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RUSHDEN BRANCH - NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023

CHAIRMAN'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Winter is now upon us and Yuletide is but round the corner, though many shops and stores would think it is tomorrow. 2023 has seen three Chairmen and given three is my lucky number and me being the third, I hope it remains that way for the next three years. In 2023 the Branch has seen a lot, done lots and the RBL lost its Patron HM The Queen.

2024 will bring more stability Branch-wise, as we have a new committee and, as seen in the next paragraph, there really is a brighter future where we will all benefit. We have already planned our events for the year, where I hope many of you will support the Main Events and offer up just an hour or two of your time, more if you wish. They are listed on pages 3 and 4; please give this some serious thought and don't leave it for just a few members to do it all. There's now 112 of us.

Who would have thought RBL Rushden Branch is involved in Line Dancing? Well, we are thanks to a wonderful Rushden lady called Linda Toleman. For many years, Linda has been running Line Dancing Groups in the county raising an average of circa £7,000 a year for many local charities. Linda is approaching her target of reaching the £100,000 mark by October 2024 and having already raised £94,000 in just nine years, is quietly confident that target will be met. Furthermore, Linda and her Committee have decided RBL Rushden Branch will be the next lucky recipients of funds raised. Wonderful news, isn't it? Does anybody want to join Lynne and me in giving the Beginner's Class a go at Irchester on Mondays 10am - 12pm? It's fun too. If so, call me on **07525 441267**. I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy, safe and prosperous New Year.

REMEMBRANCE TIDE 2023

Branch Schools Liaison Lynne Baker visited all our schools in Rushden, talking about PTSD and conflicts that have occurred since the end of WW2, visiting some schools on more than one occasion. Megan Graham and Mike Read talked to Year 6 pupils about their WW2 experiences as children. This year, with the aid of Branch Vice Chairman and Falklands Veteran Paul McKay, they attended five assemblies at Rushden Academy, a secondary school. Lynne talked about PTSD and casualties post WW2, showing a Facebook post written by a Falklands War Veteran. Paul McKay, as the author of this post was then introduced. The impact that this had on the students was palpable. He received a rapturous applause at the end of each Assembly. We also saw the largest turnout of Veterans and Standards at the Academy's Remembrance Service. Thanks go to Rushden Town Council for supporting Lynne at Rushden War Memorial's Garden of Remembrance for Schools; this was dedicated to Korean War Veterans Fred Wooding MBE and Maurice Morby who recently passed away. 250 junior schools' pupils were present; Branch Padre Linnet Smith supported the event as well as that on Armistice Day and the Remembrance Sunday Service. In addition to Branch members support and local volunteer road marshals, we must extend our thanks to Rushden Town Council for organising this year's Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service. 306th Bombardment Group Museum at Thurleigh invited the Branch to their Remembrance Service which was attended by the Branch Chairman, Secretary and BCS.



POPPY APPEAL UPDATE - So far Poppy Appeal Organiser Ruth Miller and her awesome team have raised over £42,000 and there's more to come. Update including schools next month.

WHAT'S ON IN OUR BRANCH?

Second Monday of Every Month – 7.30pm start. Branch Monthly Meeting at the Athletic Club. The next two meetings are on 11th December and 8th January 2024.

Every Wednesday & Saturday Morning – 9am start: Northants Veterans Breakfast Club dine at The Needle and Awl. All Veterans are welcome – Veterans' Families are invited to join on the last Saturday of each month.

First Thursday of every month – 10am to 12.30pm – Friendship Group meet at the Athletic Club, Newton Road, Rushden. Pop along for a cuppa and a chat any time in between 10am and 12.30pm. The next two meets are on 7th December and 4th January 2024.

11th December – 7.30pm. Branch Monthly Meeting at the Athletic Club. This will be a short meeting followed by a Patriotic Quiz Night, a Raffle, Nibbles and Mulled Wine.

12th December – midday to 2.30pm - Friendship Group Christmas Dinner for Veterans and dependants at the Masonic Hall, Rushden. Bookings are now closed.

