



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**

RBL RUSHDEN BRANCH NEWSLETTER FOR JULY & AUGUST 2026

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EDITORS' WELCOME & THANKS

Welcome to this latest edition of RBL Rushden Branch Newsletter. We are always looking for ways to improve our branch membership experience, so if anyone has any ideas, please contact a committee member. We are keen to have our very own IT guru and someone who is keen to take on the Editor role of this Newsletter.

Much is covered in this edition and members are encouraged to support the community activities by helping with the stalls just for an hour or two.

Finally, it was most unfortunate that the Rushden & District Veterans Group had to cancel the parade and ceremonial element of Rushden's Armed Forces Day due to the Met Office's Extreme Heat Warning that was extended to 2100 hrs on Saturday 27th June. Health, safety and well-being of all involved must be a priority and it was undoubtedly the right decision. The RDVG conveys its thanks to all RBL Rushden Branch members who had volunteered to be road marshals or ushers and I echo those sentiments too. Thank you.

0300 323 0137 Mental Health Matters Helpline

Midlands & East Veterans Service

0800 448 0828 Northamptonshire Helpline for Veterans 24/7

RUSH 2THE DEN RECEIVES AN AFFILIATION CERTIFICATE

RUSH 2The DEN, a volunteer-run organisation based here in Rushden, is a welcoming community space, supporting local children, young people, adults and families. Its aim is to simply create a safe, inclusive and supportive place where people can connect, take part in activities and seek community group support through its two closely aligned charities, RUSH 2The DEN Youth Club and RUSH 2The DEN Tots & Adults. Inclusivity is key in all they do and connecting with and supporting the Armed Forces community through the Royal British Legion Rushden Branch, is just but one way they demonstrate this.

RUSH 2The DEN's involvement over the years, which included sending Christmas letters to our Armed Forces personnel serving all over the world and showing a constant presence at Armed Forces Day Parades, Remembrance Sunday Service and Parades, not to mention encouraging those interested in enlisting into the HM Armed Forces (more recently two youths - and there are others who wish to follow suit), has been formally recognised by the award of an RBL Affiliation Certificate to RUSH 2The DEN.

This Affiliation Certificate confirms RUSH 2The DEN's official connection and contribution to the Royal British Legion by being formally associated with RBL Rushden Branch. It demonstrates compliance with RBL standards and acknowledges contributions to the Legion's objectives, including support for the Armed Forces community and participation in local or national activities. RUSH 2The DEN Leader River said *"We are very proud to be acknowledged for what we do when supporting our local Armed Forces community and receive this Certificate with pride. It will be proudly displayed with the King's Award for Voluntary Service (2024), the North Northamptonshire Active Communities Award (2025) and numerous awards received during the last few years."*



Pictured left to right: County Youth Officer & Branch Community Coordinator Peter Armstrong, RUSH 2The DEN Leader River, Branch Chair Jake Baker & Branch Secretary & Schools Liaison Lynne Baker.

RUSH 2The DEN club members took advantage of a photoshoot too!

Editors' Note: RBL Rushden Branch is also affiliated with Rushden Sea Cadets and will shortly be renewing its affiliation with Alfred Lord Tennyson School due to its name change.

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT ARMED FORCES PENSIONS AWARENESS WEEK?

Your Armed Forces Pension is one of the most valuable benefits of your service, yet it remains one of the least understood. Running from 14th to 18th September 2026, the week has been developed in collaboration with the Forces Pension Society and The White Ensign Association.

Whether you are currently serving, approaching discharge, or already a veteran, understanding your pension is important.

Full details, event links, and resources will be published nearer the time on Defnet, MOD social media channels, Forces Pension Society website: www.forcespensionsociety.org and www.whiteensign.co.uk and this newsletter as soon as they are known.

