



KENT COUNTY NEWS

TRBL South East Area Office (Kent)
Royal British Legion Village
Aylesford, Kent ME20 7NL

Membership Support Officer

Mobile - 07554 553263
e-mail - twest@britishlegion.org.uk

Welfare & Fundraising

via Contact Centre - 0808 802 8080



Registered Charity 219279

County website: www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/kent

November 2017

BRANCH SECRETARIES: PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ITEMS IN THIS MONTHLY CIRCULAR SHOULD FORM PART OF THE REPORT TO YOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE

COUNTY CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

As I write these remarks, you will all be very busy with the Poppy Appeal for 2017-18. On 25th October we gave our Annual Talk (formerly the Civic Launch) to the Councillors, Mayors and Military Representatives in Kent at County Hall. The event went well with, in addition to the background talk on the charity, Ambassadors telling of the support we have given them and a poem written and given by 10-year-old Frank Chadwick who was very good.

The 2017 Poppy Launch this year is a number of displays of Knitted Poppies supported by the Kent Gateways. These have been across the County and those of you who have Facebook will have seen the photos. I attended Sheppey Gateway where they were in the process of making the display to be formally opened on 10th November by the Mayor of Swale. Then on to Ashford Gateway where their display was in situ. So much hard work and time has been given by the public in producing these Knitted Poppies and those I spoke to considered they were giving something back to all those who had lost their lives in the two world wars and conflict since. It was great to see the support that the members of the public have given.

On the social media side we now have under County control four main Facebook sites. They are:

Royal British Legion Kent County <https://www.facebook.com/KentRBL>

This is the Promotional page and is able to be read by all.

RBL Kent County <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1010182079046030/>

This is the members only page and can only be seen and items submitted by those who have asked to join and been approved before publication.

Both the above Pages are operated by myself and the County Webmaster. If you have any stories for these please send them to kentrblwebmaster@btinternet.com.

Kent RBL Youth <https://www.facebook.com/Kent-RBL-Youth-254452364606284/>

Run by Susan Foster, our County Youth Officer, who is always looking news on our work with young people.

Kent RBL Poppy <https://www.facebook.com/britishlegionkent/>

Run by Julie Ness and Jane Ayres our Community Fundraisers.

In addition to these we have the County Web Page www.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/kent.

If you haven't been into any of these media pages or sites please do so. Currently they are all running adding daily stories and photos on this year's Poppy Appeal in Kent. Our webmaster on the County Web has also set up a separate section on stories being given to us by the public. From your day to day encounters, the biggest contributor so far is Susan Foster who has had some great stories.

If you want your photos and stories added please send the copy and photos to kentrblwebmaster@btinternet.com.

Richard Cast
County Chairman

DONATIONS TO COUNTY FUNDS

The following donations have been gratefully received:

£536.21	The Vintage Booth, Rotherham
£20.00	In memory of Mr Clifford Halliday
£1184.73	Rochester & Strood Branch

BRANCH ACCOUNTS - END OF YEAR

Please ensure this information is passed to the Branch Treasurer

Treasurers are reminded that Branch Accounts were to be closed at 30th June and that a copy of the accounts together with supporting Bank Statements plus a letter of 'Authority to Disclose Information' **for each account** were to be submitted to the County Office by 30th September at the very latest.

I have to report that, to date, 61 sets of branch accounts have been received at County Office. The remaining six accounts, listed below are now overdue.

Cranbrook	Hythe	Lamberhurst
Herne Bay	Kemsing	Minster

If any branch is having problems with their accounts please contact the MSO soonest.

Branch Officers should be ensuring that as much help as possible is given to the Treasurer to ensure that they can successfully close down the books and produce the Branch Accounts.

BRANCH AGMs / COMPLIANCE

The Legion year ends on 30th September and your Branch AGM's are to be held between 1st October and 30th November. Branches are reminded that to be compliant there must be four separate members holding the main officer roles of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. There also needs to be a minimum of three additional committee members and there must be a named Branch Community Representative (formally Welfare Officer) who can be one of the committee members.

Branches should ideally have a succession plan so that each role is covered by a non-official deputy who can step in should the need arise. Now is the time to plan so that everything is in place for the AGM.

