



Website <https://branches.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/rushden/>

We meet every second Monday of the month at The Athletic Club, 61 Newton Road, Rushden, NN10 0HF commencing 7.30pm. Visitors are welcome. It is **NOT** a requirement to have served in HM Forces to be a member of the Royal British Legion.

BRANCH NEWSLETTER FOR SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2026

WELCOME

Welcome members and friends of the Royal British Legion. Here is our latest edition; put the kettle on and get stuck in. There's lots to read and lots to think about as we soon move closer to the AGM where, at the latter part of October, members will receive a calling notice for the Branch AGM that takes place on Monday 16th November 2026. The roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer will be up for election and Vice Chair if a newly formed Committee so decides and of course there is the repeated cry for new Committee Members including a Newsletter Editor. If anybody wishes to apply or seek further information about any of these roles, please speak to a committee member or myself. We will be glad to advise.

After what has been a long dry summer and, to a certain extent, an enjoyable one, I hope to see many at the Branch Informal Meeting on Monday 12th September where we can relax, share some stories over a drink or two. See you then and enjoy the read 😊

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MERCHANT NAVY DAY – THURSDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2026

A brief ceremony will be held at Rushden War Memorial at 1100 hours this Thursday 3rd September followed by light refreshments at St Mary's Church Hall. All members plus family, friends and the public are welcome to attend.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED TO SUPPORT UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

6th September – Bark in the Park

28th November – Rushden Christmas Lights Switch On

If you can help to run a stall, even just for an hour or two, then please contact our Events

Coordinator Ray Burke on **07853 085368** or ramondo4@yahoo.co.uk

TRACING A PHOTO ALBUM WHICH INCLUDED BURMA DIARY NOTES

An update/correction from an email sent to members on 28th August 2026. A few months ago, Branch Member Peter Cook loaned his brown paper covered photo album that also contains diary notes of his days in Burma whilst serving in the Royal Navy. The person he loaned it to said he was writing a book about Burma. His diary notes covered what he did each day whilst at Burma. Peter is very keen to have it returned to him. Unfortunately, he cannot recall the name of the person he loaned it to. Whoever it may be, please return to Peter or contact Jake or Lynne Baker who will happily arrange for the photo album's return.

WHAT'S ON SHORTLY AND FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2026?

3rd September – Merchant Navy Day

5th September – Proms in the Park (see poster below at Page 6)

6th September – Bark in the Park

14th September – Branch Informal Evening

20th September – Battle of Britain Church Service at St Mary's Church Higham Ferrers

2nd October – 86th Anniversary of the Bombing of Alfred Lord Tennyson School & the Award of the Renewed Certificate of Affiliation with RBL Rushden Branch **(TBC)**

4th October – Rushden Mayor's Civic Service at St Mary's Church

12th October – Branch Monthly Meeting

17th October – RBL Virtual Membership Townhall Meeting

4th November – Schools Garden of Remembrance Ceremony at Rushden War Memorial

7th November – AFC Rushden & Diamonds Remembrance Service & Veterans Matchday 2026 at home versus Bourne Town

8th November – Remembrance Sunday Parade & Service organised by Rushden Town Council

11th November – Armistice Day organised by Rushden Town Council

16th November – Branch AGM – **Note: 3rd Monday of November**

28th November – Rushden Christmas Lights Switch On

8th December – Friends of the RBL Christmas Lunch at Rushden Masonic Hall

14th December – RBL Rushden Branch Christmas Party

RBL WELFARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

DO YOU NEED ANY HELP, OR DO YOU KNOW A VETERAN OR RBL MEMBER WHO NEEDS

HELP? IF YOU DO, THEN PLEASE CONTACT BRANCH COMMUNITY SUPPORTER

ANNA FERREIRA-GOMES VIA EMAIL. YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT THE BRANCH

COMMUNITY COORDINATOR, PETER ARMSTRONG ON 07498 243683.

THEIR EMAIL ADDRESSES ARE AT WHO'S WHO ON PAGE 4

REMEMBER, THE RBL IS HERE FOR YOU. IF THEY CAN'T HELP, THEY'LL GET YOU HELP.

PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT EVERY SITUATION IS DIFFERENT.

RBL HELPLINE – 0808 802 8080 - CALL 8am to 8pm 7 DAYS A WEEK

RBL FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE 2026 AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Did anybody get lucky in the Ballot this year? Branch Standard Bearer Mark Taberner-Stokes did for the afternoon performance and may strike lucky again if our Branch is selected to carry the Branch Standard at both performances. Fingers-crossed to Mark.

PLEA TO JOIN AND SUPPORT FRIENDS OF THE LEGION COFFEE MORNINGS

The Friends of the Legion was created a few years ago to help veterans who cannot come to Branch evening meetings. They now organise a monthly Coffee Morning on the first Thursday of each month at the Athletic Club on Newton Road between 10am and 12pm. It is only a £1 for non-stop coffee or tea (except if you want a posher version from the machine) and a chat. Talks are arranged along with Bingo if they require one, and a day out. A raffle is held and the money goes towards a subsidy for the Veterans Christmas Dinner each year.

Branch Community Coordinator Peter Armstrong would like to see more members of the Legion to come to the Coffee Mornings. Please do come along.

THE REGULAR MONTHLY ACTIVITIES FOR SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

First Monday of every month – Northants Breakfast Club – Hatton Hall Lounge, Hatton Hall, Hatton Avenue, Wellingborough, NN8 5AP commencing 9.30am. The next two meetings will be on Monday 7th September and Monday 5th October.

Second Monday of every month except March, June, September and December – Branch Monthly Meetings at the Athletic Club commencing 7.30pm. The next Branch Monthly Meeting is on 12th October, which will be followed by an open discussion on branch officer roles and the future of the Branch. Membership Council Representative, Membership Engagement Officer and County Secretary will be present to answer any questions.

Fourth Tuesday of every month – The Community Social & Craft Group meet at the Rushden Athletic Club on Newton Road, between 1pm and 3pm. RAFA Members Free. Guests £3/entry or £20 per year. Open to any RBL Rushden Branch Member. For more information contact Carol on **07922 141589** or carol.easton12@gmail.com Next meets are on 22nd September and 27th October.

Every Wednesday & Saturday Morning – 9am start. Northants Breakfast Club (**NBC**) dine at The Needle and Awl. All Veterans are welcome. Families are invited to join on the last Saturday of each month, which will be on 26th September and 31st October.

First Thursday of every month – 10am to 12.30pm – **Friends of the Legion** meet at The Athletic Club, Newton Road, Rushden. Pop along for a cuppa and a chat any time between 10am and 12.30pm. The next meets are on 3rd September and 1st October.

Second Thursday of every month - NGH Breakfast Club at Northampton General Hospital, Cliftonville, Northampton, NN1 5BD. **Eat Street** is the hospital restaurant on the main corridor through the hospital opposite the Chapel. The Breakfast Club is open to **all veterans (staff, patients and public)**. Attendees to purchase their own breakfast and drinks. The next **NGH Breakfast Club** meets are on 10th September and 8th October.

Last Thursday of Every Month – 10am -11.30am – Bilton Court Care Home would like to invite you to their **Veterans Coffee Morning** at Bilton Court Care Home, Queensway, Wellingborough, NN8 3FR. For more details phone **01933 401613** or pop in. The next **Veterans Coffee Mornings** are on 24th September and 29th October.

Last Friday of every month – 9am start – **KGH Breakfast Club** at Kettering General Hospital, Rothwell Road, Kettering, NN16 8UZ. The Basement Brassiere is located on the lower ground floor of the main hospital building. The Breakfast Club is open to **all veterans (staff, patients and public)**. Attendees to purchase their own breakfast and drinks. The next **KGH Breakfast Club** meets are on 25th September and 30th October.

0300 323 0137 Mental Health Matters Helpline - Midlands & East Veterans Service

0800 448 0828 Northamptonshire Helpline for Veterans 24/7

WHO'S WHO IN OUR BRANCH?

