

The Hampshire Link

The Newsletter of RBL Hampshire County Hampshire & IOW



Edition Date: January 2024

Registered Charity Number 219279



# We will remember them

To all whom we have lost this month. Our sincere condolences to family and friends. The membership secretary of Brockenhurst Branch has let us know of the passing of Hugo Thomas (1613553) on 29th November 2023. Our thoughts go out 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



# National Chair New Year Message

am writing to update you about proposed changes to the way we select the person who chairs RBL's Board of Trustees and our renewed commitment to wider engagement with our membership in the future.

The Board of Trustees still believes that we should  $h_{11}g_{22}$  how the Chair of the Board of Trustees is selected,  $u_{12}g_{22}$  have heard from many of you as members how important it is that we engage widely and closely with you. Throughout this year we have stepped up our engagement via meetings, Town Halls, online briefings, and articles in the Legion magazine. Lately, our Network Engagement team have been invited to a number of local meetings with branches to discuss issues in greater detail, and I and the Board of Trustees have greatly appreciated the opportunity to hear directly from those who support RBL with great passion and concern at a local level.

Through this engagement we have learned that there is still a big appetite to learn more about the changes which the Board of Trustees wish to make, and to have questions and concerns clarified on this and a number of other issues. For this reason, the Board of Trustees have decided that we will not be re-presenting the Charter Motion required for these changes to the Annual Conference in 2024.

Instead, we will continue to engage widely with membership on this next year and beyond, building an approach to engagement which enable us to hear the views of more members at branch level. We expect to bring the Charter Motion back to Annual Conference in 2025. This means that my successor as National Chair and Lynda Atkins' successor as National Vice Chair will be elected using the current process, with both to take office from May 2025.

I am delighted that we are making this further commitment to engagement on these significant changes, and I look forward to the development of a programme through which we can have a conversation about important issues of governance which affect RBL, hopefully building an increased sense of common purpose along the way.



There will be more news of how individuals and branches can get involved in the New Year, so please look out for announcements. Alternatively, your MEOs will be kept fully up to date with our progress on this, and we will ensure that they are promoting our activity.

Jason Coward National Chair





f you Google 'Escort', you might get a more salacious result but here I'm referring to small warships designed to protect capital ships or merchant vessels. In the sailing navy, ships were rated according to firepower; Rates 1-4 were powerful enough to fight in the line of battle while Rates 5 and 6 were designated cruisers or frigates. Frigates were fast sailers whose primary role was to find the enemy and, hopefully, draw them to battle with the main fleet but also sufficiently well-armed to give good account of themselves in single ship engagements. Rated ships were commanded by post captains whereas smaller vessels sloops, schooners, ketches, etc - were commanded by lieutenants (sometimes as 'masters and commanders' or latterly as commanders). The infamous Captain Bligh was a lieutenant. Admirals, such as Lord Nelson, were known to lament the fact they never had enough frigates.

The rating system was phased out by the late 19th century. The iron hulled auxiliary steam powered HMS Warrior (1860) was originally designated a frigate as her main



armament was confined to a single deck but, to all intents and purposes, she was a battleship. Thereafter, with steel hulls and steam propulsion replacing sails, major warships were designated battleships or armoured

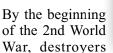
HMS Shannon capturing USS Chesapeake

cruisers with a miscellany of smaller vessels for coastal or colonial operations. At the turn of the century, a great deal changed with the advent of the torpedo launched by torpedo boats and eventually submarines, and of course HMS Dreadnought revolutionised the battleship. The 'Nelsonian' frigate metamorphosed into the light cruiser with a broadly similar role. To combat the torpedo boat, the Torpedo Boat Destroyer (TBD) was developed which eventually became known as a destroyer, and from which the modern escort ship derived.

