

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



Armed Forces Day



Many thanks to Ish Thomson for sending in these two excellent photos from the recent Armed Forces Day parade. The top photo is of the eleven Standard Bearers and the bottom one of the five marchers from Yateley & Hawley Branch with Standard Bearer Pete Pullin.

Past events of the Month

5 August 1995. Croatian offensive inflicts major defeat on the Serbs.

12 August 1986 Iran - Iraq war. Iraqi air force destroys Sirri Island oil terminal in Iran. Conducted 120 air sorties against Kharg Island.

22 August 1979. Lord Mountbatten killed with three others when IRA bomb detonates onboard his boat at Mullahmore, Co. Sligo



Veterans are military service personnel who have completed their service. They remain soldiers, airmen and sailors. It is physically impossible to un-train or demilitarise them. They have all been prepared to sacrifice themselves for their country and their family. In turn, it is the responsibility of the country to return the favour. After all is said and done, the politicians send the forces to war, not the military themselves. The armed forces are the nation's insurance policy. If the payments lapse, the policy becomes null and void and the country and its people are extremely vulnerable to all threats.

PREMISE

1. Veterans remain trained service personnel. They are proud of their service and achievements.
2. Veterans will miss their service time and will have varying levels of difficulty in entering the civilian sector.
3. Some veterans will require varying levels of support to integrate.
4. Veterans have valuable skills that can be used in the civilian sector.
5. Veterans have both good and bad memories of their experiences. Some bad memories have a lasting effect on them. This has an adverse impact on families.
6. Almost all veterans have difficulty in asking for help if it is needed. They have been trained to endure hardship. They have a mind-set of "get on with it".
7. The overarching requirement is for military comradeship, an opportunity to share stories with like minded veterans and to maintain their sense of worth which was at its highest when they were still serving.
8. Veterans need a sense of purpose. This is not always easy for them to find, once they have left the forces.

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2 SURVIVAL

3 REMEMBRANCE

4 COMRADESHIP

5 SENSE OF PURPOSE

6

METHODOLOGY

1. Give them dignity and acknowledgement for their service.
2. Give them an opportunity to meet other veterans to remember and to share comradeship.
3. Give them the meaningful reassurance that they and their families will be looked after.
4. Give them a readily available support service.

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SOLUTIONS

1. Veterans organisations provide comradeship opportunities - a place to meet and talk.
2. Short term financial support to deal with "survival" emergencies.
3. Fund raising, providing assistance for others and helping out in the community gives a sense of purpose.
4. Remembrance gatherings. Not just once a year but at regular monthly meetings. Veterans are grateful for the shared experiences they have had that only other veterans will understand. This takes place at Remembrance parades, meetings and other places of gathering, even if for a cup of tea in a café or a meal in a pub. DW



I was reading through some old RBL notes and came across this suggested format for recruitment - the ABC of recruiting.

- A Advertise your branch in the local area.
- B Branch activities - what activities does your branch do?
- C Community / Communication / Contacts. Let people know your branch exists.
- D Display RBL posters.
- E Events / Ex Service personnel. Target those in your area.
- F Families. Try to get families involved.
- G. Get out and about. Gift Aid.
- H. Handouts. Hand out or distribute information on your branch where it will be seen.
- I. Information. Inform people of activities and invite them to join.
- J. Jump at any opportunity to recruit members and promote the Legion.
- K. Keenness, Be keen and enthusiastic about the Legion.
- L. Leaflet drops. Drop information about your branch through letter boxes.
- M. Membership. Let people know of the benefits of

belonging.

- N. Newsletter, Produce one to inform the community.
- O. Online joining. Other organisations - collaboration.
- P. Publicity. Publicise your branch and events.
- Q. Quiz teams. Get the branch to form a team and get involved on local quiz competitions.
- R. Recruiting advisor. Appoint a branch recruiting person.
- S. Shows. Attend local shows to promote the branch. Put up a recruiting stand.
- T. Training / Talks. Encourage members to attend County training sessions. Get members to give talks at meetings.
- U. Utilise the facilities and knowledge you have.
- V. Volunteers. Get branch members to volunteer.
- W. Window displays. Ask local shops / businesses for permission to place displays in windows or on advert boards.
- X. eXamine what you and your branch do to recruit new members.
- Y. Younger members. Actively recruit younger members (cadets, Cubs, Scouts etc)
- Z. Zealous recruiting efforts. Carry a card with branch details to hand out at appropriate opportunities.

Basingstoke Veterans Club.



Basingstoke Veterans Club meet every Monday morning at Carnival Hall community centre from about 10h00 onwards.