BRANCH MS1s

Please be aware that Form MS1 has changed this year. Due to Data Protection laws, all officers and committee members will be required to initial the signature page to indicate that they agree to allow their personal details (name, address and phone number) to appear in the County Handbook. Therefore previous versions, including the version in the Membership Handbook, are not to be used.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORMS

Please ensure this information is passed to the Branch Membership Secretary

This is a reminder that Form MS4/RMFAPP002/0515 is the only version of the form that can be used and is available to order from the Poppy Appeal, not County Office. Please submit your orders to PoppyMembership@britishlegion.org.uk or by phoning 01622 795801 or 01622 717172. Because of the larger than A4 size the form must not be photocopied.

STANDARD BEARER COMPETITION

The Standard Bearer competition took place on 8th October at Ditton Drill Hall. There were five competitors and the final placings were:

1st	Paul Austen	Chartham Branch
2nd	Julian de Zille	Downs Branch
3rd	Mervyn McAllister	Dover White Cliffs Branch
4th	Linda Fletcher	Rochester & Strood Branch
5th	Barry Rampton	Staple Branch

Paul Austen will therefore take over the role of County Standard Bearer after County Conference. Well done to all and thank you to everyone involved in making it a successful day.



Ann Austen
County Ceremonial Coordinator

COUNTY PARADE 2018

The County Committee has agreed that the proposed date for next year's parade will be 10th June 2018. Branches interested in hosting the parade should contact the MSO by 6th December.

ANNUAL COUNTY CONFERENCE 2018

Next year's County Conference will take place at Headcorn Village Hall on Saturday 20th January commencing at 1 pm. Branch Secretaries now have the papers branches will need. All paperwork concerning Conference is printed on green paper to make it immediately identifiable. If you wish to send a delegate to County Conference or to Annual Conference in May **your audited Branch Accounts must have been received at County Office by 30th September and your MS1 must be received by 31st December.** Remember, if your Branch Delegate does not attend your voice cannot be heard. This is your chance to put your points of view over for discussion. **Delegate applications must be received at County Office by no later than Tuesday 5th December.**

The guest speaker will be Mr Terry Whittles, the Legion's National Chairman. There will be time for a question and answer session and it is hoped that all branches will make an extra effort to attend so that they can put their questions to him. Any questions should be submitted to the MSO in advance, by no later than 5th December please, to give him time to obtain answers – he doesn't know everything.

COUNTY AWARDS

We are fast approaching the time of the County Conference and I ask that if you were presented with a Trophy at this year's Conference in January could you please return it to County by the middle of November so we can get them checked out for any repairs and get them cleaned and engraved. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

STANDARD BEARER TRAINING

There is to be Standard Bearer training on 26th November from 10am to 1pm in the Capel Morris Community Hall, RBL Village, Aylesford ME20 7QY. Please bring full uniform as well as Standard, sling and gauntlets. Further training sessions will be held throughout the County in 2018.

If you are going to GP90, it is important that you, the Standard Bearer, attend training. This is not a County directive but a National one and it is to check that you are confident in handling the Standard and are proficient in the drill required. If you do not attend, then you will not be able to carry at GP90 (the County Parade Marshal has the final word).

As you are aware it is AGM time and all Standard Bearers must sign form MS1B. This extends to anyone who may carry the Standard during the year.

If you have any queries contact me by email annjaneausten@yahoo.co.uk or 01227 731385.

Ann Austen
County Ceremonial Coordinator

NAVAL ACTION CENTENARY COMMEMORATION

On Tuesday 17th October a small service was held at the Chatham Naval Memorial to commemorate the sinking of Destroyers HMS Mary Rose and HMS Strongbow on 17th October 1917 in an action off Lerwick while escorting a convoy of 12 merchant ships from Norway. This was a memorable occasion and those present were grateful to Geoff Lees (Swanley, Crockenhill & Hextable) and John Clayton (Gillingham) for leading the parade and it was felt their presence added a solemnity to the proceedings. The padre leading the service commented "I, who have led many such services at war memorials over 40 years, found this particularly moving as I know did the other family members present".



FOLKESTONE YOUTH FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

This year's Festival will take place on Saturday 11th November at the Leas Cliff Hall commencing at 6 pm. Doors are open from 5.30 pm. The Festival features the Shorncliffe Military Wives Choir; the Blue Falcons Gymnastics Team; Sea, Army and Air Cadet Displays; local primary and secondary school choirs; and big band and dance displays. As usual the Festival is in aid of the Poppy Appeal. Tickets cost just £8.50 and are available from the box office on 01303 228600 or 0844 871 3015.