TBDs were intended to operate in the North Sea and English Channel to protect the Grand Fleet from torpedo attack. Initially they were small (200 tons or so) and powered by steam turbines, they could achieve speeds of about 30 knots but, as torpedo boats got more versatile, so the TBD needed to up its game with heavier armament and increased size. By the end of the Great War, destroyers displaced some 1,000 tons. This gave them the capacity to mount medium calibre guns, torpedo tubes and eventually depth charges to help combat German U-boats. Initially submarine detection was visual (periscope sighting, etc) but eventually hydro phones were fitted to listen for underwater noise. Eventually, between the wars, ASDIC (an acronym from the Anti-Submarine Detection Investigation Committee) was fitted to destroyers and sloops - more lightly armed generalpurpose warships designed for policing the British Empire.

ASDIC was a hull mounted transducer that transmitted a sonic pulse through the water which would 'bounce' back if it encountered a submerged object, giving direction, range

and, later, depth. Today's active Sonar is far more sophisticated and longer ranged but similar in principle, while passive sonar is more akin to the original hydrophone.





of the 2nd World

were the principal general-purpose escort; powerful enough for independent action in the absence of heavier gunned cruisers and battleships; fast (more than 30 knots); capable of anti-surface, anti-aircraft, and anti-submarine work but less than ideal in the inclement conditions of the North Atlantic. As specialised warships they were costly to build and, as Nelson would have recognised, there were never enough of them. An immediate solution for convoy escort duty was to augment the few available destroyers and sloops with armed merchant vessels and trawlers converted for anti-submarine work. These were followed by small purpose-built warships based on a commercial design for a whaling ship called Flower Class corvettes. Despite some modifications and improved corvette designs such as the Castle Class, corvettes lacked speed and firepower and had poor standards of crew habitability. The eventual solution was resurrection of an old name - the frigate.

The first frigates were the River Class. Bigger and better armed than corvettes with twin screws instead of one, these ships embodied lessons learned so far in the Battle of the Atlantic. Of a similar size to most destroyers at 1,500 tons and cheaper than a sloop, these ships had a fo'c'sle extending <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of the overall length giving more protected access to machinery spaces and messdecks but with less speed -20knots as opposed to over 30 knots for a destroyer - and lighter gun armament. With RDF (Radar), ASDIC (Sonar), HF/DF (Huff Duff) and both depth charges and Hedgehog mortars, they proved useful anti-submarine platforms and paved the way for further developments with the Loch and Bay classes.

By 1945, despite losses, the Royal Navy had over 1,000 escorts ranging from fleet destroyers to corvettes and A/S trawlers, and has been in steady decline ever since. Wartime designed escorts continued to serve well into the 1960s but, with the advent of nuclear submarines, some destroyers were converted into fast anti-submarine frigates. Others were gradually replaced by much larger destroyers (the County Class) and a new generation of frigates called Type 12s, comprising Whitby, Rothesay and eventually Leander classes. In all, eight County Class destroyers and forty-one Type 12s were built, augmented by twelve smaller Type 14 frigates (more akin to corvettes) and seven Type 81 Tribal class general purpose frigates (sloops really) designed mainly for patrolling the Persian Gulf and other legacies of empire. To confuse matters further for a type of vessel specialising in anti-submarine warfare, eight diesel powered frigates were procured (based on the Type 12 hull); four each for anti-aircraft and aircraft direction purposes – Type 41 and Type 61 respectively. By the end of the 1960s, the total number of escorts had reduced to about 100.

The County Class were built primarily for the (then cutting edge) Sea Slug missile system and, as such, destroyers now became dedicated to area air defence rather than general purposes. At over 5,000 tons, these ships were more akin to light cruisers in size and, with the Tribal class frigates, were the first ships with combined steam and gas turbine propulsion; the Tribals having half the power plant of a County with single as opposed to twin screws. All these ships, together with the later Type 12s (Leanders and modified Rothesays) carried anti-submarine helicopters – the larger Wessex Mk 3 with dipping sonar in the Counties



