

Edition Date: September 2023

We will remember them



To all whom we have lost this month. Our sincere condolences to family and friends. Geoffrey Buckley, died on 8 August 2023 at the age of 101. He was a member of the Hayling Island branch of the RBL and served as a merchant seaman during World War Two and deployed on the Malta convoys. In 1992 he went to Malta with his wife to be awarded the Malta George Cross Fiftieth Anniversary Medal. His funeral was held at the Oaks Crematorium, Barton's Rd, Havant on Wednesday 30 August.



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

The Time of the Year

The Hampshire County Committee meeting was held on the 23rd August and our County Chairman, Tim Russell a report on the current state of affairs in Hampshire RBL.

He said the following - "Whether we know it or not, acts of camaraderie, the Remembrance services, and events we attend, the fundraising we participate in, the campaigning we support, the knowledge we share and the kindness we show each other constitute the new Legion purpose, 'that membership exists so our Armed Forces family has friends and allies standing by them in every community'. If we in Hampshire focus on these key elements and remind our Branches of their core purposes, regardless of the frustrations and obstacles we face as a committee we will make a real difference. As always, we have a lot of work to do, and we need to identify willing and able new committee members to share the load. One of the recruiting strategies is 'Member get member', we should follow this example".

This must be the focus of the branches of Hampshire. At this time of the year we need to also focus on a few important aspects. Firstly, November is eight weeks away. It is the most important time of the year for the Royal British Legion as we enter a concerted effort to collect for the Poppy Appeal. Even more importantly, we remember the Fallen as a focus of main effort culminating in Remembrance Sunday. The balance between all our activities must be finely tuned. Always at the centre of what we do must be our veterans, the armed forces and their families. It is the very purpose of the RBL; started so many years ago just after the end of the First World War.

To do this, branch admin needs to be kept up to date. It will soon be time for branch annual general meetings, the election or re-election of branch officials, the completion of Branch Plans and updating asset registers. DW



The Purpose of the RBL

The RBL is an amalgamation of The National Association of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers (1916), The British National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers (1917), The Comrades of The Great War (1917) and The Officers' Association (1920). On the 14th May 1921, at the Unity Conference in the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, London, the Draft Constitution, together with amendments, alterations, and additions were agreed as the Constitution of the British Legion. This Constitution was to become operative from Sunday 15 May 1921. At 9am on 15 May 1921, the ex-Service men sealed their agreement at the Cenotaph, the shrine to their dead comrades. Field Marshall Earl Haig and Lance Bombardier Frederick Lister of The Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers were the founders and they became the British Legion's first President and first National Chairman respectively. There would be no distinction between rank, religion or political affiliation.

The main purpose of the Royal British Legion was straightforward: to care for those who had suffered from serving in the Armed Forces during the Great War, whether through their own service or through that of a husband, father, or son. The suffering took many forms; from the effect of a war wound on a man's ability to earn a living and support his family, to a war widow's struggle to give her children an education. Over six million men had served in the Armed Forces during the Great War and 725,000 had never returned. Of those who came back, 1.75 million had suffered some kind of injury and half of these were permanently disabled; additionally, there were those who depended on their loved ones who had gone to war.

In 1921, the tradition of an annual Two Minute Silence had been established in honour of the dead and the first Poppy Appeal was launched on 11 November 1921. In 1922 the Poppy Factory in Richmond was formed where disabled ex-Service personnel were employed to make poppies for the annual appeal. The Royal Charter was introduced in 1925.

https://support.britishlegion.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/1243/~/-/history-of-the-royal-british-legion

A quick visit to Germany

Some may know that I am a veteran, having served in the Rhodesian and then the South African army for a total of 33 years and have a passion for things military. It is in the blood and an opportunity arose to visit some of the areas along the Rhine in Germany, that saw much action during World War Two. Our group was able to visit Hurtgenwald where fierce fighting took place in the forests as well as various crossing points on the Rhine where the US Army crossed further into Germany, as well as a quick stop to look at the area of Operation Varsity where British and American paratroopers and glider-borne troops landed to secure the area around Hamminkeln. We then visited the remains of the bridge at Remagen before returning home. The photos on this page are an illustration of the trip.

