

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

Feedback on the Annual Meeting of the County Conference held on 18th January 2025

The annual meeting of the Hampshire County Conference was successfully concluded on the 18th January. Various branch standards accompanied the County standard on parade at the opening of the conference. This was the last County Conference to be chaired by Tim Russell before he stands down having faithfully served the RBL as the County Chairman.

A letter of good wishes was from King Charles III to the RBL was read out and then the guests were introduced. These included the Mayor of Winchester, the Nation President of the RBL Vice Admiral (Rtd) Paul Bennett CB OBE, the Deputy National Chair Mrs Laura Hayworth, the Hampshire County Patron, Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL, the County President, Col Andrew King and others.

The County President addressed the meeting and thanked those present for attending and specially mentioned the Standard Bearers and fund raisers for all the work that they do. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true reflection of that meeting.

County Chairman, Tim Russell addressed the meeting and then made an appeal to all branches to channel their excess funds to the County Welfare Fund as there is a growing number of veterans and beneficiaries requiring support. In this way direct assistance can be given. Membership of the RBL enjoyed some discussion. Membership of the RBL is waning and it is affecting many branches to the extent that branches are struggling to fill committee posts and therefore are no longer compliant. It was explained that the "County Supported Branch" system allows branches that are struggling with membership and filling appointments of branch officers to consider approaching County so as to allow the branch some time to revitalise their membership and committee by having more time to try and get volunteers to join and serve on the branch committees. Such branches continue with their activities but all funding is handed over to county for administration on their behalf.

The County Standard Bearers report was presented and

covered various ceremonial events including the 80th Anniversary of D Day.

A motion was put forward to assist all World war two veterans to attend the Festival of Remembrance with their carers. This was accepted.

The County awards were then presented. The guest speaker at the conference was Lt Col Jim Davidson, the commander of the army Cadet Force in Hampshire. He explained the governance of cadets forces and their structure in Hampshire. He explained what the different cadet units did as far as military activities and training is concerned and explained that while the cadet forces also have experienced budget cuts they remain value for money as the training programs produce young people with skills in leadership, initiative communication skills and more and when they integrate into society and its work force they continue to make a contribution to society. Various cadet units have been supporting the RBL at ceremonies and with fund raising for the Poppy Appeal.



The guests from RBL HQ also addressed the meeting and discussed membership issues. They reported that computer issues were being addressed as this was a problem with records. DW

2nd February 1943 - End of the Battle of Stalingrad. The battle cost the lives of approximately 2 million people.

County Conference Certificate Recipients



County Chairman Tim Russell

Tim Russell has served as the County Chairman since 2017. He has provided leadership and guidance for all the RBL branches in the County and has done so steadfastly from the beginning. Despite often not having a full country committee, Tim has never faltered in motivating our branches to try and keep compliant and to continue with the important work that the RBL does at branch level.

Tim attended the presentation of a Legion D'Honneur to one of our veterans in 2017 in his role as County Chairman. He also attended the GP90 (Great Pilgrimage to France and Flanders) for Old Basing branch in 2018, demonstrating his loyalty to the remembrance of the Fallen. He was part of the main parade at Ypres. This is something that Tim takes seriously and continues to do.



Receiving the
Poppy Appeal Award

While holding down the role of County Chairman Tim also serves as a very active member of the Poppy Appeal for Old Basing Branch. He received the County Poppy Appeal award in 2023 for his dedication and support to the fundraising of the branch.

In 2024 Tim attended the French Freedom Flame ceremony as well as the RBL 100th anniversary in Westminster Abbey 2021. Tim has always been actively involved in the RBL National Annual Conferences and attended the ones held in Belfast, Bournemouth, London, Torquay, Newport. He has always represented Hampshire's best interests and has engaged discussions at national RBL events to try and motivate the decision making process to make the RBL a better organisation.

As Chairman Tim has attended countless services, ceremonies and funerals. In 2018 Tim opened the Hampshire Festival of Remembrance 2018 with Matt Le Tissier hosting. Tim is a QPR fan and they enjoyed a bit of banter. In May 2019 Tim was invited to attend the Queen's Garden Party in his role as County Chairman. Tim also helped arrange



Attending GP90

funding for a

Hampshire beneficiary to get new kit to attend the Invictus Games competing in Archery last year. Tim remains active within the RBL and we wish him the very best. DW



L to R - Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL, Tim Russell and Col Andrew King



Memories

Recruiting

Message from our County Recruiting Officer. 2025, a new year, and new start. For those of you who don't know who I am, I am the former County Chairman, now elected to County committee as your County Recruitment and Retention Officer. My new role is to identify and encourage Legion members to take up the role of Recruitment Advisor in your Branch. Just think for a moment about the positive effect new and active members would have on your Branch.

