

Edition Date: November 2022

We will remember them

To all whom we have lost this month. Our sincere condolences to family and friends. We specifically remember Dr Bob Hanson, Branch President and Chairman of the Lovedean and Horndean Branch' who recently passed away. 'Dr Bob' passed peacefully away recently and he will be sadly missed by his 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

County correspondence can be addressed to Hampshire & IOW MSO, PO Box 317, Southampton. SO45 9BS

November time



This time of the year is traditionally a busy time for the Royal British Legion. Branches are conducting the launch of their Poppy Appeal activities, Annual General Meetings of branches are taking place and new office bearers are being appointed to carry on the good work of the RBL.

It is also a time of reflection. We think of the Fallen and of those who served. The legacy of those service personnel that have gone before us is one of peace in our time, despite the fact that wars are being waged the world over. It is also a time of some uncertainty, where the war in the Ukraine is affecting daily life for thousands of people, including our own. It is a time for use to stand together and to remember that there is much to be grateful for.

Quote of the month

"People say live for the future, don't live in the past. But I don't live in the past; the past lives in me."
Olga Horak, Holocaust survivor

At this time of the year our branches hold their Annual General meetings and elect branch officials. The editor asks if branches can please submit the names and email addresses of branch chairmen and secretaries so that the Hants Link can be forwarded to them for distribution within the branch. The email address of the Hants Link is editor is HampshireLinkDW@yahoo.com. It is on the last page of every edition and branches are encouraged to send in news, photos and articles to make activities known within the Legion.

Stockbridge Cubs Remember



The Stockbridge cubs have made these statues as part of their Remembrance activities. They are on display at Stockbridge Church. This is a great effort by our younger generation in helping to remember the Fallen. Photos from Pete Pullin, with thanks.



Bordon and District Branch

On Wednesday 5th October 2022 the Bordon & District Branch lost a long standing member, Mr Steve Johnson to a long battle with dementia. Steve was a veteran who served with REME. He was a dedicated case worker for the Royal British Legion, helping many soldiers and veterans in need, as part of the County team. Steve worked hard to bring to life, the Bordon and Whitehill War Memorial that currently sits proud on the Bordon & Whitehill Highstreet (old A325). He acted as the Secretary or Chairman at various times for the Bordon & District Branch RBL, after reforming the Branch in 1984.

Steve also dedicated his time to the Poppy Appeal selling poppies door to door and as the Poppy Appeal Co-Ordinator for several years, as well as working hard at the local Fetes raising money for various other charities, along side The Poppy Appeal. He was a very active member of St Matthews Church in Blackmoor and on many occasions he went to the soup kitchen on Mondays and for tea and toast on Friday mornings. He was much loved and respected by many and he will be forever missed. The Service for Steve Johnson was held at St Matthews Church, Blackmore on 25th October at 11:30.



Gosport and Alverstoke Branch Memorial

Gosport and Alverstoke Branch have conducted a "tidy up" exercise at their war memorial garden in preparation for Remembrance in November. Brockhurst Primary School after school club known as the "Super Troopers" for service children enthusiastically painted some stones with appropriate images and words to complete the project for this year. The use of plastic plant troughs sunken into the ground is a very effective way to show off wooden memorial crosses.



The closing of the Earl Mountbatten Memorial Branch

Sadly, for me, the Memorial Branch has had to close after 42 years and we have amalgamated with the Romsey Branch to form the new Romsey Mountbatten Branch. Seven months after the death of Lord Louis Mountbatten in Ireland, the branch was formed on 29 March 1980, by 23 Members of the then Hampshire County Committee. As a founding Member, I became the 1st secretary/treasurer of the Branch and during those 42 years I have served 24 years as secretary and 32 years as treasurer until now. Membership started at 23 members and rose to 116 members in 1992 gradually declining to 19 members in 2022 – remembering that ALL Members belonged to another 'parent' branch in Hampshire.

The branch will be remembered at the National Memorial Arboretum with a tree planted in 2002 in memory of Lord Louis. I should personally like to thank the present Members of the branch for their support in Romsey Abbey for the final laying-up of our branch standard in September 2022.

