

We will remember them

To all whom we have lost this month. Our sincere condolences to family and friends. We especially remember Albert Westgate, a D Day Veteran, aged 100 of the Lovedean and Horndean RBL Branch".

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



Yuletide



21 ARMY



GROUP

PERSONAL CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE C-IN-C

(To be read out to all troops)

1. The forces of the British Empire in western Europe spend Christmas 1944 in the field. But what a change has come over the scene since last Christmas.

The supreme Battle of Normandy carried with it the liberation of France and Belgium.

Last Christmas we were in England, expectant and full of hope; this Christmas we are fighting in Germany.

The conquest of Germany remains.

2. It would have needed a brave man to say on D day, 6 June, that in three months we would be in Brussels and Antwerp; having liberated nearly the whole of France and Belgium; and in six months we would be fighting in Germany: having driven the enemy back across his own frontiers.

But this is what has happened.

And we must not fail to give the praise and honour where it is due:

"This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

3. At Christmas time, whether in our homes or fighting in the field, we like to sing the carols we learnt as children; and in truth, this is indeed a link between us and our families and friends in the home country: since they are singing the same verses. The old words express exactly what we all feel today:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

That is what we are fighting for, that is what we desire: on earth peace, good will toward men.

4. And so today we sing the Christmas hymns, full of hope, and steadfast in our belief that soon we shall achieve our hearts' desire.

Therefore, with faith in God, and with enthusiasm for our cause and for the day of battle, let us continue the contest with stout hearts and with determination to conquer.

5. And at this time I send to each one of you my best wishes and my Christmas greetings.

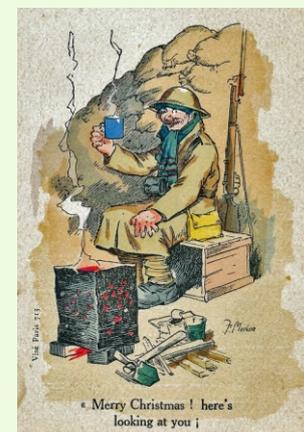
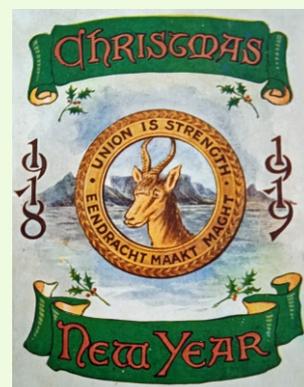
Wherever you may be, fighting in the front line, or working on the lines of communication or in the ports, I wish all of you good luck and a happy 1945. We are all one great team; together, you and I, we have achieved much: and together, we will see the thing through to the end.

6. Good luck to you all.

A. L. Montgomery
Field-Marshal

C-in-C 21 Army Group.

Belgium.
Xmas, 1944



25 December 1941. The Fall of Hong Kong

4 December 1991. Release of US hostages in Lebanon





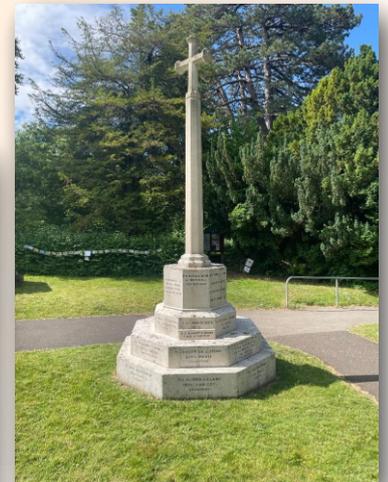
Remembrance Service at Aldershot Garrison Church



The Remembrance service at Aldershot Garrison was attended by our County Chairman Richard Moore, Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL, the County Patron The Royal British Legion Hampshire and Lt Col (Retd) Dick Brown, who is the new Chairman of the Aldershot branch. Photo kindly supplied by Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL



Remembrance Service at Old Basing



The founder of the RAF, Lord Trenchard, held armourers in high esteem, saying “without armament, there is no air force.” Within the Air Force, armourers are considered the most specialized of any trade. They hold a qualification for each specific weapon. Armourers do an initial phase of generic training and then transfer to a School for Technical Training for trade specific training. When an armourer qualifies they can find themselves employed on a wide variety of tasks such as:-

Preparing, maintaining and loading of aircraft bombs, missiles, guns.

Aircraft assisted escape systems (ejection seats).

Maintenance of explosive release systems.

Maintenance of small arms within station armouries.

They could work alongside their army equivalents such as Ammunition Technicians dealing with improvised explosive devices.

Non trade specific jobs such as the flight line servicing of aircraft.

Nicknames.