and the Wasp in Type 12s and Tribals. These helicopters carried homing torpedoes that gradually replaced anti-submarine mortars (Squid and Limbo). A bit of an 'odd ball' was H M S B r i s t o 1; originally the first of a class of large Type 82 destroyers designed to escort the subsequently cancelled CVA-01

aircraft carriers. Bristol was used as a platform for the new Sea Dart surface to air and Ikara anti-submarine missile. At over 6,000 tons she spent most of her operational life as a flagship or Dartmouth Training Ship. After decommissioning, she became a cadet training ship at Whale Island where she now awaits final disposal. Destroyers and frigates also replaced the cruiser as vessels capable of single ship operations in peacetime. By the late 1970s, smaller Type 42 destroyers armed with Sea Dart entered service as replacements for the obsolescent County class while the delayed Type 22 frigates gradually replaced some of the Type 12s. As an interim measure to replace the Types 41 and 61, a commercial design - the Type 21 - was also introduced. All these new ships were propelled by gas instead of steam turbines and the Type 22s were armed with Sea Wolf, a state-of-the-art point defence surface to air missile. HMS Defender (T45) meets HMS Edinburgh (T42)

As ever, apart from fourteen Type 42 destroyers, new classes of ships seldom equalled the number of vessels they were replacing. It was 'accepted wisdom' by the early 1980s that the Royal Navy needed about 50 escorts for NATO and national tasking and the Royal Navy's decline in escort numbers was halted for a while by the Falklands War, despite losing two Type 42s and two Type 21s to enemy action. Orders for the Type 42 replacement, the Type 45 (Daring Class) destroyers, dwindled to just six and the Type 23 (Duke Class) frigates that replaced the Types 21 and 22, and remaining Type 12s has now reduced to eleven from an original class of sixteen. A combined total of just seventeen escorts to defend potentially two aircraft carriers, an amphibious group and fulfil a range of NATO and national tasks. Warship roulement generally operates by thirds: 1/3

operational, 1/3 preparing for operations and in r o u t i n e maintenance, and 1/3 in refit. So, with an escort force of seventeen ships, only six are likely to be at sea at any one time – eight at a push. Today's escorts are bigger



(Type 45 displaces 8,000 and Type 23 nearly 5,000 tonnes) and more capable than their predecessors but still can only be in one place at a time.

So, what for the future? The UK still relies on the sea for 95% of her trade. The convoy system that proved so successful in both world wars is now unlikely to used other than at specific 'choke points' – e,g. the Straits of Hormuz, Suez Canal approaches, Cape of Good Hope, and emerging trade routes via the Arctic circle. Modern merchant ships are larger and faster; the cargo capacity of a single container ship probably exceeds that of an entire WW2 convoy, but fewer are British flagged. We will need escorts to patrol 'choke points' with our NATO allies, while also escorting the UK's aircraft carriers or amphibious ships when required. Ideally a carrier or amphibious group needs at least two destroyers, two frigates and a nuclear attack submarine plus logistics support (tankers, etc).

The aging Type 23s are in urgent need of replacement and Type 26 (City Class) frigates are already under construction. The original requirement for thirteen has already been reduced to eight with the balance made up by five cheaper and less capable Type 31 (Inspiration Class) frigates. With six Type 45s, that should bring total escort numbers back to nineteen. I'll leave it to the reader to decide whether that's enough.

A replacement for the Type 45 is under consideration - the Type 83 which suggests that it will be configured for general purposes rather than just air defence. The fighting strength of the Royal Navy in the 2030s could be: four Trident ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), seven Astute Class attack submarines (SSNs), two aircraft carriers each operating a mix of F35B 'Lightning II' Joint Strike Fighters and helicopters, six Type 45 destroyers, eight Type 26 frigates and five Type 31 frigates. There will remain some miscellaneous vessels with limited warfighting capability and, of course, the essential logistics train of tankers, support and specialist ships manned by merchant seamen of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. Currently there are also two assault ships or Landing Platform Docks (LPDs) that may be replaced in the next decade or so; watch this space but don't hold your breath!