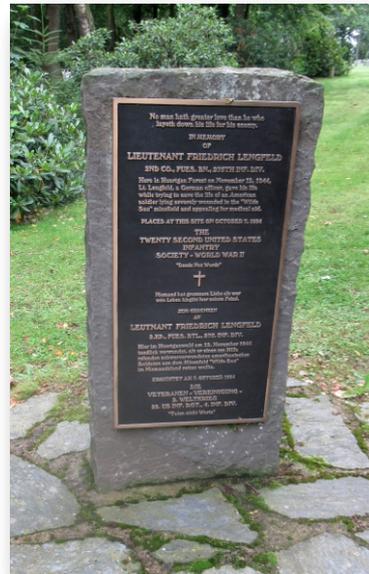
What is of significance is the fact that the act of remembrance is not common practice there, for obvious reasons, or so I thought. There are very few memorials or monuments in Germany and while the military cemeteries are well kept they are not visited in the same way cemeteries are visited in France and Belgium. I spoke to a young woman who is a volunteer at the excellent museum in the Hurtgenwald and found that all the people who run the museum are volunteers. She explained that most German veterans of the war are no longer alive and those that are, are now frail. Many Germans were killed in Germany during the war and therefore there are thousands of graves of



Grave of a US soldier in the Hurtgenwald



Grave of a US soldier in the Hurtgenwald



Grave of a German soldier in the Hurtgenwald



Grave of a US soldier in the Hurtgenwald



Crossing point over the River Rhine at Ork.
US 30th Infantry Division



soldiers that are never visited or remembered because there is nobody left in the family to actually do so. The majority of people would rather just forget about the war as it is considered a shameful matter.

Knowing how we place much emphasis on remembrance at home in Great Britain I found it sad that soldiers have given their lives for their country and their loved ones and they are no longer remembered. It reminded me of the graves of the German soldiers buried in our local cemetery in Basingstoke and the futility and sadness of war, no matter where it takes place. It also reminded me that we have much to be grateful for and that we have an opportunity to remember with gratefulness. DW