Immediate Note: New online Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) Form 14. It is going to be easier now to apply for your Armed Forces Pension because it can all be done online. Beforehand one had to access the form, download it, fill it in and post it off. Access the new online AFPS Form 14 on GOV.UK by searching for AFPS Form 14

RBL WELFARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

DO YOU NEED ANY HELP, OR DO YOU KNOW A VETERAN OR RBL MEMBER WHO NEEDS HELP? IF SO, PLEASE CONTACT OUR NEW BRANCH COMMUNITY SUPPORTER ANNA FERREIRA-GOMES VIA EMAIL. YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT THE BRANCH COMMUNITY COORDINATOR, PETER ARMSTRONG ON 07498 243683. (SEE THE WHO'S WHO SECTION OF THIS NEWSLETTER FOR THEIR EMAIL ADDRESSES).

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

1st July – 110th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme
11th July – Party in the Park
23rd July – RBL Virtual Townhall Membership Meeting
27th July – Anniversary of the end of the Korean War (1953)
31st July – End of Op Banner (Northern Ireland)
31st July – End of the 100 days Passchendaele War (known as the Third Battle of Ypres)
2nd August – Rushden Classic Car Show
15th August – 81st Anniversary of VJ Day
3rd September – Merchant Navy Day organised by RBL Rushden Branch
5th September – 132nd Dean & Shelton Country Show
6th September – Bark in the Park
14th September – RBL Rushden Branch Informal Evening
14th to 18th September – Armed Forces Pension Awareness Week 2026
15th September – 86th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain
2nd (3rd) October – 86th Anniversary of the bombing of Alfred Lord Tennyson School
5th November – Schools Garden of Remembrance Ceremony Rushden War Memorial
8th November – Remembrance Sunday Parade & Service organised by the Town Council
11th November – Armistice Day organised by the Town Council
16th November – Branch AGM – **3rd Monday of the month**
28th November – Rushden Christmas Lights Switch On
14th December – RBL Rushden Branch Christmas Night

THE REGULAR MONTHLY ACTIVITIES FOR JULY & AUGUST

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 6th July & Monday 3rd August.

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 Monday 13th July, which will be followed by the Speaker from Northamptonshire Carers.

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 26th July and 25th August.

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 25th July and 29th August.

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 2nd July and 6th August.

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 9th July and 13th August.

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 30th July and 27th August.

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 31st July and 28th August.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED TO SUPPORT UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

11th July – Party in the Park

2nd August – Classic Car Show

5th September – 132ND Dean & Shelton Country Show

6th September – Bark in the Park

If you can help, even just for an hour or two, then please contact our Events Coordinator Ray Burke on **07853 085368** or ramondo4@yahoo.co.uk

WHO'S WHO IN OUR BRANCH?

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

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

*Vice Chair – 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 or **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 or **07498 243683**

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

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

** Position vacant from AGM on 16th November 2026.

SUCCESSION PLANNING – NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. PLEASE CONTACT BRANCH SECRETARY OR SPEAK TO ANY OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

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

AFC RUSHDEN & DIAMONDS SPONSORED BY RBL RUSHDEN BRANCH

Our branch connection within the local community continues to go from strength to strength. We are helping AFC Rushden & Diamonds as much as they are helping us. The following Facebook post sums it up beautifully:

WELCOME RUSHDEN ROYAL BRITISH LEGION 🍷

We would like to give a huge thank you to [Royal British Legion Rushden Branch](#) for joining us as **NEW** perimeter sponsors for the 2026/27 season!

Having attended our Remembrance Day games over the last few seasons, Jake and his fellow Branch members have shown a real dedication to support our community and are determined to be doing that more.