Organising events become easier, so does succession planning for Branch officers and more members mean greater engagement with Youth Groups and other local organisations in your area. In short, the future of your Branch in your community will be secured. I am keen to talk to any member interested in learning more about becoming a Recruitment Advisor and can be contacted on: Hampshire.CRO@RBL.community

Look forward to hearing from you.
Tim Russell. Hampshire County Recruitment and Retention Officer



Petersfield Poppy Project



The Petersfield Poppy Project has been launched to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2, and to remember the Fallen in all wars. The people of Petersfield are making a waterfall of poppies to cover the porch at St Peter's Church, Petersfield. This is intended to act as a backdrop for the Remembrance service held in the Square in November 2025. Those involved are hoping the project will be an all-inclusive, Petersfield wide, community project and is open to include schools, Brownies, Scouts, Guides, Churches, W.I. Bellringers, Lions and all knitters and crochet makers of the area. Approximately 6000 knitted/crochet poppies are required.



The poppies are going to be attached to netting in order to produce the effect of a waterfall, covering the whole of the church porch. It will also be a backdrop to The Remembrance service in Petersfield Square on Remembrance Sunday 2025. It is not a small project and an appeal is extended to encourage the support of the whole community. Help is needed to make the poppies, but also to support the project with finance and offers of materials.

For this reason an appeal is put out for anybody who wishes to be part of this community project. If you would like to participate please contact The Parish Office, on phone number 01730 260213 or email office@stpetersfield.org.uk. DL

Treasury Matters

A letter from our Hampshire County Treasurer. It was nice to see so many Branches represented at our County Conference. Delegate and Visitor numbers both up on last year. The Buffet was excellent, the Raffle made £294.00; Thank you to the three Ladies on the Raffle Table. Diaries sales and other donations produced a further £78.20. For the benefit of those that couldn't make it, I just want to repeat what I said in my accounts report; pretty much what I said last year, but bears repeating, so that we can all improve our support for the Legion in the various ways. We are a bit lacking in some areas.

Only 8 branches of our 57 in Hampshire contributed to the County welfare fund. Several others donated direct to the Poppy Appeal, but many didn't contribute anything at all.

The 2024 accounts show that some Branches are still keeping money they don't need. Branches are asked to keep only what they require to operate. Committees should complete a forward budget plan covering 12 to 18 months future needs, and any surplus funds sent off to the County Welfare fund, or Poppy appeal. The CWF is preferred, as it is firstly almonised towards the cost of grants to our Hampshire beneficiaries. Given that there are never enough funds to help all our beneficiaries, we need to ensure that every possible penny is used for Welfare. Treasurer's can send by cheque to me (call or email for address) or by BACS to - Royal British Legion Hampshire County Committee account 30.99.50 Account No - 29143063.

Of our 57 Branches, 49 submitted their accounts on time, albeit one or two left it to literally the last minute. Given that a Branch has 3 months to submit accounts, and that the finances would be up to date at any given time, it should not take 3 months to complete and send in the accounts. The last few days of September 2024 were frantic to say the least! Four Branches have not sent in any accounts at all.

So, for 2023/2024, compliance for our Hampshire Branches is 93% which is up 10% from last year; very good considering, but we need to be 100%. I feel a bit disappointed to be honest, that given all the constant effort that our MEO has put in, that we could not deliver a full house.

As we are all aware, any Branch that has not sent in their accounts by 30th September will be non compliant, and if not by the 31st December of the due year will be risking sanctions, or even closure. We are mostly Volunteers, and far too much time is spent continually chasing up a few Branches that have either ceased to function or don't bother to communicate.

We obviously wish to avoid this happening, so please, any Branch struggling or anticipating a problem, let County Committee know as soon as possible.

Ges Brown

Hampshire County Treasurer

hampshire.treasurer@rbl.community

The Things You Did Not Do

Remember the day I borrowed your new car and I dented it. I thought you would kill me. But you didn't.

And the time I took you to the beach and you said it would rain and it did. I thought you would say "I told you so". But you didn't.

And the time I flirted with all your friends to make you jealous. Well, you were and I thought you would leave me. But you didn't.

You remember the time I spilt blueberry pie all over your new car seat. I thought you would smack me. But you didn't.

And the time I forgot to tell you that the dance was formal and you showed up in jeans. I thought you would leave me forever. But you didn't.

Yes, there were lots of things you didn't do, but you put up with me and you loved me and protected me. There were so many things I wanted to make up to you when you got back from Vietnam. But you didn't.