FAVERSHAM BRANCH

On Tuesday 5th September members from Faversham and Canterbury Branches plus representatives of RAFA South East Kent and RAFA Headcorn, all with their Standards, set off for the three-day pilgrimage to Ypres. Everyone was looking forward to what looked to be a very interesting itinerary arranged by Faversham's Tom van Soest and Alma Huntley.

Having attended a very moving service at the Menin Gate where the four Standards were paraded, John Quested, Chairman of Faversham Branch, was asked by BBC Radio Stoke if the Standards could attend a Rededication Service the next day at Zantvoorde British Cemetery in Ypres for a Serjeant James Joseph McLynn of the 4th Battalion North Stafford Regiment. He had lain as an Unknown Soldier for nearly 100

years and his details and family had been traced. John had no hesitation and said yes and the itinerary was changed.

The next morning, instead of visiting Berks Cemetery and Prowse Point Cemetery, we visited Essex Farm Cemetery – The Canadian Casualty Station where Lt Col John McCrae wrote “In Flanders Field”. Tyne Cot Cemetery was next. The Service and wreath laying was very moving. Lynda Jenner from Canterbury read a poem called “Hello God” which had been found on the body of a dead soldier. The Standard Bearers had a bit of a challenge with the wind.

In the afternoon the party moved over to the Zantvoorde British Cemetery for the Rededication Service and the Standards were joined by the Ypres Branch Standard and two others. This was a very moving Service and an honour for all to have been invited. As was said at the time “An added bonus” to the pilgrimage.

On our final day we visited Brandhoek New Military Cemetery and held a short service. This is where Captain Noel Chavess RAMC, VC & Bar DSO is buried just by the Cross of Sacrifice. Late in the day before returning to England we visited the Lissenthoek Cemetery for a another service. Lissenthoek was a Casualty Clearing Station and the Cemetery holds 11,966 headstones, one of which has the grave of Staff Nurse Nellie Spindler, the only lady war casualty buried in Belgium. Big thanks are to be given to Darren Quested for stepping in at the last minute with his very moving sounds of the Last Post and Reveille on his amplifier, as Roger Ely, Faversham’s Bugler, was taken ill just before the pilgrimage. All those that took part thoroughly enjoyed the trip.



ISLE OF SHEPPEY BRANCH

The photographs were taken at the opening of the Garden of Remembrance at the Holy Trinity Church, Sheerness on Saturday 28th October in the presence of the Deputy Mayor of Swale, Cllr Koffie-Williams and Mrs Koffie-Williams. We were extremely pleased that Chelsea Pensioner Alan Brunger was able to travel down from London for the occasion.



BIRCHINGTON BRANCH

The Branch held a Boot Fayre last Saturday and raised £462.91 for the Poppy Appeal. The next one will be held on Saturday 25th November at Church House, Kent Gardens, Birchington. Please see the poster at the end.

LITTLEBOURNE & DISTRICT BRANCH

On Sunday 10th September the Branch raised £264 with a guest appearance by Elvis Presley (alias the landlord Kevin Costello) at the Hay Wain Pub & Restaurant, at Bramling, near Wingham. It was a wonderful performance and we are grateful to Kevin and his backing group and singers for putting this on in aid of the Poppy Appeal.

Kevin and his customers (most of them Legion members) are very supportive of the Branch and Kevin and another member, Paul Howson, recently also raised £500 for the Poppy Appeal with a sponsored run.



Kevin as 'The King'



Kevin and Paul presenting their sponsored run cheque

SANDWICH BRANCH

The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Sandwich Paul Graeme JP (a branch member) and his wife Sue meet the troops.

Sandwich has several large town events throughout the year, the busiest and most colourful being the August bank holiday weekend. One of the events that takes place on the Guildhall forecourt on the Sunday is Community Showcase Day. This involves community groups such as the Royal British Legion setting out a stall and telling people of our aims and what we offer. As there was a modest sized 'arena' the idea was to have a couple of Standard Bearers doing drill to draw attention to our stand. Barry Rampton (Standard Bearer Staple Branch) volunteered his support and with a few last



minute emails we managed to get David Harris (County Deputy Parade Marshal) on board. With all permissions in place, and a rehearsal on the Guildhall car park done, it was into the 'arena'; the forecourt went quiet as people turned to watch the two Standard Bearers carry out a near perfect 21 point routine which lasted 15 minutes which was followed by applause from the crowd?