President - David Hawker: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

*Chair/Media Rep: Jake Baker rushden.chairman@rbl.community 07525 441267

**Vice Chair – Post Vacant

*Secretary – Lynne Baker: rushden.secretary@rbl.community

*Treasurer – Janet Flowers: rushden.treasurer@rbl.community

Standard Bearer - Mark Taberner-Stokes: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Youth Member Standard Bearer - Theo Mizon: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Committee Member – Heather Phillip: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Committee Member – Sally Morton: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Committee Member – Ray Burke: ramondo4@yahoo.co.uk 07853 085368

Committee Member – Steve Miller: via rushden.secretary@rbl.community

**Branch Padre – Post Vacant

BCS – Anna Ferreira-Gomes – Aferreira-Gomes.BCS@rbl.community

BCC – Peter Armstrong: rushden.bcc1@rbl.community 07498 243683

Poppy Appeal Organiser – Ruth Miller: poppyappealrushden@gmail.com

Deputy Poppy Appeal Organiser – Steve Miller: poppyappealrushden@gmail.com

*Position is vacant from AGM on 16th November 2026

**Position is vacant now.

SUCCESSION PLANNING AND THE FUTURE OF THE BRANCH

Members are advised that several committee vacancies would arise at the AGM, including Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Jake and Lynne would not seek re-election, as they intend to move away from Rushden to be nearer their family, and Janet Flowers too as Branch Treasurer. Whilst there is the possibility of becoming a County Supported Branch (CSB), members need to know this is not an automatic process and would require an application to County. In the meantime, the position would become clearer nearer the AGM, once nominations for the officer and committee vacancies had been received - a Calling Notice is sent to every member for nominations 21 days before the AGM on 16th November ie 25th October. If a committee could not be formed, the options might include amalgamation with another Branch or temporary administration by County, allowing members further time to establish a new committee. Branch closure would arise only in the most serious circumstances.

CSB status could subsequently be considered following a Branch application supported by the membership. A CSB would require two suitable Branch members to act as Points of Contact, providing a link between the Branch, County and the Membership Engagement Officer. The Branch would be expected to continue parading its Standard, maintaining fellowship and Branch Community Support activities, and undertaking community fundraising. In the meantime, members should be encouraged to consider standing for an officer or committee position when nominations open. A fuller explanation at the October Branch meeting will be given.

SUPPORT THE 2026 POPPY APPEAL

Volunteers have been at the heart of the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal for over 100 years, helping collect donations across the country and distribute poppies for people to wear ahead of Remembrance Sunday. By giving your time, skills, or experience, you enable RBL to remember their sacrifice and repay their service. Why not help sell poppies during Poppy Appeal Week which is from 25th October to 8th November 2026. If you can spare an hour or two Poppy Appeal Organiser Ruth Miller would love to know. Please email her on poppyappealrushden@gmail.com

RBL HELPLINE – 0808 802 8080 - CALL 8am to 8pm 7 DAYS A WEEK

AWARD OF THE BRANCH CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION



Pictured here at the July monthly meeting is Branch President David Hawker presenting a Joint Branch Certificate of Appreciation to our former Deputy Branch Padre Major Richard Cook Salvation Army; also awarded to his wife Branch Padre Major Pauline Cook Salvation Army, who was unfortunately unwell. Richard and Pauline had to relinquish their roles because of other unavoidable Salvation Army commitments in the wider community. They said they will remain as members, and they'll continue offering support where they can. A huge **THANK YOU** to them for what they have done for the Branch.

ARMED FORCES DAY 2026 AT GREAT ORMOND STREET HOSPITAL

In the previous Newsletter, we mentioned what we have been doing to celebrate Armed Forces Day 2026 locally but omitted events Branch Standard Bearer Mark Taberner-Stokes and his wife Alison had got involved in outside the area, indeed Alison's workplace, Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) where she is the Associate Chief Nurse for the Brain Directorate and Head of Nursing for Neurosciences and Patient Experience. They have been helping GOSH celebrate AFD on Saturday 27th June too, as part of the nationwide Armed Forces Week honouring service personnel, veterans, and military families. Children, families, and staff enjoyed interactive areas decorated with camouflage netting, banners, and bunting with Mark and other uniformed soldiers and a visiting Chelsea Pensioner meeting with patients and staff. It was an action-packed event with young patients participating in themed play, including designing custom medals, building model Spitfire planes, dressing up in military uniforms, and writing supportive letters to active service members.