Article and images gratefully received from Cdr Rob Scott RN, Droxford & District RBL





Petersfield branch of the RBL Memorial Sunday parade.



Petersfield branch of the RBL held a Christmas Lunch at the Half Moon Sheet on December 7th. In attendance were Petersfield Mayor JC Crissey, former Mayoress Lesley Farrow and Petersfield RBL members.

# Remembering a Son of Hampshire Pilot Officer Geoffrey C Layley of 218 Squadron RAF



**1** 37342 P/O Geoffrey C Layley 218 Sqn RAFVR. Buried at Hanover War Cemetery Germany. Lived in Ashford Hill. KIA aged 23 on Wed 27th Jan 1943. (Son of Arthur W and Flora V Layley (Old Farm Ashford Hill) of Kingsclere. he participated in Operation Gardening and flew on a sortie over Germany on 27 -

Geoffrey Layley

28 January 1943. Aircraft type Stirling 1. Serial no N6077. Code HA-V

Geoffrey Layley originally enlisted with the Royal Berkshire Regiment before transferring to the RAF. He was deployed to France and was evacuated at Dunkirk. On return it appears that he then joined the RAF and served with 218 Squadron.

The squadron was based at RAF Downham Market in Norfolk when Geoffrey Layley served with it. Geoffrey Layleys aircraft took off at 17h03 on the 27th January 1943 to conduct mine laying in the Rostock and Arcane area of the Baltic Sea. The mine laying was successfully completed and on return, flying at 400 feet the aircraft flew into high ground near Dassel 21 km east north east of Hoxter.

The crew consisted of

Pilot Officer Arthur Edward Gough (no 133219) aged 20. KIA (pilot)

Pilot Officer Kenneth Alsey Taylor (no 468299) aged 23. KIA (pilot)

Flight Sgt Edward John Forward (no unknown) aged 24. KIA

**Pilot Officer Geoffrey Charles Layley** (no 137342) aged 23. KIA. (Observer / Navigator). (He was promoted shortly before this sortie)

Sgt Norman Whitehead (no 1213624 aged 20. KIA (Air Bombardier / Bomb Aimer)

Sgt George Lesley Banks (no 1113233) aged 31. KIA (Wireless operator / air gunner)

Sgt Loring Charles Ehrhart (no 964374) age unknown. KIA (Wireless operator / air gunner)

Sgt William E Jackson. (no 1281390) age unknown, Air Gunner who was thrown out of the aircraft and survived,

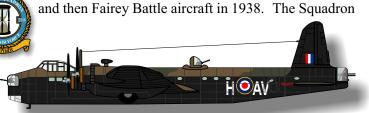


Section of the Royal Berkshire Regt. Geoffrey Layley in the back row centre

having fell through some trees and landing in thick snow. Captured and taken PoW (PoW number 27380). Held at camps 8B-Stalag Teschen and 334 Stalag Lamsdorf.

## Squadron History

No 218 (Gold Coast) Squadron was adopted by the people of the Gold Coast (Ghana). The squadron was reformed in March 1936 taking in elements of 57 Squadron at RAF Upper Heyfordand was equipped with Hawker Hind



deployed to France in September 1939 where it was tasked with flying reconnaissance sorties and dropping leaflets. It was also deployed on bombing sorties in June 1940 against the Germans who were advancing through France and suffered several losses. The squadron returned to England and was re-equipped with Bristol Blenheim aircraft. In November of 1940 the squadron received Vickers Wellingtons which allowed them to take on longer range bombing missions. By December 1941 the squadron received Short Stirling aircraft to replace the Wellingtons and continued its bombing raids in occupied Europe. Targets included bombing German infantry units on the ground and V-weapon sites.