Various air forces have different nicknames for armourers. RAF armourers are called “Plumbers”, South African Air Force armourers are known as “Bomb Rollers” or “Catapult Mechanics”. Royal Australian Air Force armourers are “Gunnies”. DW



RAF 19 Sqn Armourer Fred Roberts rearms MGs on Sgt Bernard 'Jimmy' Jennings' Spitfire Mk1B Fowlmere, Sept 1940.



RAFA armourers branch



SAAF armourers



RAF armourers



Air Sgt Steyn and Leading Air Mech Britz fuzing bombs on a SAAF 2 Sqn Sabre 608 M somewhere in Korea during the 1950s



RAF armourers



SAAF 12 Squadron armourers posing in front of a Boston bomber, North Africa 1942



USAAF armourers restore newly-cleaned machine guns to a P-47 Thunderbolt at Duxford, August 1943



RAF armourers working on a Hawker Hurricane somewhere in France 1940



Armourers loading a 1000lb bomb on to the Centre Line Pylon of a Sea Harrier FRS.1 on board HMS INVINCIBLE off the Falkland Islands

The patron saint of armourers is Saint Barbara.



USAAF armourers

Fifty-two young people from the rural parish of Copythorne wore poppies with the names of the young men who lost their lives during two world wars. Before the Remembrance Service a parade left the Parish Hall for the half mile route to the War Memorial by St Mary's Church led by the Stanleys Own Scout Band and the Union Flag carried by the Guides and the Royal British Legion Standard carried by Mark Parry-Norton.

The Service at the War Memorial was led by Royal British Legion Chaplain, Rev John Reeve, and the Lord Lieutenant was represented by Mrs Anne Thompson DL. The Roll of Honour was read by Branch Chairman 'Ginge' Kinley and bugler Jess Blackburn played the Last Post. Prayers were read by young people from Bartley School, The Guides, the Scouts and James Read on behalf of the local Ukrainian Appeal. The flags of the Rainbows, Brownie Guides and Guide Company as well as Squirrel Scouts, two Cub Scout and two Scout Troops and Magellan Explorer Scouts and the Legion standard were lowered and raised in good order. Mrs Thompson laid the first wreath followed by some 30 wreaths by representatives from the main Services, the Parish Council and local organisations. It was estimated that nearly 300 people were at the Service after which Mrs Thompson thanked all the young people for their response to the Service. Copythorne History Society once again provided an 'Avenue of Remembrance' displaying the names and information about the young men whose names are on the War Memorial. 'We will remember them' Brian C N Soffe
Branch treasurer

Hampshire County Standard Bearer Pete Pullin

My name is Pete Pullin, and I currently serve as the Fawley & District Standard Bearer, the Hampshire County Standard Bearer, and the South Western Regional Winner. In this article, I want to share my journey, experiences, and what it means to carry a Standard.

How It All Began. I became a Standard Bearer by chance—something that often happens in the Legion. In 2018, I was asked to carry the Branch wreath at GP90 alongside our Branch Standard Bearer. For some reason, the Branch SB didn't turn up for the trip, so on my return, I was appointed as the Branch Standard Bearer. GP90 was an incredible experience: five unforgettable days culminating in over 1,200 Standards parading through Ypres and the Menin Gate. During the trip, I was welcomed by the Isle of Wight Standard Bearers and wreath carriers, which introduced me to the camaraderie of the role and the wider RBL family. I made friendships that will last a lifetime.

Competitions and Achievements. In October 2019, I entered the Hampshire County Standard Bearer Competition—and to my surprise, I won. I've retained the title every year since. Winning at County level automatically qualifies you for the Regional Competition. This year, held in Axminster, Devon, I won the South Western Regional title and went on to compete nationally at the RBL Annual Conference in Harrogate.

Although I finished a respectable eighth out of ten, most of my competitors were decades younger than me! The competitions can be stressful, but they're also full of laughter and mutual support as we help each other with kit and drill.

The Role and Responsibilities. A Branch Standard Bearer



represents all branch members—past and present—tracing back to the WWI veterans who founded the British Legion. The uniform should be to a high standard. Before an event or funeral, I can easily spend three to four hours polishing shoes and brass, pressing the Standard, and ensuring everything is perfect. I must have shares in starch, Brasso, and boot polish by now!

Training and Standards. Hampshire Standard Bearers maintain exceptionally high standards and regularly attend training. We're considered one of the top counties in the country. The youth side is thriving too—Amelie, our County Youth SB, is also the South Western Regional Youth winner. Judges believe she would have ranked highly at the national level,

but family commitments kept her from competing this year. Hopefully, she'll make it next time.