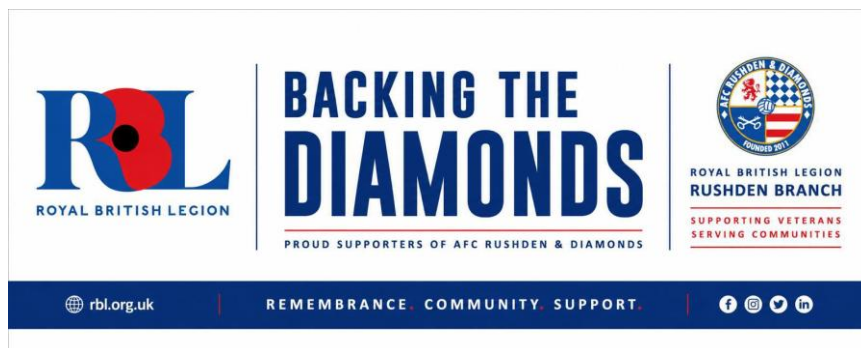
The Rushden Branch meets on the second Monday of the month at the Rushden Athletic Club, Newton Road, Rushden, NN10 0HF at 7.30pm.

Membership is open to everyone. If you have an interest in the objectives of the Legion and want to help and support those who have served and their families, come and join us. We welcome men and women of all ages, whether they have served in the Armed Forces or not. If you want to find out more, get in touch: branches.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/rushden/

☎ 07525 441267 or ✉ rushden.secretary@rbl.community

Left: Facebook post.

Below: Sponsor Board that will be displayed at the pitch perimeter throughout the 2026/2027 Football Season.



On Saturday 4th July, Rushden & Diamonds are hosting a Matchday Sponsors Hospitality Day at Hayden Road Rushden and have invited members to attend. Eight Members have put their names forward, so we are well represented. Thank you and whilst there, in between the nibbles and drink, don't forget to mention the RBL. The friendly match is against Higham United with kick-off the usual 3pm.

FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

The ballot for this year's Festival of Remembrance closed on 24th June! Next phase is on:

- Wednesday 8 July – evening ballot is drawn and entrants informed of the outcome and;
- Thursday 9 July – afternoon ballot is drawn and entrants informed of the outcome.

THE VEGGIE PATCH IN WOLLASTON

Recently our newly appointed Branch Community Supporter or BCS Anna Ferreira-Gomes visited The Veggie Patch in Wollaston, and she was very impressed—it is an excellent space. The project is run by The Daylight Centre in Wellingborough and serves as a wellbeing environment for their service users, alongside operating as a small-scale social enterprise selling produce grown on site.

If any members are interested, please email Lynne Baker, the Branch Secretary at rushden.secretary@rbl.community. It offers flexibility for a range of needs—participants can engage in hands-on activities if they wish, or simply use the environment as a place to rest, recharge, and socialise.

Anna has already spoken with the Daylight Centre Manager, who is open to the idea and interested in discussing this further. It was noted that they would expect a financial contribution (which the Branch can seek through the RDVG) to support staffing and running costs for any sessions RBL Rushden Branch may arrange.

RBL MEMBERSHIP FACEBOOK

The national launch of our RBL membership-exclusive Facebook group has been created so that members can share their good news stories, share thoughts and ideas, and hear updates from the RBL.

To join, you need to have a Facebook account. You'll be asked to verify your RBL membership and, once approved by admins, you're in! There are house rules, which you will see on joining, but we hope that this will be a new and fun way for our members to connect with each other. Kindly note, questions about your membership should be sent to membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.

[Find and join the group here](#) or search on Facebook for *Members of the Royal British Legion*. You may share the link with other members. From July, the RBL will begin sending out email invitations to members, in stages by region, to ensure that as many as possible have the opportunity to join. See you in the group!

MEET THE FORMER PARA NOW IN CHARGE OF DEFENCE



It's all change at the top of the MOD, as a former paratrooper takes on the role as Secretary of State for Defence: Dan Jarvis.

A former major in the Parachute Regiment, Mr Jarvis brings frontline military experience to the role, having deployed on operations in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan before leaving the Army to enter politics.