My brother and I (both veterans), attended the event and we were made to feel very welcome by the veterans who gather there on a regular basis. The proceedings are very informal and the opportunity is provided for like minded veterans to gather, have a cup of tea or coffee and share stories, reminiscing about the old days of service and more current events. On this occasion a



veteran who was badly injured celebrated his birthday. The proceedings are completely informal and those that attend can come and go as they please. The gatherings are well attended and generally over forty veterans from all the services and various units are present (sadly much more than the four or five members that attend the RBL meetings of Basingstoke branch). People contribute food and refreshments out of their own pockets and there are no costs involved. This is what true military comradeship is all about. DW



Aldershot Military Museum



Aldershot Military Museum is situated in the base. This small museum is worth a visit if you have some spare time! They are open Thursdays to Sundays from 10h00 to 16h00. Ph 01252 - 314598. <https://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/aldershot-military-museum>



The future of the Petersfield branch that saw the light of day on the 19th July 1921 has been in jeopardy for some time now. Unfortunately the chairman, Councillor Chris Paige, (a previous mayor of Petersfield), had to resign for personal reasons and work commitment. Another reason for his resignation was that it has become difficult to find active members to participate in the activities of the branch. The branch faced number of choices that included closure, becoming a County Supported Branch, or amalgamating with another branch. The last option was to form a new committee, if there were people volunteering to do so. These steps are not taken lightly but are an indication of the future of our organisation if we cannot get new members or get existing members to become more involved.



James Deane

For this reason the branch held a Special General Meeting to discuss their future on the 8th of July. At this meeting the future of the branch was discussed in depth and it was decided to form a new committee. As participation in the committee involves individuals giving up their time, there was an understandable reluctance to commit without understanding of the commitment. The three main roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer were described by the current incumbents, and the commitment involved was mentioned. As the previous chair had taken on outreach and events as well as the chair role, his commitment had been significantly greater than just the role alone. After discussion, it was clear that the Chair roles and the events and outreach could

be split out, considerably reducing the burden.

As no-one wanted the branch to fold, the next step was to find a new Chair. James Deane volunteered and was proposed by David Lloyd, and seconded by Steve Field. All voted for with one abstention. The existing Secretary and Treasurer agreed to carry on in their positions. Two other volunteers offered their support to the treasurer and secretary roles: the support is welcomed. This will be discussed formally at the next committee meeting. The Secretary and Chair both thanked those who volunteered. With new volunteers, options to increase participation and membership will be discussed by the committee. DL



Deliberations at the Special General Meeting



Sailor Malan was born on the 3rd October 1910 in Wellington, Cape Province, South Africa. He was given a short service commission in the RAF in 1935 and after qualifying as a pilot was posted as a Pilot Officer flying Gloster Gladiators. At the beginning of the war he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant and took part in the Battle of Britain. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for bravery on the 11th June 1940 when he shot down several enemy aircraft. He was appointed commander of 74 Squadron RAF on 8th August 1940 as a Squadron Leader and awarded a bar to the DFC on 13 August 1940 for further destruction of enemy aircraft in the air. On the 24th December he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for his leadership and further aerial combat successes. On 22 July 1941 he was awarded a bar to the DSO. He was promoted to Group Captain (equivalent to a Colonel in the army) in October 1942 and was posted as Station Commander to RAF Biggin Hill, one of the most prominent RAF bases in the south of England. By the end of the war Sailor Malan was the 3rd highest scoring ace in the RAF with 32 kills, sharing this position with Irishman Brendan Finucane DSO, DFC and two bars.

Sailor Malan returned to South Africa after the end of World War Two in 1946 and worked for Oppenheimer's Diamond Trading Company. In 1959 he returned to Britain to visit his old squadron (74 Squadron), which by this time was equipped with Hawker Hunter jet fighters. Sailor Malan passed away on the 17th September 1963, having suffered from Parkinson's Disease. (Photo source - IWM) DW



The Iran - Iraq War 1979 - 1980

The conflict in this region goes back centuries. Iran (Persia) was the main component of the Persian empire. Iraq was part of the Turkish empire. This conflict was partly caused by disputes in the mutual border between the two nations. In 1847 the second Treaty of Erzurum allocated a triangle of land between Shatt al Arab (near Basra), the port of Khorramshah and the island of Abadan which is known as Khuzestan. In 1937 another treaty determined that the border was along the eastern bank of the Shatt except off the island of Abadan and Khorramshah where the border was to run along the deep water channel in the middle of the river.

The quarrels concerning the border continued and in 1969 Iran discarded the treaty because the Khuzestan triangle (red triangle on adjacent map) was the main oil producing land in Iran. The Shah of Iran was deposed in 1979 because of his unpopular authoritarian efforts to modernise the country and this created further problems. The country was made an Islamic



republic when he left and was led by religious leader, Ayatollah Khomeini who returned from 14 years exile in Iraq. Khomeini was an Islamic fundamentalist who reacted against all things Western. The old Iranian government underwent a radical purge of old supporters of the Shah. The unstable situation in Iran allowed Iraq's Saddam Hussein to take advantage of the situation to try and gain control of the triangle and Iraq invaded Iran. (See red area on map for extent of the invasion).

Iraqi forces had mainly Soviet Block weaponry whereas the Iranians had a mix of USA, British and Soviet equipment. Iraq launched their attack over the border with Iran on 12th September 1980. This included a number of small deception type actions towards Mahabad in order to prevent Iranian forces deployed in Kurdish areas in the north from becoming involved in the conflict. Terrain played an important role in this conflict and the mountain ranges that form a natural obstacle stretching north - south along the border and inside Iran. In the south the Iraqis advanced rapidly over open desert and reached the towns of Dezful, Ahvaz and Khorramshah.