We train monthly at Eastleigh for two hours, with over 15 attendees, including cadets and SBs from other associations. We've even welcomed SBs from Dorset, Wiltshire, and Oxfordshire. Dave Graham, our County Parade Marshal, is highly respected nationally. It's recommended that SBs attend at least two sessions a year—after all, we're carrying an eight-foot pole with a brass finial that can cause serious injury if mishandled.

Closing Thoughts. Being a Standard Bearer is an honour and a responsibility. It's about respect,

tradition, and representing those who served before us. The role demands commitment, but the rewards—camaraderie, pride, and the chance to uphold the Legion's values—are immeasurable.

Pete Pullin Fawley Standard Bearer, Fawley & District Branch





Festival of Remembrance Albert Hall London



The Festival of Remembrance is held annually at the Albert Hall in London and is a tribute to all those who have served and are currently serving in the armed forces. Our past County Chairman, Tim Russell was invited to attend. Many thanks to Avril Mitchell for the photos.



Old Basing branch Poppy Launch Dinner



Old Basing branch held its annual Poppy Launch dinner which was well attended. Many thanks to Avril Mitchell for the photos.



Before the fall of Hong Kong. Canadian troops in the typical country among the hills of the Island of Hong Kong



Japanese soldiers rounded up in the Fan Ling district of Hong Kong by 3rd Commando Bde entrain for Kowloon.

The battle for Hong Kong took place over the period of the 8th to the 25th December 1941. It was one of the first battles of the Pacific War during the Second World War. On the same morning as the attack on Pearl Harbour, Japanese ground and air forces attacked the British Crown colony of Hong Kong. It was the first attack after Japan declared war against Great Britain. The Hong Kong garrison was at a strength of 12000 and comprised forces from Great Britain, India and Canada. Auxiliary Defence Units and Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps (HKVDC) were also present.

Hong Kong consisted of three territories at the time. The garrison forces abandoned the two mainland territories of Kowloon and New Territories after a week of intensive fighting. Within two weeks, the last territory, Hong Kong Island, could not hold on any longer due to overwhelming enemy forces and the defending forces of the colony surrendered on Christmas Day. The fighting for the defence of the territory lasted for 17 days during which fierce fighting took place. 2000 allied forces and 3000 civilians were killed in action. The Japanese occupation lasted four years.

Japanese forces remained in Hong Kong for the duration of the war until they surrendered to the Allies. The fall of the city is still remembered as Black Christmas. The Japanese began a brutal occupation that lasted until it was liberated in the summer of 1945. Photos from the Imperial war Museum. DW

Security during war time has always remained a very important aspect of every day life. It still remains just as important and is the responsibility of all the armed forces as well as the rest of the nation. During World War Two a vast number of posters were designed to remind people that it was their responsibility to keep our secrets secret. During both war time and peace all countries have a requirement to know what their adversaries are doing to improve their defence capability as well as their military offensive capabilities. This knowledge gives the adversary the upper hand and they can then prepare for any contingency. It allows them to develop counter measures to regain an advantage on the battlefield.

Within the military the responsibility lies with the Counter Intelligence department of the Intelligence Corps. Deception plays a role as does psychological warfare. Whichever nation is best at these tasks has the advantage and is best able to protect its armed forces and its people. DW



Some examples of security related posters that were distributed and displayed in public places as a reminder. Nothing has changed. We must still be vigilant.

The Christmas truce (German - Weihnachtsfrieden) was a series of widespread but unofficial ceasefires along the Western Front of World War I around Christmas 1914. At the time of the First Battle for Ypres in the week leading up to Christmas Day, French, German, and British soldiers crossed trenches to exchange seasonal greetings and talk. In some areas, men from both sides ventured into no man's land on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to mingle and exchange food and souvenirs. There were joint burial ceremonies and prisoner swaps, while several meetings ended in carol-singing. Men played games of football with one another giving one of the most memorable images of the truce. Peaceful behaviour was not ubiquitous. Fighting continued in some sectors, while in others the sides settled on little more than arrangements to recover bodies.

The following year, a few units arranged ceasefires but this was much more uncommon as the opposing forces senior commands prohibited truces. Soldiers were no longer keen to participate as the war had taken on a bitter stance with each other. Having said that the Christmas truces were significant as in the more peaceful sectors, dozens of men openly congregated in daylight. The Germans took to decorating the area around their trenches in the areas of Ypres, Belgium and particularly in Saint-Yvon (called Saint-Yves, in Plugstreet/Ploegsteert – Comines-Warneton). Captain Bruce Bairnsfather described the truce - *“The Germans placed candles on their trenches and on Christmas trees, then continued the celebration by singing Christmas carols. The British responded by singing carols of their own. The two sides continued by shouting Christmas greetings to each other. Soon thereafter, there were excursions across No Man's Land, where small gifts were exchanged, such as food, tobacco and alcohol, and souvenirs such as buttons and hats. The artillery in the region fell silent. The truce also allowed a breathing spell where recently killed soldiers could be brought back behind their lines by burial parties. Joint services were held. In many sectors, the truce lasted through Christmas night, continuing until New Year's Day in others. The last I saw was one of my machine gunners, who was a bit of an amateur hairdresser in civil life, cutting the unnaturally long hair of a docile Boche, who was patiently kneeling on the ground whilst the automatic clippers crept up the back of his neck”*.