He was also awarded an MBE in 2011 for his service in the Army, making him the first serving MP to be decorated for military service for a number of years. He said it was an "honour and a privilege" to serve once more alongside the Armed Forces, praising their "professionalism, courage and extraordinary skill".

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ARMED FORCES DAY EVENTS IN THE REGION

Branch Members have been busy both in the community and supporting Rushden & District Veterans Group in this year's celebrations of our Armed Forces. Unfortunately, the Parade and Drumhead Service was cancelled following the Met Office issue of an Amber Extreme Heat Warning, which was not due to expire until 2100 hrs on Saturday 27th June 2026. The RDVG rightly felt that many of the would be parade participants were very young or well into their senior years, therefore vulnerable; and they have a responsibility to ensure both their public safety and that of road marshals, ushers, etc.

That said, on Rushden Armed Forces Day itself, the Rushden Historical Transport Society's Goods Shed was in full swing with many stalls of various kinds from arts and craft, face painting, jewellery, Rushden Town Council, Brain Health, not to mention military stalls, such as the RNA, RBL, SSAFA, Help for Heroes, etc. We were entertained by Rodney Dell, a much experienced and delightful local singer who entertained stall holders and visitors to the Goods Shed for well over two hours. Rod was very well received, and we'll surely be seeing him and of course hearing him again.

Across the road, Beat Route Radio was present on the platform, and everybody there had a great time singing, hopefully drinking sensibly and having a great time. Unfortunately, many of the stall holders heard the fun but didn't get a chance to experience it.

On behalf of the RDVG Branch Chair Jake Baker wishes to extend a special thanks to Richard Aspley and his team from Event Safety Group Ltd for providing security on the day and to Lauren Gilbert, who is Asda's Community Champion, who, despite the cancellation of the parade, donated over 200 bottles of chilled water for all to help themselves to during the day.

Here below and the following pages are images taken of both Armed Forces Week and Day:

Rushden Town Council is very supportive of the Armed Forces Community and is renowned for displays for many occasions such as seen here. Branch Standard Bearer Mark Taberner-Stokes at Raunds attending the raising of the Armed Forces Day Flag Ceremony.





A successful day with the stall raising a lot of money for the Poppy Appeal, with Lynne Baker, Sarah Butlin and Ray Burke, just three of many supporting the stall that day. Thank you to you all 😊



Events Coordinator Ray Burke chilling and The Sallie Army's final day of yomping for the Combat Stress March for March fund-raiser. They raised a whopping £7,000. HUGE CONGRATULATIONS!



A sight to behold. Troops Trucks & Stores still came with their vintage vehicles, a great feature in Rushden's Armed Forces Day Parades, despite their disappointment of the Parade being cancelled. Not every day do you get a train flying the AFD Flag. Thank you RHTS.

POST 45 CEREMONY

A Post-1945 Memorial Service is a ceremony held annually to commemorate those with county connections who have served in conflicts and peacekeeping missions since the end of the Second World War. They are held at various locations, and for this region the Post 45 Ceremony was held on Sunday 28th June (usually the last Sunday of June) at Northampton's Towcester Road's Commonwealth War Graves Commission section of the Cemetery. This special ceremony features the reading of the Post 1945 Roll of Honour, which includes about 140 names. This is open to the public, especially families, friends and veterans. WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.



Top left: Mark Taberner-Stokes in the middle being led by County Parade Marshal, Nick Fall.

Top right: Mark at a solemn point of the ceremony.

Left – from left to right: County Chair Ian Byrnes, Northampton Branch Chair Brian Burke, Rushden Branch Standard Bearer Mark Taberner-Stokes, County Parade Marshal, Nick Fall, Brixworth Branch Chair Eddie Edmunds and Membership Council Representative South East Midlands & Rushden Branch Member Paul McKay.