Editor's Comments: Mark is still a serving soldier on Full-Time Reserve Service. Thank you both for what you do supporting in the Armed Forces community on top of your busy work and voluntary roles.

WANTED - BOTTLES OF ANY SORT FOR BRANCH BOTTLE TOMBOLA

One highly successful way the Branch raises funds is to hold a Bottle Tombola; that and the games like Buzz Wire and Play Your Cards Right goes down well - not literally. We need bottles of booze, soft drinks, smellies, anything less cleaning fluids. Maybe you can clear your bar and get rid of any unopened booze you don't want or are ever likely to drink. Please call me, Jake Baker on **07525 441267** and I or Lynne will pick it up from you, or we can give our address details when you call and drop it off.

Mayor's Proms In the Park

Performed by **Rushden Town Band**
In aid of the Mayor's Chosen Charity
'It's my Life'
A non-profit based charity in Rushden for young adults with learning difficulties

Saturday 5th September 2026 at 7.00pm
Gates open 6.00pm

Walled Garden, Hall Park, Rushden, NN10 9NG

Tickets £15.00

Includes light refreshments, seating and a Union Jack Flag
You are welcome to bring your own champagne, picnic, chairs and rugs.
Email: mayor@rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk
R.S.V.P. by 28th August 2026

01933 316216 | www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk @rushdencouncil

ANNUAL CIVIC OPENING OF RUSHDEN FEAST
Thursday 10th September 2026
6.30pm at the Dodgem Cars
Spencer Park, Washbrook Road,
Rushden, NN10 6UR

Followed by a Fish & Chip Supper at the Railway Station

Tickets £15.00

To include a ride on the Dodgems, Fish and Chip Supper in the Railway Carriage at Rushden Station and a look around the Railway Station and Museum

In aid of the Mayor's chosen charity
'It's My Life'
A non-profit based charity in Rushden for young adults with learning difficulties

RUSHDEN
TOWN AND COUNTRY COUNCIL

TIME FOR A LARF OR TWO AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT 🤪🤪

Helen: "Hi, Jennie! How did you die?"

Jennie: "I froze to death. Honestly, it wasn't that bad. After the shivering stopped, I started feeling warm, sleepy, and just drifted off. What about you?"

Helen: "I died of a massive heart attack. I suspected my husband was cheating on me, so I rushed home to catch him. But when I got there, he was alone, just sitting on the couch watching TV."

Jennie: "So... what happened?"

Helen: "I was convinced there had to be another woman in the house! I searched everywhere—the attic, the basement, under every bed, and inside every closet. I exhausted myself so much that I collapsed and had a heart attack."

Jennie: "Oh... what a shame."

Helen: "Why?"

Jennie: "Because if you'd checked the freezer... we'd both still be alive!"

MY PARENTS SPANKED ME AS A CHILD
AS A RESULT, I NOW SUFFER FROM A PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION KNOWN AS "RESPECT FOR OTHERS"

DOES ANYONE STILL HAVE A LITTLE ROUND SCAR ON THEIR ARM?



Apparently exercise helps you with decision making. It's true. I went for a run this morning and decided I'm never going again.

NEW DEFENCE SECRETARY – THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WESLEY 'WES' STREETING



Only in the previous Newsletter we did an article on former paratrooper Dan Jarvis, yet since the arrival of a new Prime Minister there is a new Defence Secretary. The following is extracted from Forces News:

Wes Streeting described himself as 'not a typical politician'.

He now finds himself responsible for the UK's nuclear deterrent and the Armed Forces at a time of war in Europe and growing doubt over the reliability of the United States as a Nato partner.

The former health secretary was appointed Secretary of State for Defence by Prime Minister Andy Burnham after taking office, returning to Cabinet two months after resigning from Sir Keir Starmer's government.

He succeeds Dan Jarvis, the former Parachute Regiment officer who spent less than six weeks as Defence Secretary and resigned over the funding offered to the MOD. Mr Jarvis oversaw the publication of the Defence Investment Plan at the end of June, setting out £298bn of spending over four years, including an additional £15bn for defence spending.