Brian C N Soffe

A Time of Remembrance

The Unknown Warrior

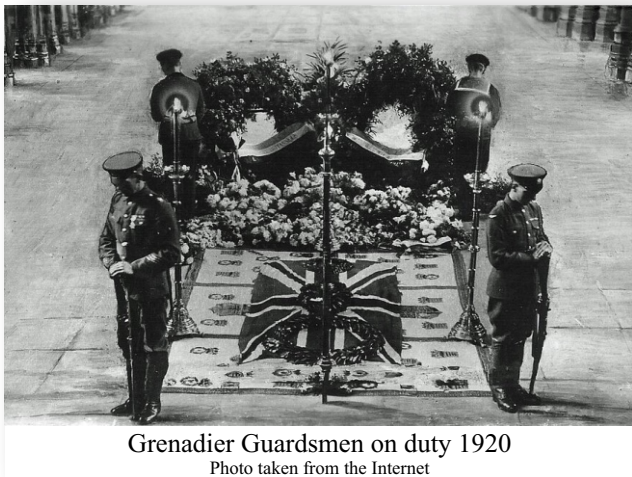
The idea arose when the Reverend David Railton (1884-1955) was deployed in France in 1916 and saw a grave with a rough wooden cross in a back garden at Armentières that had a pencilled sign saying "An Unknown British Soldier". After the end of World War One in August 1920 he wrote to the Dean of Westminster, Herbert Ryle and suggested that an unknown soldier be brought home and buried in Westminster Abbey. A body was chosen from four unknown British servicemen exhumed from four battle areas, the Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres and were placed in the chapel at St. Pol on the night of 7th November 1920. The GOC i/c Troops in France and Flanders, Brigadier General L.J. Wyatt accompanied by Colonel Gell, chose one of the Union flag covered bodies. A service was held the next morning and the body placed in a coffin lined

consisting of 100 holders of the Victoria Cross (from all three services) were present. Once the coffin was



The grave of the Unknown Warrior.

Photo taken from the Internet



Grenadier Guardsmen on duty 1920

Photo taken from the Internet

with
zinc
inside a
bigger coffin,
that was
covered with
the flag that
David Railton
had used as an
altar cloth
during the War
(known as the Ypres
or Padre's
Flag) and

shipped to England. (The flag now hangs in St George's Chapel).

On 11th November 1920 the coffin was placed on a gun carriage drawn by six black horses of the Royal Horse Artillery and was taken via Whitehall and the Cenotaph where King George V placed a wreath of red roses and bay leaves on the coffin with a card "In proud memory of those Warriors who died unknown in the Great War. Unknown, and yet well-known; as dying, and behold they live. George R.I. November 11th 1920". The Last Post was played here.

The carriage, accompanied by (Admirals) Lord Beatty, Sir Hedworth Meux, Sir Henry Jackson, Sir C.E. Madden, (Field Marshals) Lord French, Lord Haig, Lord Methuen, Sir Henry Wilson, (Generals) Lord Horne, Lord Byng, Albert Farrar-Gatliff and Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard followed by the King, members of the Royal Family and ministers of State, proceeded to Westminster Abbey. The coffin was carried into the west end of the nave of the Cathedral. Approximately 1,000 mourners and a guard of honour

put in place the King stepped forward and dropped a handful of French earth onto the coffin from a silver shell as it was lowered into the grave. The service ended when Reveille was sounded. A guard of honour remained, standing to attention, arms (rifles) reversed, heads bowed. On 18th November the grave was filled in, using 100 sandbags of earth from the battlefields and covered by a temporary stone inscribed A British warrior who fell in the great war 1914-1918 for king and country. Greater love hath no man than this.

On 11th November 1921 the present black marble stone was placed on the grave at a special service. US General Pershing conferred the Congressional Medal of Honour on the Unknown Warrior on 17th October 1921. (It is in a frame on a pillar nearby in the Abbey).

It is possible that the Unknown Warrior is from any one of the three services or from any part of the British Isles, Dominions or Colonies and represents all those who died who have no other memorial or known grave.

When the Duke of York (later King George VI) married Lady Elizabeth Bowes Lyon in the Abbey in 1923 as she left, laid her wedding bouquet on the grave as a mark of respect (she had lost a brother during the war). All royal brides married in the Abbey since then have sent back their bouquets to be laid on the grave (as also have some royal brides who were married elsewhere).



The grave of the Unknown Warrior surrounded by poppies.

Photo taken from the Internet



A Personal Story of Remembrance

Once in a while I find myself thinking back on my days in the armed forces. Memories flood back of contacts with the enemy, ambushes, land mines and coming under mortar fire in Rhodesia. I remember walking in the bush on foot patrols for miles and anticipating that the enemy will be just around the corner, ready to do his best to destroy us. I remember the look on a mother's face as she carried her baby on her back in an old blanket as we passed her on a dusty path joining small villages and an old greybeard man hobbling along with a crooked stick, off to the cattle dip, with his small grandsons, herding cattle.

I remember a fire-fight with the enemy and was forced to take an enemy's life to survive. After the contact was over I removed the sling from his AK 47 and kept it as a souvenir. I stared at his blank face and wondered if he thought it was worth it. I remember being wounded in an ambush and my co driver / machine gunner was killed instantly, several rounds in his head and chest. Life snuffed out in an instant. I remember Quentin, who came back to help us and chasing the enemy off; his aggression and first aid, saving the day and my life.