UNKNOWN



Preston Candover Memorial



Remembering Tony Farnell from Meonstoke

Tony Farnell was just aged 20, and part way through his National Service with the Royal Engineers in 1957 when he, along with thousands of others, deployed to Christmas Island in the Pacific Ocean. Their job was to build runways, roads and other infrastructure in preparation for what they were told would be “a bomb to be tested in a few months' time.” But they were not to worry, the Army assured them: any radiation “would be as harmless as having an X-ray.”

The soldiers thought little about it until the atomic bomb was detonated. One of the men later recorded, “We were told to line up on the beach, wearing little more than shorts and sandals, with our backs to it, and our hands over our eyes. “There was then a big flash, and we were allowed to turn around and look at this mushroom cloud plume rising thousands of feet into the air. It was awesome.”

Tony and thousands of others were subsequently to develop cancers and heart defects, some serious enough not just to blight their lives but to be passed on to their unborn babies as well. Tony, seemingly unaffected at the time, thought he had been one of the lucky ones... until 50 years later while living at Pound Cottages in Meonstoke he developed on his face a disfiguring cancerous growth which grew to three inches in diameter. He was convinced it was a result of the bomb.

He died in 2019 aged 82 and was buried in St Andrew's churchyard Meonstoke. As Tony was a widower with no family, a small wooden cross was erected to mark his grave. Last year, however, it was pointed out that, under national churchyard regulations, a proper headstone was now required.

The then Chairman of the Droxford and District Branch, Royal British Legion, Captain Anthony McEwen RN, immediately stepped in to try to raise the necessary funds. He contacted the Legion's County Patron, Lieutenant General Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL, who by chance had also served in the Royal Engineers. Sir Mark in turn liaised with the Royal Engineers' Association who agreed immediately to provide the bulk of the funds, supported by the Meonstoke Parish Council, St Andrew's PCC and personal donations from local villagers.

Sir Mark told The Bridge Magazine, “The Royal Engineers Association has a long and proud history of supporting veterans who have served in the Corps, and it was only too pleased to help provide a fitting memorial headstone for one of its own, and with the Royal Engineers' cap badge engraved on it”.

On 4th January 2025, some 30 of Tony's friends and relatives along with RBL members and local representatives gathered around the new headstone as the Revd Canon Anthony Hulbert, Branch Chaplain RBL Droxford & District held a short service of blessing. He told them, “Tony had served his country well and was such a well-known figure in Meonstoke that it was felt unreasonable he should lie in an unmarked grave. We are so pleased, therefore, that the headstone is now erected.” Anthony McEwen added, “It was wonderful to see how the local community came together to support this unusual fundraising appeal. We now feel that Tony's service has been suitably recognised and recorded for posterity.”

By Ian Gilchrist, Editor of The Bridge Magazine, Droxford

Thanks go to Lt Cdr Rob Scott of Droxford branch for forwarding this article with permission of the original author.



Tony Farnell



Revd Canon Anthony Hulbert conducts the service around the new headstone. Its inscription reads: “In loving memory of Anthony Keith Farnell and his beloved wife Molly. He was a veteran Royal Engineer of Christmas Island who is sadly missed.”



The wooden cross which was discovered lying in the grass.

Origins of the use of the Poppy

The First World War commenced in 1914 and Europe experienced a cold winter over the period of 1914 – 15. The spring of 1915 (April and May) was warmer than usual and had a positive effect on the vegetation of France and Belgium. In the vicinity of Ypres the farmers began to plough their fields close to the front line. Poppies (species *papaver rhoeas*) began to grow on the edges of the ploughed fields.

The poppy is an annual plant and flowers during May to August. It propagates itself by seeds that are carried on the wind. When the soil is disturbed, such as when the farmers plough, the seeds are given the opportunity to germinate and grow. Equally the heavy artillery bombardments during the war disturbed the soil and ironically encouraged the poppies to grow. Poppies also grow on the Gallipoli Peninsula and seeds carried by the wind tend to spread far and wide. Poppies also grow in Great Britain and their prolific blooming during the summer months on the battlefields

The idea of using a poppy as a flower of remembrance was

started by an American woman, Miss Moina Michael. She was a member of the YMCA, an organisation that provided facilities for soldiers on the Western Front who were resting behind the lines during the war.

On the 9th November 1918, two days before the Armistice was declared Moina was on duty at the YMCA Overseas War Secretaries' headquarters in New York. She was working in the "Gemot" reading room in Hamilton Hall where U.S. servicemen who met to say their farewell to family and friends before deploying on overseas service. While there a soldier gave her a copy of the November edition of the "Ladies Home Journal" on the desk, in which she read Major John McCrae's poem "In Flanders Field".