Wes Streeting's paternal grandfather served in the Second World War in the Royal Navy and later in the Merchant Navy.

His responsibilities include the oversight of veterans

AFC RUSHDEN & DIAMONDS HOME MATCH VERSUS BOURNE TOWN COMBINED REMEMBRANCE SERVICE & VETERANS MATCHDAY 2026



The Branch Committee is absolutely delighted to see AFC Rushden & Diamonds has allocated Saturday 7th November 2026 as the Remembrance Service & Veterans Matchday.

This was a very successful community event last year with a group of Veterans and Cadets taking part; we have been invited again. The order of events would look something like this:

Location: AFC Rushden & Diamonds, The Stadium, Hayden Rd, Rushden NN10 0HX

Estimated public attendance: Approximately 600

Arrival: 1400 hrs

Service: 1440 hrs to 1500hrs - Standards, Serving Personnel, Veterans and Cadet Forces march to centre circle. Bugler in position.

Match Kick-off: 1500 hrs - all are welcome to stay but not compulsory as some may wish to disperse after the brief ceremony.

The above details will be confirmed in due course, but in the meantime, please note this in your diary.



EXTRACT FROM FORCES NEWS: THE 'WOMAN OF WAR' KEEPING THE SEAS OPEN



BFBS Forces News reporter James Wharton travelled to Iceland, where Commodore Maryla Ingham is preparing to hand over control of Nato's Standing Maritime Group One (SNMG1), the alliance's flotilla of warships currently patrolling the North Atlantic.

Cdre Ingham is one of the Royal Navy's top senior officers and has spent her time at the helm of SNMG1 commanding troops from across the alliance.

It's immediately obvious she is a big-picture thinker.

"The northern sea route[s] are opening up with climate change, so they're economically important," she explained.

"We've seen a growth in Russian interest in that area with the opening up of old Soviet-style bases, and we've seen China declare themselves as a near Arctic partner.

We're very interested in keeping those sea lines of communication free and open for everybody, because everybody's economies generally rely on the movement of goods by sea."

It's a fascinating, wide-ranging interview, with a woman who could well become the Royal Navy's First Sea Lord one day.

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE (MINISTER FOR VETERANS AND PEOPLE) - CALVIN BAILEY MBE MP



Calvin Bailey was born in Zambia and raised in Southeast London. An RAF scholar, he read Engineering and Engineering Management at the University of Exeter. He was elected as the MP for Leyton and Wanstead in July 2024 and appointed Minister for Veterans and People in the Ministry of Defence in June 2026.

He was commissioned as a pilot into the RAF in 1999, flying predominantly C-130 and A400M aircraft. He deployed on operations worldwide, including time in Afghanistan, Haiti, Cyprus, Sudan and Iraq. He also helped establish the Armed Forces Chronic Conditions and Disabilities Network and chaired the RAF Ethnic Minorities Network.

As a Parliamentarian he has been a member of the House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, Chair of the Armed Forces Community All Party Parliamentary Group.

He was awarded the US Air Medal for his service with the US Air Force in 2007 and the MBE in 2013. He is married, with four children. Responsibilities include:

- Office for Veterans Affairs (including veterans' policy, delivery and VALOUR)
- Armed Forces Covenant
- Defence culture – including oversight of the Raising our Standards Programme and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Armed Forces Commissioner
- Cadets

Extracted from Forces News - Calvin Bailey recently urged the Government to contribute more money to the cadets. They contribute £120 million to the UK economy annually in health and wellbeing benefits alone – but the responsibility for paying the bill for cadets falls squarely on the shoulders of the Ministry of Defence. He wants that to change. The Minister for Veterans and People, who was himself an air cadet, described the organisations as a "useful vehicle for opportunity across government" during a trip to a cadet camp in Lincolnshire.

He particularly wants the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education to pull their weight – something the latter did prior to 2024, when the Schools Minister abolished a £1.1 million grant to expand cadet numbers in secondary schools.

Improving prospects for young people is high on the agenda of multiple departments, and for good reason: more than a million people aged 16 to 24 are now classed as Neets (not in education, employment or training), and the government is keen to avoid adding to that number.