I remember big battles, coming under close artillery fire, and being attacked by enemy tanks in Angola. I can still hear the shrapnel clanging against the side of our Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle, looking out of the turret and seeing fellow soldiers under fire, vehicles being hit and it seemed like temporary chaos. Of course it was not. Everybody was well trained and knew exactly what was expected from them. They just got on with the job. I remember standing on top of my Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle north of the town of Cuvelai in south central Angola, hearing an oncoming enemy mechanised convoy including T55 and T62 tanks, and in awe, watched as Mirage ground attack aircraft came over, pitched up and attacked them. I was grateful I was not on the receiving end. Those were the aircraft of my brothers' squadron and their great skill was something to behold.

I remember going through the defences of captured enemy brigade deployments; underground bunkers and trench systems with a myriad of documents in Cyrillic, Spanish

and Portuguese. I remember going through the pockets of dead Cuban soldiers on Christmas morning, looking for information that would help us close with their comrades and destroy them. That was our intention.

I remember patrolling in Natal trying to stop the African National Congress killing Inkatha Freedom Party members and vice versa. I remember deploying to various areas in Natal and coming across small school children lying dead, their blood covered little bodies; their lifeblood seeping away in the dusty road when all they wanted to do was go to school and learn; killed by ANC terrorists. They just happened to be members of a family who belonged to a different political party and were slaughtered just because of it.

I remember my fellow comrades in arms. My brother Tom and cousin Mark served. I cannot be more proud of them. I served alongside brave men and women who did not take sides, who served loyally and impartially, not like the spineless cowards who hid behind their so called conscience or political ideology. I yearn for that comradeship in a slit trench in the middle of the night in Angola. I yearn for the days when I visited with my brother at his base, or in the operational area when he was also deployed and we shared the same circumstances.

I yearn for the comradeship of my fellow soldiers. The reality is that they are now much older, like I am, and scattered all over the world. Many are no longer alive, killed in their prime or long dead through old age. The reality is that my era of soldiering has effectively been forgotten or turned about to make us look like we were the evil ones in the conflict. Our battlefields are no longer.

I live far away from those places now, but I remember them. When I walk down the street and when I see the faces of the people, I am cynical. I ask myself; what values do they place on everyday life? They take life for granted. They do not know the comradeship of combat; the brotherhood of soldiers, airmen and sailors, but I do, and once again I remember and long for those days. Too often I remember.

DW

The Memorial at Overton

The Memorial at Overton village is in the local church grounds. It reflects the names of the Fallen from both World Wars. We remember them all.



Military Museums - D Day Museum Southsea Portsmouth

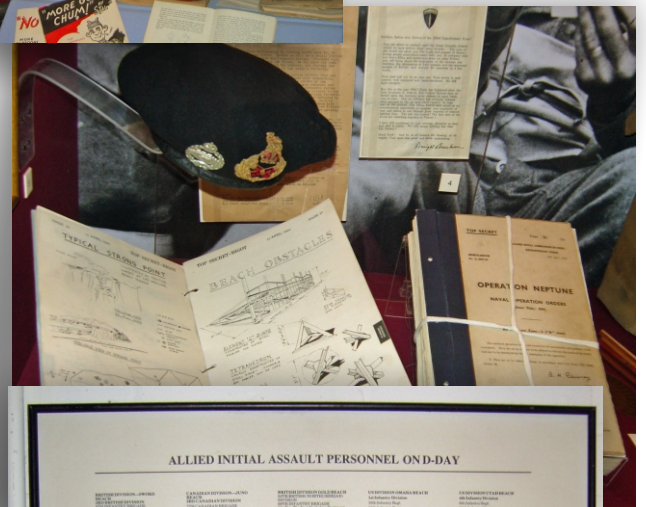
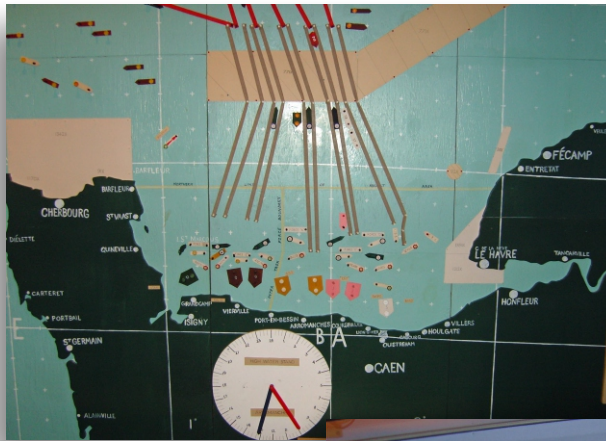
The D - Day Museum is situated on Clarence Esplanade in Southsea, Portsmouth and tells the story of pre D-Day preparations and the event on the day as well as just thereafter during the Battle of Normandy.