It made an impact and she then began making poppies to wear as a form of remembrance and to raise funds for those who had been wounded. The tradition of wearing a poppy was spread to all the countries of the Empire and while the tradition is not too common in the USA it is very popular here in the UK. DW

Animals lost in war

It is estimated that 484,143 British horses, mules, camels and bullocks died between 1914 and 1918 and many hundreds of dogs, carrier pigeons and other animals also died on various fronts. Of the 2.5 million injured animals admitted to the Army Veterinary Corps during the First World War, over 85 per cent were treated and returned to duty. Between August 1914 and December 1917 more than 1,850,000 horses and mules were treated in veterinary hospitals and 80 per cent treated were returned fit for duty. This was critical as most of the British Army used horse, especially along the Western Front.

It was horses that were used by Cavalry regiments, to pull the guns, to bring up supplies and to pull the ambulances for injured soldiers. It was not just the horses which were vital to the army, but many other animals like messenger pigeons and dogs.

Source RSPCA



Mule drawn ambulances somewhere in the Middle East during World War One. Photo courtesy of the Imperial War Museum.

Petersfield Branch Recruiting

Petersfield branch of the RBL are in urgent need of volunteers for the position of Secretary and Treasurer. If you are willing to assist a worthy cause supporting our armed forces community in the Petersfield area please make contact with the Chairman.

Basingstoke, Overton and District Branch Recruiting

Basingstoke, Overton and District Branch are recruiting for a Secretary and Standard Bearer. Volunteers are urgently required. If you are willing to assist a worthy cause supporting our armed forces community in the Basingstoke area, please make contact with the Chairman.

Saudi Arabia Medal for the liberation of Kuwait



This medal was awarded by the Saudi Arabian government to all Allied forces that took part in the campaign for the liberation of Kuwait.

Only a few of the 45000 British service personnel have been given permission to wear it.

County Contact Details

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/hantscountyrbl/ Facebook Email - Hampshire.web@rbl.community

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

Contact us

It's your newsletter!!!

If anyone has any articles that they would like published in the Newsletter then please contact the editor (Colonel (Retd) Dudley Wall MSM MMM) with any information or articles by the 20th of the month at:

HampshireLinkDW@yahoo.com

ALL LEGION ENQUIRIES

(including Welfare requests) should be directed to the national call centre

0808 802 8080

County Personnel

Patron Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL

County President Col Andrew King

County Vice President Brian C.N. Soffe

County Vice President Robert G. Knight

Chairman Tim Russell Hampshire.Chairman@rbl.community

Vice-Chairman Robert Bartlett Hampshire.vicechairman@rbl.community

Treasurer Ges Brown hampshire.treasurer@rbl.community

County Recruitment and Retention Officer Tim Russell Hampshire.CRO@RBL.community

Independent Examiners - G.S. Brown and M. Davis

Committee members - Secretary Melvyn Cole, John Davies, Paul Holyoake, Brian Mansi, Avril Mitchell, Vic Thorn, David Barton

County Management Board: Tim Russell, Robert Bartlett, Ges Brown, Melvyn Cole, John Davies

Conference Committee: Chairman Brian Mansi, Secretary Avril Mitchell, Pat Prior BEM QVRM, Melvyn Cole, Nigel Thomas,

Rev John Morley

Cups Sub-Committee: Avril Mitchell, Pat Prior BEM QVRM. Brian Mansi

Annual Conference Delegate: Tim Russell

Poppy Appeal Manager North: Sarah Ferris

Poppy Appeal Manager South: Claire Smith

Regional Poppy Appeal Manager: Clare Peppiatt

Poppy Appeal Coordinator - North: Vacant

Poppy Appeal Coordinator - South: Pat Prior BEM QVRM

Principal Recruiting Officer: VACANT

County Training Officer: John Davies hampshire.cto@rbl.community

Community Support: VACANT

CCSC: VACANT

Clubs Liaison: Paul Holyoake

Communications Support: Dudley Wall HampshireLinkDW@yahoo.com

County Webmaster: Avril Mitchell Hampshire.Web@rbl.community

Youth Officer: Steve Slack Hampshire.CYO@rbl.community

Events Support: VACANT

Parade Marshall: David Graham, Deputy Parade Marshall: Andy Cassidy

County Standard Bearer: Pete Pullin, ppullin@britishlegion.org.uk

Deputy County Standard Bearer: Dudley Howard up to County Conference and then Andy Dawes

County Youth Standard Bearer: Natalia Szymkiewicz

Ceremonial Support: David Graham, Karen Graham

County Padre: Reverend David Roache

Golf Officer: Rick Bourne

Membership Engagement Officer: Holly Church, Membership Engagement Manager: Martin Pelling

Membership Council Representative: Gerry Nunn

Public Relations Officer: VACANT

Independent Examiners: Ges Brown, Mike Davis

UK Honours Awards: County President, County M.E.O.

[Errors and Omissions Excepted](#)