> In July 1942 the squadron was deployed to RAF Downham Market. It was while the squadron was at this base that Sergeant Geoffrey Layley was killed in action. It stayed here until March 1944 when it was moved to RAF Woolfox Lodge in Rutland. In August 1944, the squadron was transferred to RAF Methwold and was reequipped with Avro Lancaster aircraft. From this base the squadron conducted diversionary bombing raids against enemy defences near Pas de Calais in the lead up to D Day.

> The squadron participated in Operation Glimmer which was a diversionary operation dropping Window (aluminium foil to confuse enemy radar) to get the Germans to believe that there was a Royal Navy force deploying to the French coast in an effort to draw German forces away

from the real landing beaches for D Day approximately 100 miles to the southwest. The mission was completely successful, to the extent that German shore batteries opened fire on the "ghost" fleet that the squadron created and the German 2nd Panzer Division and 116th Panzer Division were kept at Pas de Calais for over two weeks after D-Day, because they believed that Pas de Calais was a major British beach-head.

The squadron deployed to Chedburgh in December 1944 where it was converted into a transport squadron. After World War Two ended, the squadron was responsible for transporting food to Europe and for the return of British PoWs. DW *Photos from website Remembering Aircrew and from the family* 



P/O Geoffrey Layley would have been awarded the following medals - Air crew Europe Star, 1939/45 War Medal with MiD emblem.



# Hants County Conference

eminder of the Hampshire County Conference. Saturday 20th January 2024 at The Jubilee Hall, Little Shore Lane, Bishop's Waltham SO32 1ED starting at 10h30 to 16h00



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION HAMPSHIRE COUNTY CONFERENCE 2024 **Registered Charity Number 219279** 

Notice is given that Annual Meeting of the County Conference will be held on Saturday 20th January 2024

at The Jubilee Hall, Little Shore Lane, Bishop's Waltham, SO32 1ED Conference will start at 10.30am and is anticipated to end no later than 4pm

The County Conference is conducted under the County Byelaws and the Standing Orders for Conference issued to Branches. ALL RETURNS for INCLUSION in THE ANNUAL COUNTY CONFERENCE MUST REACH the MEO BY 30th November 2023 unless

TO JOIN CONFERENCE AS A DELEGATE: Please complete the enclosed form to r

rm to notify us of the branch delegate/s names (FORM A).

MOTIONS AND ROYAL CHARTER AMENDMENTS: Proposed Motions and amendments to the Royal Charter of Incorporation and Schedules for inclusion in the Annual County Conference Agenda must be approved by a Branch General Meeting, given in writing and signed by the Branch Secretary or Chairman. A template for motions and charter motions is included. (FORM B)

NOMINATIONS TO COUNTY COMMITTEE: NOMINATIONS TO COUNTY COMMITTEE There are currently EIGHT positions on the County Committee to be filled. Any Member of a Hampshire Branch may be nominated for election to the County Committee. Please Note: Elected County Committee members will be required to agree and sign the "Certificate of Acknowledgement of Responsibility" A nomination form is enclosed for all vacant positions and for Conference Venue 2026. (FORM C) All county committee nominees are required to provide a CV - a template for cs/s is attached. (FORM D)

COUNTY CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION: Branches may apply for the award of a COUNTY CERTIFICATE of APPRECIATION for a Branch member who has shown excellent performance at Branch or County levels. These are awarded at the discretion of the County Committee and are ONLY presented at the County Conference, Application forms are obtainable from the MSO. The number awarded by the County in any one year may be limited.