YELDEN STRAWBERRY FAYRE 2026

Unfortunately, there is no 'photographic evidence' of our stall or its supporters, but this was held the day after AFD 26 and was a successful 3-hour event. Thanks go to Sally Morton, Heather Phillip, Janet Flowers, David Hawker, Steve & Ruth Miller and Jake & Lynne Baker

ARE WE UP FOR A BIT OF HUMOUR?

Please send some good clean jokes in to rushden.chairman@rbl.community otherwise, well, these are a bit desperate 🤔

What do you call a magic dog? A Labracadabra!

Why did the sun go to school? To get a little *brighter*.

Summer is the only season where you can burn your feet, your shoulders, and your dinner... all in the same afternoon.

Knock, knock. Who's there? Adore. Adore who? Adore is between us, so open it!

Did you hear the one about the guy who ate a frog? He's probably going to croak.

NOW HERE'S A FASCINATING READ: MILLERS SAVING LIVES BY NATHANAEL HODGE

These two oval plaques shown below once decorated the carriages of a First World War Ambulance Train. These trains transported wounded soldiers from the trenches to nearby hospitals where they could be properly cared for and were equipped with bunks for casualties and treatment rooms where nurses could provide vital immediate care from life-threatening injuries sustained during battle.

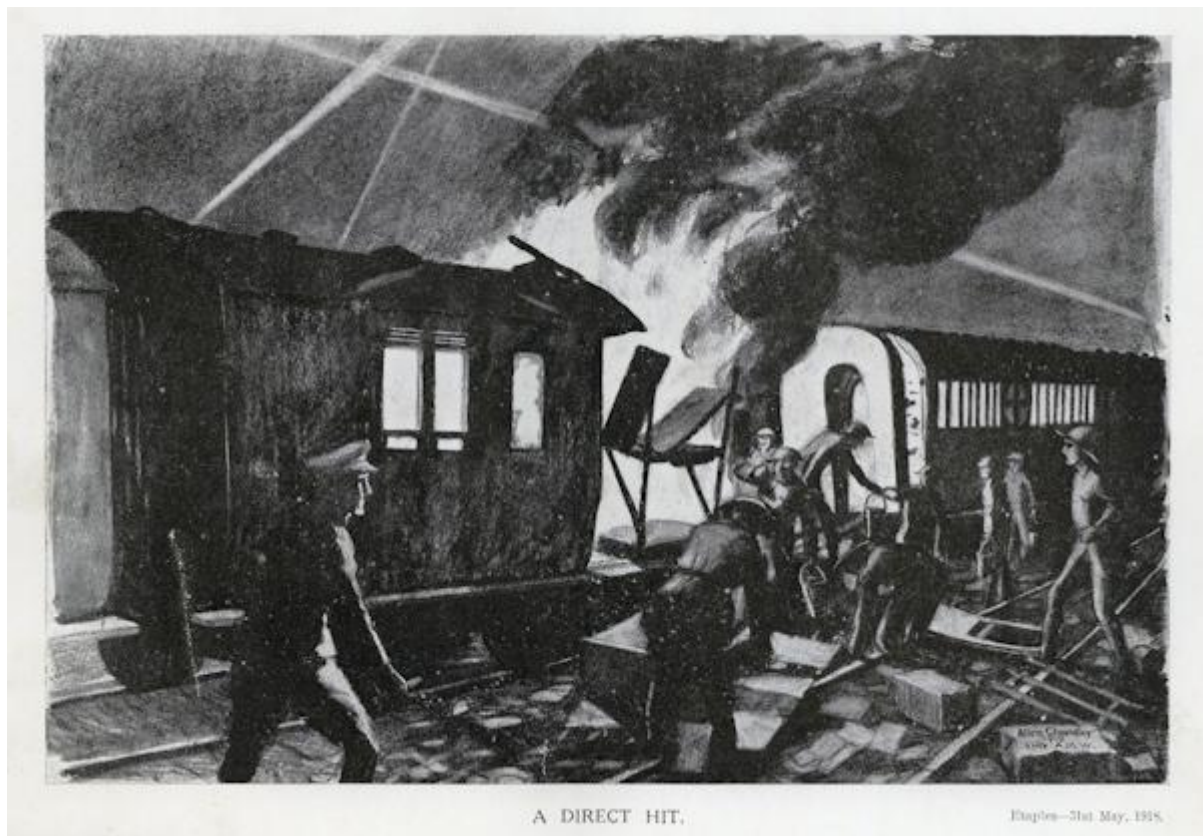


Two of the trains, no's 16 and 17, were donated to the war effort by the United Kingdom Flour Millers, whose considerable fundraising paid for their construction. They were far more suited to their role than the French equivalent (converted rolling stock trains), and by the end of the war they had helped transport over two million wounded.

A Direct Hit



A book called *A Train Errant* shines light on this little-known aspect of the First World War. The book contains a bound collection of newsletters, *The Orderly Review*, which were published on board Great War Ambulance Train No. 16, one of the two trains donated by the millers. *The Orderly Review* was quite a varied publication, describing itself as 'illustrative, critical and literary', with handwritten contributions ranging from essays on Gothic architecture, adverts mocking pastries and reports on the nature that could be seen from the train windows.



The sketch shown above from one of the newsletters depicts an incident that occurred on 21 March 1918, when two bombs landed squarely on the ambulance train whilst it was boarding wounded soldiers at Agnez. The trains were painted with red crosses on the outside to show that they were carrying the injured and should be exempt from shelling, but the enemy were not always merciful, and there were reports of trains having to hide in tunnels to escape the bombs. This train didn't make it to shelter in time, but the article describes how although the whole side of the coach was wrecked, miraculously nobody was killed and only two people sustained very slight injuries. The incident must have been quite a shock to those on board, but luckily, they lived to write about it in the paper! The report states:

A couple of terrific explosions, followed by the crash of falling glass announced the arrival of two bombs opposite "H" kitchen. They fell in a shed, which took off some of their force, but the whole side of the coach was wrecked. By a piece of singular good fortune no one was killed. The mess-room was crammed with patients and every part of the train filled up, yet the only casualties were Gibson, who was cut about the head, and Stanley, who was hit in the back by a piece of wreckage.



Those on the train were not from the British Army, but from the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU), a Quaker organisation for those who wanted to serve but due to their pacifist beliefs were not able to undertake armed combat. Despite their pacifist nature, the members of the FAU witnessed all the horrors and risks of war and saved many thousands of lives. One such FAU member was an individual called J W Major, who is shown in the picture above standing second from the right on the back row. This gentleman was the father of Ken Major, one of the founding members of the Mills Archive and whose extensive collection can be viewed [on our online catalogue](#).

Death Valley

The Mills Archive is very grateful for the kind donation of the plaques by Stephen Cannons, from the collection of his father, John Cannons, a lifelong railway enthusiast. Stephen also provided an account of a relative, Arthur England, who travelled on an ambulance train. Arthur was stationed in what became known as Death Valley, due to the heavy shelling of the area. On the 1st June 1916 he reported:

"I was hit about 11, a nice little machine gun bullet in my left thigh which went straight through – no great damage."

He would go on to spend a fortnight in a hospital near the front line while his leg healed and was then sent home by a sympathetic doctor so he could get some leave, having been in Europe for a year. To help his journey, the kind doctor marked him as a stretcher case – but on arrival at the station, the authorities informed the wounded that only walking cases would be allowed on the train. At this point Arthur decided he was no longer a stretcher case, got up and boarded the train back to Britain! His remarkable story, however, does not finish there. Arthur would later return to France where he would be more seriously injured. On returning once again to England, the hospital ship

he was on was hit and the wounded were transferred onto fishing boats to make the rest of the crossing.

Ultimately by the end of the war, it is estimated that close to 2.7 million wounded soldiers had travelled on ambulance trains. They were responsible for saving hundreds of thousands of lives.



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