The museum has over 10,000 items in its collection and continually preserves, researches and acquires objects to share with the public through exhibitions, workshops and other activities. According to the Museum website it is fully accredited and meets the nationally agreed standards for UK museums. In the last year or two the museum has undergone a major upgrade costing £5 million. It tells the story of both the military

service falls under the remit of the council's cabinet member for Culture, Leisure and Sport.

Entry ticket costs. Adult £13.50 (£12.15 on line), Seniors (aged 60+) £10.80 (£9.72 on line), Students and children (aged 5 to 17) £6.75 (£6.08 on line), Families (up to 2 adults and up to 3 children) £33.75 (£30.38 on line), Under 5s are Free.

The museum website is at thedaystory.com
Address: Clarence Esplanade, Southsea, PO5 3NT
Phone: (023) 9288 2555



involvement and the personal stories behind D - Day. The museum is home to the Overlord Embroidery, an extensive work of art that depicts

the story of the operation across 34 hand-stitched panels stretching for a total of 83 metres. The D-Day Story is one of six museums run by Portsmouth Museums, part of Portsmouth City Council. Responsibility for the museums

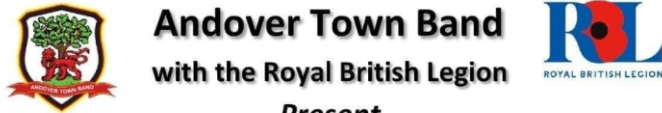


Other News

Hampshire County Conference 2023

Notice is given that the Annual Meeting of the County Conference will be held on Saturday 21st January 2023 at The Jubilee Hall, Little Shore Lane, Bishop's Waltham, SO32 1ED. The Conference will start at 10.30am and is anticipated to end no later than 4pm. Documents will be sent by the MSO to branch Chairman and Secretaries and are also available to download on MAP for those with access. <https://trbl.sharepoint.com/sites/BranchPortal-Hampshire/County/Shared/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

Please see the separate PDF document attached with the newsletter.



Andover Town Band
with the Royal British Legion

Present

Andover Remembers

**A Festival of Remembrance
for those who have fallen in war**

Friday Nov 11th at 7:30 PM

**Andover Baptist Church,
Charlton Road, Andover, SP10 3JH**

Tickets: Adult £10 and Children £2.50
from David Mellor Jewellers Andover Chantry Centre
or phone: 01264 394098

Profits from the evening to the Royal British Legion

www.andovertownband.com
Charity no. 1141183

Sponsored in Andover by

Mitutoyo UK

**NEW STREET
DENTAL CARE**



Know the medal - The Military Cross

This decoration was instituted on 31st December 1914. It is awarded for gallantry and was originally awarded to captains, lieutenants and warrant officers of the army and was then extended to RAF members of equivalent rank for bravery while serving on the ground as opposed to in the air. World war One members of the Royal Marines were also awarded this decoration. The 1993 Review of gallantry awards saw the discontinuation of the Military Medal (equivalent for other ranks) and all ranks are now awarded the Military Cross



Volunteer for the Poppy Appeal

Poppy Appeal volunteers are vital in enabling us to support our Armed Forces community through thick and thin – ensuring their unique contribution is never forgotten.

For more information on becoming a part of our incredible volunteer team please see the key information below, or scan the QR code to visit our site.



rbl.org.uk/poppyvolunteer

As the Poppy Appeal is fast approaching we are urgently looking for Volunteer Collectors to help at our manned stand collections. Can you spare a few hours for our Armed Forces Community? Meet new friends and join local volunteers across Hampshire & the Isle of Wight. Sign up today here: <https://forms.office.com/r/4B9qqJugqK> or contact Claire at csmith4@britishlegion.org.uk Tel: 07526 200209

British Forces Resettlement Services



British Forces Resettlement Services (BFRS) continue to give support and assist serving members of the Armed Forces, Reservists, Veterans, and their family members. It is sometimes daunting to take the first step into civvie street and support is available. Their services are open to service leavers, reserve forces, veterans, civilian MOD employees, partners and families Registration is free! Receive regular updates on job and training opportunities relevant to you. Use this link - www.bfrss.org.uk

County Websites

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 with any information or articles by the 20th of the month at:

HampshireLinkDW@yahoo.com

ALL LEGION INQUIRIES

(including Welfare requests)

Should be directed to the national call centre

0808 802 8080

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Errors and Omissions Excepted