ALL BRANCHES ARE URGED TO TAKE PART IN THE COUNTY COMPETITIONS ALL BRANCHES ARE URGED TO TAKE PART IN THE COUNTY COMPETITIONS Application forms for the following awards are distributed with this notice. Shaw and Capper Cups (for proficiency and endeavour) (FORM E) Howard Memorial Cup (contributions outside the dosed period) (FORM F) County President's Shield (for affiliate groups contributions to the Poppy Appeal) (FORM G) Business Affiliation Shield (for a company's contributions to the Poppy Appeal) (FORM H) Poppy Appeal cup (for promoting the Poppy Appeal in their area) (FORM ) Please note that the deadline to return all forms for County Conference is 30<sup>th</sup> November

ion forms are required for Stockdale and Foley Cups Branch Membership, The Buckingham Shield Poppy Appeal, Poppy Acception of the second s

### National Awards for PROGRESS AND EFFICIENCY

Lister Cup (for small branches with up to 50 members) Haig Cup (for branches with over 50 members) which during the previous

Lister Cup (for small pranches with up to 50 members) Haig Cup (for pranches with over 50 members) which during the previous year has shown the most progress and efficiency in various areas e.g. activities, recruitment, events, remembrance, loca community, online (LOMAS/Office 365), fundraising. Application forms are available from the MEO and will be judged by the Cups sub-committee. The County may nominate more than one entry to the national competition. Return the completed form to Pat Prior 155/157 High Street, Lee-On-The-Solent, PO13 98X or by email to Hampshirecountycommittee@rbl.community. Closing date for the Lister & Haig Cup application forms is 30° November2013. November2023



Make sure that your worst enemy doesn't live between your own ears.

### Laird Hamilton

# Lyndhurst and District Burns Night

# 



**The Royal British Legion** Lyndhurst & District



### Saturday 20th January 2024

### 7.30pm

Lyndhurst Community Centre

£15.00 per person

Includes admission & buffet, incl. haggis.

### Plus, a selection of cold foods

Join us for an evening of fun & dance (bring your own drinks)

Tickets available from Lyndhurst Community Centre or Lyndhurst Workmen's Club

All profit to the Lyndhurst & District Poppy Appeal

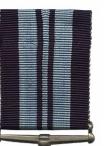
### 

Tickets also a v a i l a b l e from faulknerwhite@btopenworld.com

Dee Faulkner White. (Lyndhurst and District Branch Secretary)



# The 1939 - 1945 **India Service Medal**





his medal was awarded to Indian forces for service between 1939 and 1945 for three years non operational service. In effect it replaced the Defence Medal for Indian forces. There were no clasps awarded with this medal.

Some British service personnel were awarded the medal if they met the criteria and were deployed in India during the war. Medals were not named

**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: <u>HampshireLinkDW@yahoo.com</u>

> ALL LEGION INQUIRIES (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 <u>Hampshire.Chairman@rbl.community</u> Vice-Chairman Robert Bartlett <u>Hampshire.vicechairman@rbl.community</u> Treasurer Ges Brown <u>hampshire.treasurer@rbl.community</u> Committee members - Melvyn Cole, John Davies, Paul Holyoake, Brian Mansi, Avril Mitchell, Vic Thorn 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, Chris George, Nigel Thomas. Cups Sub-Committee: Brian Mansi, Avril Mitchell, Pat Prior BEM QVRM

Annual Conference Delegate: Tim Russell

Poppy Appeal Manager North: Sarah Ferris Poppy Appeal Manager South: Julie Lax Regional Poppy Appeal Manager: Clare Peppiatt

Poppy Appeal Coordinator - North: Jacki Gatfield Poppy Appeal Coordinator - South: Pat Prior BEM QVRM

> Principal Recruiting Officer: VACANT County Training Officer: John Davies Community Support: VACANT CCSC: VACANT

Clubs Liaison: Paul Holyoake Communications Support: Dudley Wall County Webmaster: Avril Mitchell <u>Hampshire.Web@rbl.community</u> Youth Officer: Steve Slack <u>Hampshire.CYO@rbl.community</u> Events Support: VACANT

Parade Marshall: David Graham, Deputy Parade Marshall: VACANT

County Standard Bearer: Pete Pullin, <u>ppullin@britishlegion.org.uk</u> Deputy County Standard Bearer: Andy Cassidy County Youth Standard Bearer: Amelie Neal

Ceremonial Support: David Graham, Karen Graham County Padre: Reverend David Roche 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.