RBL ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE INCREASE

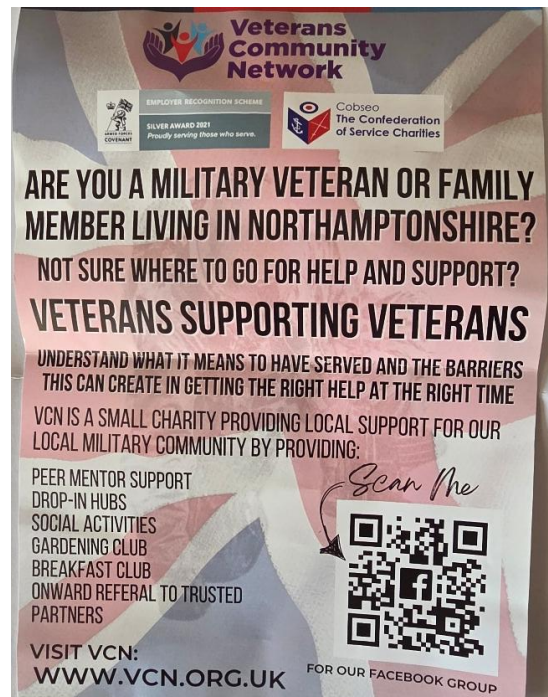
Members are reminded that in line with the motion passed by delegates at Annual Conference 2024, the annual membership fee will be increasing by £2 from £22 to £24 on 4th September 2026. Ahead of the fee change, the RBL will be reminding members through Central News, the membership eNewsletter, website and Legion magazine. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk

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PARTY IN THE PARK 2026



Great support was given to help put up the new Gazebo, especially Craig & Kev Martin who are not yet members of the Branch! 🙏🙏 Thank you all.



CEREMONIAL TRAINING DAY

There is a Ceremonial Training Day planned for **Saturday 19th September 2026**, from 10.30am to 3.00pm at the Army Reserve Centre Clare St, Northampton NN1 3JQ.

This is open to all Standards Bearers (including Youths) and anyone who wants to be a Parade Marshal.

To allow for catering including a light lunch, could members please notify attendance to Nick Fall, The County Parade Marshal via northamptonshire.parademarshal@rbl.community and copy that email to rushden.chairman@rbl.community Other regular training dates are published in the County Newsletter.

RUSHDEN CLASSIC CAR SHOW 2026



Play Your Cards Right was enjoyed by many and this is Steve Miller's own work. Colin Howitt and Jake Baker taking a break.



Poppy Appeal Organisers Ruth & Steve Miller & Mike Read with his beloved Classic DAF 55 Car

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0300 323 0137 Mental Health Matters Helpline - Midlands & East Veterans Service

0800 448 0828 Northamptonshire Helpline for Veterans 24/7

HOW MANY LIVING VC HOLDERS ARE THERE TODAY AND WHO ARE THEY?

There are 7 living holders of the Victoria Cross (VC) and the distinct regional Victoria Crosses for Australia and New Zealand worldwide.

The passing of the final Second World War recipient, John Cruickshank, in August 2025 left these seven modern recipients.

Living Victoria Cross Recipients

Willie Apiata (New Zealand) — Awarded for bravery in the War in Afghanistan (2007 for 2004 action) while serving in the New Zealand Special Air Service.

Johnson Beharry (United Kingdom) — Awarded for extreme gallantry in Al-Amarah, Iraq (2005 for 2004 actions) while serving in the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

Mark Donaldson (Australia) — Awarded for gallantry in Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan (2009 for 2008 action) with the Australian Special Air Service Regiment.

Daniel Keighran (Australia) — Awarded for valour in the Battle of Derapet, Afghanistan (2012, for 2010 action) while serving with the Royal Australian Regiment.

Joshua Leakey (United Kingdom) — Awarded for exceptional bravery in Helmand Province, Afghanistan (2015, for 2013 action) with The Parachute Regiment.

Keith Payne (Australia) — Awarded for conspicuous gallantry during the Vietnam War (1969) while serving with the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam

Benjamin Roberts-Smith (Australia) — Awarded for valour in Tizak, Afghanistan (2011, for 2010 action) while serving in the Australian Special Air Service Regiment.

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