on the Park, Eastleigh	2.00pm
Monday, April 13	TA Drill Hall, Bath Road, Lymington	7.30pm
Sunday, May 10	Pavilion on the Park, Eastleigh	2.00pm
Monday, May 11	TA Drill Hall, Bath Road, Lymington	7.30pm

All Standard Bearers should be familiar with the Ceremonial Handbook and make every effort to improve and maintain the quality of their dress, drills and performance. Chapter 6 paragraph 1.2 points out that "if a Standard Bearer is deemed unfit to carry a Standard by a Parade Marshal then he/she should be stood down from that position."

Dave Graham keeps raising the bar

In September Milford-on-Sea Standard Bearer David Graham once again won the Hampshire County Standard Bearer's competition at Bishops Waltham. Now he is preparing to contest the Regional Final in Bridgwater on February 28. He was there last year and knows how tough it can be but, for the uninitiated, County Parade Marshal Steve Forward explains what is involved.

"Taking part in the County Standard Bearer's competition can be quite daunting, but taking part in the Regional Competition can be Very Daunting!

In the County competition, the competitor knows everyone but with the Regional he is against competitors he only knows by reputation. This is when the stress level starts to rise.

After the inspection, the drill part of the competition starts and a bead of sweat runs down the back of your neck. At this point the brain has to switch to auto because there is no time to think, if you think about what you have to do then mistakes will be made.

There is only you and the Parade Marshal who calls out the commands, the judges float around and you try not to look at them.

Suddenly you hear applause, the Parade Marshal falls you out, it's all over!!

LEST WE FORGET

Our sincere condolences go to the family and friends of these members:

Mr J A P Brodie - Brockenhurst
Mr J Burgin - Lymington
Mr D Bull - Curdrige
Mr A Cuff - Alton Branch Vice Chairman
Mr W J Filer - Headley & District
Mr R H Gregory - Ringwood & District
Captain John Impey - Itchen Valley
Mr S Ingram - Botley
Mr V Lunn - Houghton & District
Mr K Martin - Fawley & District
Mr D R J Miller - Bishops Waltham
Mr D Peckham - Romsey
Mr F Spriggs - Petersfield
Mr B C Wells - Headley & District
Mr J Wrixon - Lee on Solent

The name of Mr Peter Letcher of Damerham & Western Downland, who died November 15, 2014, was omitted from our December edition. For this, we send our sincere apologies to Mr Letcher's family, friends and colleagues.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

If you are organising an event, function or interesting activity or if you have a special person in your branch who deserves recognition please contact *Hampshire Link*. Simply send the information to the e-mail address below.

jshantsrbl@hotmail.com

ALL OTHER ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO 0808 8028080