The remains of the bridge at Remagen



Grave of an RAF officer of 617 Sqn (Dam Busters).
Rheinberg Allied Cemetery

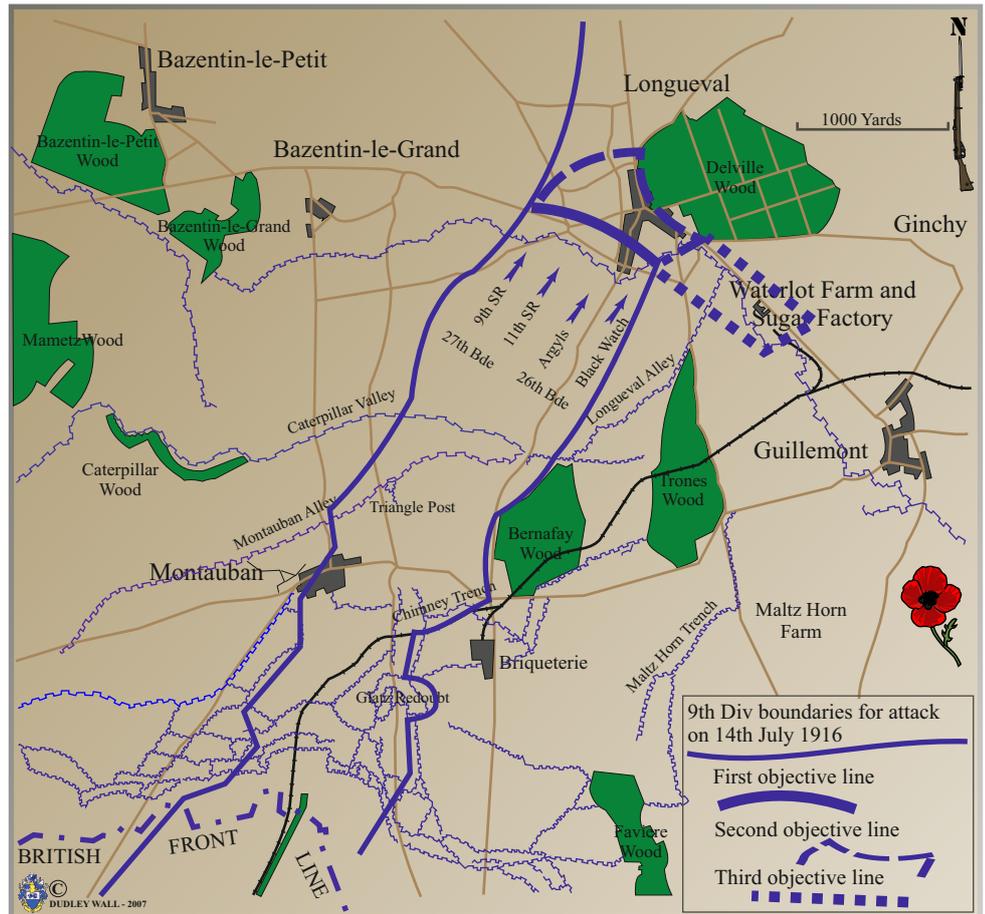


Grave of an RAF officer from South Africa.
Rheinberg Allied Cemetery

The Battle of Delville Wood, 15 July - 3 September 1916

The First World War started in 1914 with the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir-presumptive to the Austrian and Hungarian thrones, by Gavrilo Princip, a Serb nationalist. It was a military conflict which lasted from 1914 to 1918 and began as a local European war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia on 28th July 1914 and was transformed into a general struggle when Germany declared war against Russia on 1st August 1914. It eventually became a global war involving 32 nations. The Allied countries included Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy and the USA. The coalition (known as the central powers) included Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria. The fundamental causes of the conflict, were rooted deeply in the European history of the