Afterwards The Sandwich Mayor's Marshal of Parades led the Legion Standard Bearers to take part in the Battle of Sandwich Procession.

Visit the Sandwich Branch Facebook site to watch a short film of the activities. Our thanks go to those who took part and those who granted permission. As a result of the day there has been a surge in membership enquiries.

ROYAL TONBRIDGE WELLS BRANCH - MEMBER FOCUS

Alf Hunt was born in Tunbridge Wells and therefore served with his local Infantry Regiment, the Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment in the 6th Battalion. He was sent to North Africa landing in Algiers on the 8th November 1942.

The Battalion fought its way through to Tunis, arriving on the 20th May 1943 with 'several "tight situations on this advance", according to Alf. "Many good chaps went down and on one occasion every soldier including the cooks were pressed into the front line at Longstop Hill, overlooking the River Medjerda."

The 6th Battalion was then sent to Sicily on the 26th of July. "Tough fighting", Alf recalls. He was then a signaller radio operator for his OC, a Major. He was only a few yards away from the OC, when a hand grenade took the back off the head of the Major.

From Sicily, the Battalion went to Italy landing at Termoli on the Adriatic Coast on the 24th of September. They were tasked to move up the east of the country to Arieli. On the 18th of October on the outskirts of Montecilfone as a member of B Company, Alf was with two other signallers in a slit trench. The Germans were only 30 yards away. Grenades were rolled down the hill at the three of them but they hung on.

They had a telephone line to their CO. A message came over the phone for the Company Commander, who was down the hill about 150 yards away. Alf sprang out of the slit trench and ran down the hill in full view of the enemy to the Officer. "You are ordered to advance immediately" he told the Officer. There was some reluctance to obey the order but Alf shouted come on and led the way back up the hill with the others following him. The Germans retreated. For this heroic deed, Alf was awarded the Military Medal.

He, along with the 6th Battalion, battled up through Italy including Cassino, during 1944 and into 1945. A brief R&R was then taken in Egypt. When the war ended the Battalion was sent to southern Austria, a town called Griefenburg, to prevent Marshall Tito invading from Yugoslavia. The locals were fearful the Russians were on their way! He was only allowed home in the autumn of 1945 to get married and then went back on duty until mid 1946, to be demobbed when the threat to Austria from the Red Army Communist Forces had diminished.

KEMSING BRANCH



A memorial has been unveiled to a young fighter pilot who was killed when his plane crashed near the railway line at Kemsing, near Sevenoaks. Flight Sergeant Jack Hammerton's life was cut tragically short when his Hawker Hurricane came down on 6th November 1940.

Around 150 people attended the unveiling service including members of RAFA, Air Cadets and members of the Kemsing Branch. A Hurricane based at Biggin Hill made a spectacular flypast in tribute.

Regards to you all

Tony West

Membership Support Officer



LEST WE FORGET

Notification has been received that the following members have passed on:

Mr James Powell	Ashford
Mr Cyril Baker	Downs
Mr Ronald Hannah	Gillingham
Mrs Hilda Green	Isle of Sheppey
Mrs Margaret Andrews	Royal British Legion Village
Mrs Linda Gass	"
Mr Kenneth Piper	"
Mr Kenneth Wooldridge	Swanley, Crockenhill & Hextable



Our deepest sympathies go to their families and friends



KENT COUNTY DIARY OF EVENTS - 2017

NOVEMBER

Fri	3rd	Thanet Festival of Remembrance - Winter Gardens, Margate
Fri	10th	Dover Festival of Remembrance
Sat	11th	Armistice Day
Sat	11th	Festival of Remembrance - Royal Albert Hall
Sun	12th	Remembrance Sunday

DECEMBER

Sat	16th	Carol Service - Capel Morris Centre (2.30 pm)
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JANUARY 2018

Sat	20th	County Conference - Headcorn Village Hall (1 pm)
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Royal British Legion

WINTER FAYRE

Raising funds for the Poppy Appeal

Saturday 25th November 2017

at

**Church House, Kent Gardens
Birchington**

9:00 am - 12:00 noon

**Various Stalls, raffle, tombola, seasonal gifts
and a friendly welcome!**

Seasonal refreshments available

Entry by donation please
Everybody welcome



Enquiries: Brian White
01843 843334

Legion Contact Centre 0808 802 8080
Registered Charity Number: 219279