IRAN INVENTORY

874 x British Chieftain tanks.
800 x USA M48 and M60 tanks.
Mixed artillery.
600 x helicopters.
188 x F4 Phantom fighter aircraft.
166 x F5 Tiger fighter aircraft.
177 x F14 Tomcat fighter aircraft
A large well balanced navy.

IRAQ INVENTORY

2500 x T54 and T62 tanks.
50 x T72 tanks.
1000 x field guns (artillery)
332 x combat aircraft mainly Mig 21s and Mig 23s
An unknown quantity of maritime river patrol boats

The Iranian army counter attacked and struck targets along the Baghdad road on the border. They also conducted air strikes on targets inside Iraq including Baghdad. The Iraqis reinforced their first three divisions with another six and managed to reach the Karun River and the Abadan Island (the home of the world's largest oil refinery) in October. The two sides then settled in for the winter. The Iraqis underestimated the Iranians and were able to gain territory without achieving any great victories. The Iranian army withdrew intact into the eastern mountains conducting guerrilla warfare. Both sides found themselves in a situation of long range artillery bombardments. The Iranians did not go onto a counter offensive and did not use their air force effectively due to an inability to control their own anti air weapons. Eventually hostilities subsided due to the general incompetence of both sides and an unsteady peace returned to the area. The main cause of the war was the requirement to control oil supplies and the wealth derived from it. DW



Gerard Ross 'Toys' Norton VC MM was born at Herschel, Eastern Cape, South Africa on 7 September 1915 and died in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) at Harare (Salisbury) on 29 October 2004. He was educated at Selborne College, East London

(where he acquired his nickname) and was a keen sportsman excelling at cricket, rugby and tennis. On completion of his schooling he joined Barclays Bank working at Umtata, Johannesburg and East London. Norton did his initial military service with the Middelands Regiment and when the Second World War broke out he was transferred to the Kaffrarian Rifles in East London. In 1943, he transferred in to the 1/4th Battalion, Hampshire Regiment.

He saw action in the Western Desert with the 1st South African Infantry Division, when the 8th Army withdrew from the Gazala Line in June 1942. His unit, the Kaffrarian Rifles was part of the rearguard of the 1st South African Division and was cut off on the desert coast road east of Tobruk. Norton had enlisted as a

private soldier in 1940 and had been promoted through the ranks to sergeant. He and five fellow South African soldiers were reported missing, believed taken prisoner. All six soldiers had avoided capture by escaping and travelling through the desert in a lorry. They travelled south-eastwards for approximately 100 miles until the vehicle ran out of fuel. Norton then led his men on a 470 mile trek that took 38 days to complete, travelling through the newly formed German front area. They used water and supplies that had been abandoned until they reached the newly formed 8th Army defence line on the Egyptian frontier. Norton was awarded the Military Medal for his leadership and determination

in bringing his men to safety.

Thereafter Norton participated in the Italian campaign while serving as an officer attached to the Hampshire Regiment when he was awarded the Victoria Cross. See citation. He was later promoted to Captain. After the end of the war

Norton moved to Rhodesia, where he ran a large tobacco plantation and became a Rhodesian citizen.

Citation for the Victoria Cross. London Gazette, 26 October 1944], Monte Gridolfo, Italy, 31 August 1944, Lieutenant Gerard Ross Norton MM, Kaffrarian Rifles, att'd 1st/4th Bn, Royal Hampshire Regiment.

In Italy, on the 31st August 1944, Lieutenant Norton was commanding a platoon during the attack on the Monte Gridolfo feature, one of the strong points of the Gothic Line defences, and one which contained well sited concrete gun emplacements. The leading platoon of his Company was pinned down by heavy enemy fire from a valley on the right flank of the advance. On his own initiative and with complete disregard for his personal safety, Lieutenant

Norton at once engaged a series of emplacements in this valley. Single-handed, he attacked the first machine gun position with a grenade, killing the crew of three. Still alone, he then worked his way forward to a second position containing two machine guns and fifteen riflemen. After a fight lasting ten minutes he wiped out both machine gun nests with his Tommy gun, and killed or took prisoner the remainder of the enemy.

Throughout these attacks Lieutenant Norton came under direct fire from an enemy self-propelled gun and, whilst still under heavy fire from this gun, he went on to clear the cellar and upper rooms of a house, taking several more prisoners, and putting many of the enemy to flight. Although by this time wounded and weak from loss of blood, he continued calmly and resolutely to lead his platoon up the valley to capture the remaining enemy positions. Throughout the attack Lieutenant Norton displayed matchless courage, outstanding initiative and inspiring leadership. By his supreme gallantry, fearless example and determined aggression, he assured the successful breach of the Gothic Line at this point.

Gerard Norton was invested with his Victoria Cross by King George VI at Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh, on the 1st December 1944. DW



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

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

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**

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Errors and Omissions Excepted