previous century. Particularly in the political and economic policies that prevailed on the continent after 1871 when Germany became a great world power. Germany's strategy for its western front focussed on its forces sweeping through Belgium to outflank and destroy the French. The advance faltered and degenerated into trench warfare along a wide front. Trenches stretching 800km stretched from the Swiss border to the North Sea.

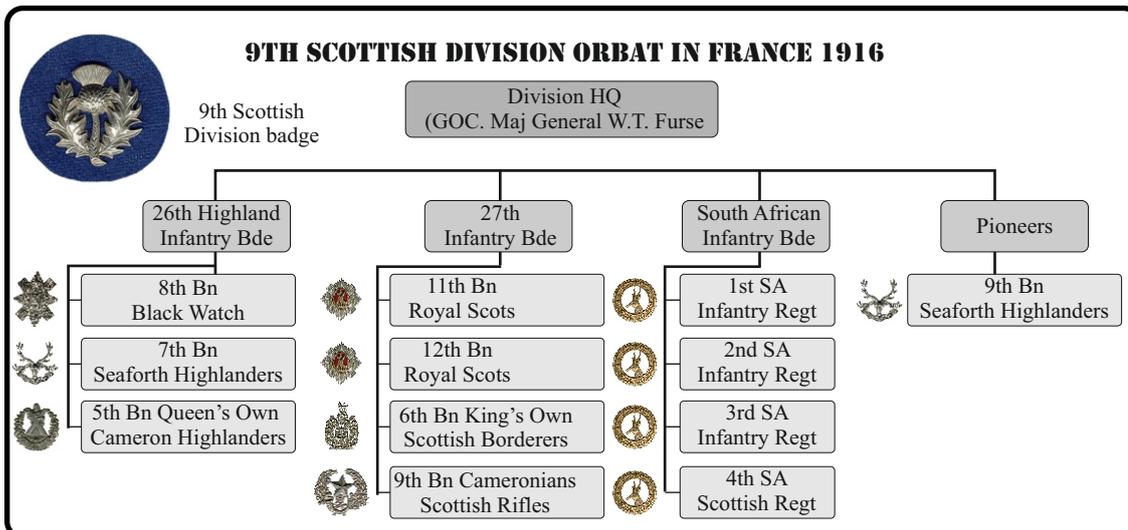
The countries of the Empire rallied to the cause and contributed forces to help. This included South Africa. An infantry brigade was raised specially for service on the Western Front. It comprised four regiments. The strength of the Brigade at the end of training was 160 officers and 5 648 other ranks. From Potchefstroom the Brigade entrained for Cape Town and sailed to England where they were put in barracks at Bordon in Hampshire to undergo a further two months training. The brigade was then deployed to Egypt. In late 1915 Gaafer Pasha led his Senussi tribe against the Egyptian government. Britain acted and 1 SA Infantry