Captain Robert Patrick Miles, King's Shropshire Light Infantry, who was attached to the Royal Irish Rifles was killed in action on 30th December 1914 and wrote home -

“Friday (Christmas Day). We are having the most extraordinary Christmas Day imaginable. A sort of unarranged and quite unauthorized but perfectly understood and scrupulously observed truce exists between us and our friends in front. The funny thing is it only seems to exist in this part of the battle line – on our right and left we can all hear them firing away as cheerfully as ever. The thing started last night – a bitter cold night, with white frost – soon after dusk when the Germans started shouting 'Merry Christmas, Englishmen' to us. Of course our fellows shouted back and presently large numbers of both sides had left their trenches, unarmed, and met in the debatable, shot-riddled, no man's land between the lines. Here the agreement – all on their own – came to be made that we should not fire at each other until after midnight tonight. The men were all fraternizing in the middle (we naturally did not allow them too close to our line) and swapped cigarettes and lies in the utmost good fellowship. Not a shot was fired all night”. DW

Graphic taken from the internet



Image Vecteesey (free)

Old Basing Branch Poppy Appeal



November is always a busy time for the branches. Old Basing branch members were very involved in collecting for the Poppy Appeal. Grateful thanks go to all who were involved for their dedication and hard work. Thanks to Avril Mitchell for the photos.



Petersfield Branch News



The branch Poppy Appeal went well this year. The branch participated in a collective effort to make 20,000 poppies for a Poppy Waterfall Dedication display that is at the entrance to the St Peters Church entrance. Poppies were also used to create a special "shawl" for the Reverend Will Hughes and a drape over the alter. The support of the community in Petersfield is always appreciated David Lloyd



At the recent Petersfield AGM two presentations were made to deserving people. One was for the "Clean Up" team (photo at right) and second one was the presentation of an RBL plaque to Jake - Bar Manager of the Folly Wine Bar where the branch will be holding its meetings and the forthcoming Christmas Dinner will also be held there.



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

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

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 (Rhodesia), MMM (SA) 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

County Chairman Richard Moore Hampshire.chair@rbl.community

County Secretary Avril Mitchell hampshire.secretary@rbl.community

Treasurer Ges Brown hampshire.treasurer@rbl.community

Recruiting and Retention Officer Hampshire.CRO@rbl.community

Community Support Co-ordinator Bob Bartlett Hampshire.CCSC@rbl.community

Training Officer John Davies Hampshire.CTO@rbl.community

Youth Officer Andrew Dawes Hampshire.CYO@rbl.community

Deputy Youth Officer Melvyn Cole

Clubs Liaison Paul Holyoake Hampshire.clubs@rbl.community

Webmaster Avril Mitchell Hampshire.web@rbl.community

Committee member Brian Mansi Ringwood.chairman@rbl.community

Membership Council Representative ((Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight) David Taylor DTaylor2@britishlegion.org.uk

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

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

Deputy County Standard Bearer: Andy Dawes

County Youth Standard Bearer: Amelie Neal

Ceremonial Support: David Graham, Karen Graham

County Padre: Reverend David Roache

Golf Officer: Rick Bourne

Membership Engagement Officer: Holly Church, Membership Engagement Manager: None

Membership Council Representative: Gerry Nunn

Public Relations Officer: VACANT

Independent Examiners: Ges Brown, John Davies, Pat Prior, Malcolm Brunnsden and Avril Mitchell.

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

Committee members - David Barton, Melvyn Cole, John Davies, Paul Holyoake, Brian Mansi, Avril Mitchell, Tim Russell

County Management Board: Ges Brown, Avril Mitchell, John Davies

Conference Committee: Brian Mansi, Avril Mitchell, Melvyn Cole, Pat Prior, Nigel Thomas, Patti Cunningham

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

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

Poppy Appeal co-ordinator (South) Pat Prior BEM QVRM

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

Poppy Appeal manager North Hampshire Chris Hayward chayward@britishlegion.org.uk

Newsletter Editor: Dudley Wall HampshireLinkDW@yahoo.com

Errors and Omissions Excepted