8th January 2024 – 7.30pm. Branch Monthly Meeting at the Athletic Club.

12th February 2024 – 7.30pm. Branch Monthly Meeting at the Athletic Club followed by "Women's Land Army during the First World War" by Helen Frost.

WHAT ARE OUR MAIN EVENTS FOR 2024?

Your help is needed at these events highlighted below

- 9th January RAFA Games Night
- 20th January RBL County Conference
- 27th January Holocaust Memorial Day – Rushden Town Council run event.
- 1st Thursday of every month the Friendship Group Coffee Morning
- 24th February – 2nd Anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine
- 20th March – 21st Anniversary of the Iraq war
- 22nd March – Happy Feet Line Dancing Social Event
- 2nd April – 42nd Anniversary of the Falklands war
- 24th April – Branch Visit to RAF Coningsby
- 3rd to 5th May – East Midlands Steam Rally Chelveston
- 8th May – VE Day
- 10th to 12th May – RBL Annual Conference, Newport Wales
- 18th May – Wings Appeal Band Concert – joint support
- 9th June – Soap Box Derby
- 29th June – Armed Forces Day
- 13th July – Party in the Park
- 4th August – TBC – Classic Car Show
- 3rd September – Merchant Navy Day
- 3rd October – Alfred Lord Tennyson School Memorial Service
- 21st October – Trafalgar Day
- 25th October – Happy Feet Fundraising Presentation
- 25th October to 11th November – Poppy Appeal Fortnight

6th November – Garden of Remembrance for Schools
10th November – Remembrance Sunday Parade & Service
30th November – Christmas Lights Switch On
10th December – Friendship Group Xmas Dinner

Day trips are planned such as at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, Bletchley Park, the Shuttleworth Collection and Swiss Garden at Old Warden, the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, 306 Bombardment Group Museum at Thurleigh, RAF Coningsby and Sywell Airfield.

FRAUD TARGETING COMMUNITY GROUPS

The RBL has received an alert from Thames Valley Police about a WhatsApp scam affecting community groups nationwide. This is being shared for information purposes; we are not aware of any reports of this affecting groups involved with the Royal British Legion.

Even if you are not located in the Thames Valley area or do not use WhatsApp, please do read the below information on the scam to ensure you are aware of it and share this message with any in your network who may benefit from it.

Large community and religious WhatsApp groups are being targeted by scammers who infiltrate these groups to deceive their members into sending them money.

The fraud often begins when a member of the group receives a WhatsApp audio call from the fraudster, pretending, or claiming, to be a member of the group. This is done in order to gain the individual's trust, and often the scammer will use a false profile picture and / or display name, so at first glance it would appear to be a genuine member of the group.

The fraudster will then call the victim and say they are sending a one-time passcode which will allow them to join an upcoming video call for group members. The scammer then asks the victim to share this passcode with them so they can be "registered" for the video call. What's really happening is that the scammer is asking for a registration code to register the victim's WhatsApp account to a new device where they then "port" their WhatsApp profile over.

Once the fraudster has access to the victim's WhatsApp account, they will enable two-step verification which makes it impossible for the victim to access their account. The scammer will then message other members of the group, or friends and family in the victim's contacts, asking them to transfer money urgently as they are in desperate need of help.

What can you do to avoid being a victim?

- Never share your account's two-factor authentication (2FA) code (that's the six-digit code you receive via SMS).
- Set up two-step verification to give an extra layer of protection to your account. Tap Settings > Account > Two-step verification > Enable.
- THINK. CALL. If a family member or friend makes an unusual request on WhatsApp, always call the person to confirm their identity.
- You can report spam messages or block a sender within WhatsApp. Press and hold on the message bubble, select 'Report' and then follow the instructions.

If you have been a victim of fraud or cybercrime, report it [online to Action Fraud](#) or by calling 0300 123 2040. In Scotland, victims of fraud and cybercrime should report to Police Scotland on 101.



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