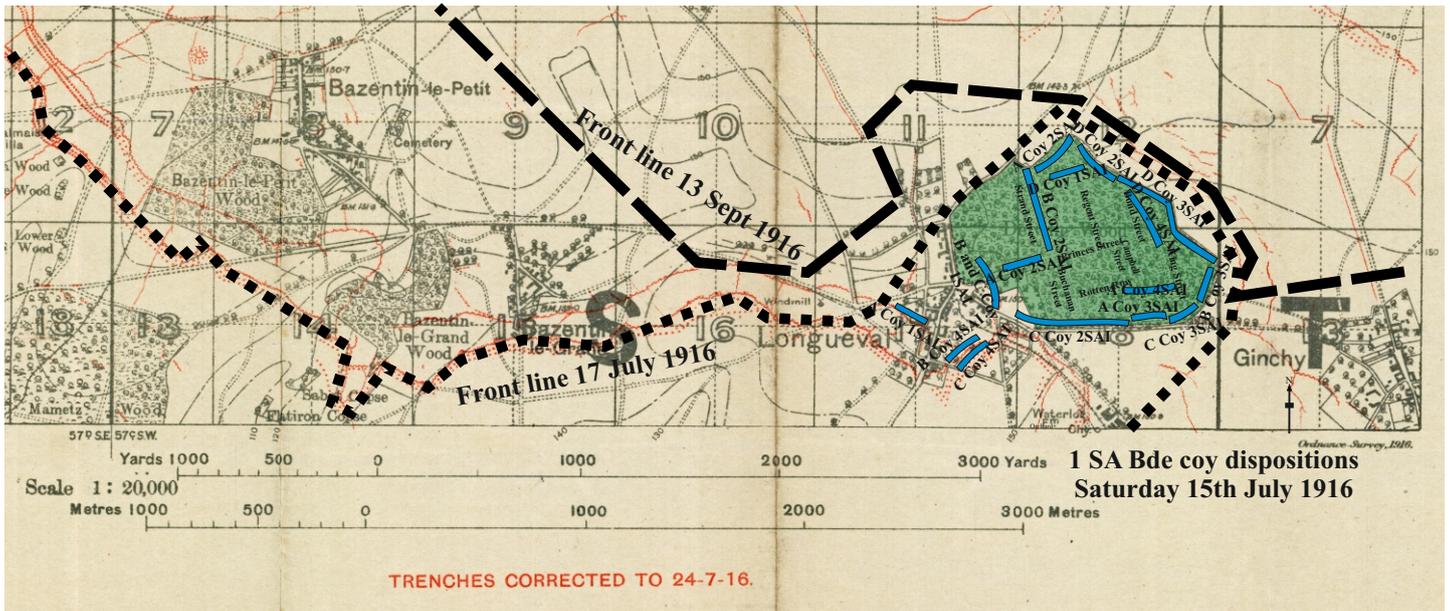


Brigade was deployed to the Western Desert. The 2nd SA Infantry were the first to see action which took place at Halaxin. Other elements of the South African forces were detached to a column led by Brig Gen Lukin and comprised the 1st and 3rd South African Infantry; Dorsetshire Yeomanry; 1st/6th Royal Scots; one squadron of The Royal Buckinghamshire (Yeomanry) Hussars; and the Nottinghamshire Battery of the Royal Horse Artillery. The column were given the coastline to patrol and met with the enemy at Agagia on 26 February 1916. The Senussi were defeated in the first clash. From there the brigade was redeployed to France.

THE WESTERN FRONT

When the Brigade arrived at Marseilles the Brigade was deployed to Armentieres in Flanders. The 4th SA Infantry were delayed as some of its personnel were in quarantine for meningitis. The Brigade conducted training exercises and acclimatised to the European conditions. At this time they were introduced to trench warfare. Once training was complete the Brigade was attached to the 9th Scottish Division to replace the British 28th Brigade. The 28th Brigade had suffered severe casualties during the





fighting around Loos in September 1915.

The SA Brigade was given the task of acting as divisional reserve and the 1st SAI were committed to the battle of the village of Longueval while half of the 4th SAI were tasked to capture Waterlot Farm on the 14th July 1916.

The next day the SA Brigade were ordered to capture the objective of Delville Wood at all costs. 2 SAI led the attack early in the morning and had all but captured the entire wood when the Germans countered with a very heavy artillery bombardment and with machine guns. Most of the German effort came from the northwest corner of the Woods after a successful counterattack on Longueval. The front line appeared as an indent into the German lines and for this reason the South Africans were surrounded by the Germans to the front and both left and right flanks. It was as if they had over extended themselves in the advance on the Germans.

The German artillery bombardment continued in intensity and South African casualties rose rapidly. The South Africans found it impossible to either advance or withdraw. German troops entered Delville Wood and their artillery bombardment was then lifted. The South Africans dug in with great difficulty amongst the roots and splintered tree trunks and repelled several German counter attacks. The Germans controlled Longueval village and this allowed them to dominate Delville Wood. Delville Wood was the key terrain in the front line for the British, if they were to advance on the front.

Both the Germans in Longueval and the South Africans in Delville Wood were



William Frederick Faulds VC, 1 SA Infantry. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on 18 July 1916 at Delville Wood, France. IWM photograph



18-pounder gun RFA into new posn near Delville Wood, 15th September 1916. IWM photograph

determined to maintain their tactical positions of strength. The British launched two counter attacks to try and support the South African Brigade but the pre bombardment by the British artillery was ineffective and both failed. The Germans then countered the 9th Divisions efforts at the relief of the South Africans with a devastating artillery bombardment using gas and conventional artillery shells. The South Africans had to maintain their positions in Delville Wood and take everything that the Germans threw at them. The result was even more casualties.

After this the British reorganised and counter attacked the German positions, spearheaded by 76 Brigade on the 20th July 1916 and were only then able to relieve the few remaining South Africans in the southern part of the Woods. 3433 South African soldiers went into Delville Wood on the 14th July and only 768 came out at the end.

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The old British front line trenches from the Battle of the Somme at Delville Wood, 3 July 1917. IWM photograph



Devil's Trench Delville Wood photographed on 3 July 1917, a year after the fighting. IWM photograph.

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SA Bde memorial service Delville Wood, 17 February 1918. Clergyman is Captain G J A Enslin SA Army Chaplains Department. IWM photograph.

Other News

Bramley and District Annual Dinner

Bramley and District Branch (Incorporating Sherborne St John, Sherfield on Lodden and Stratfield Saye are holding their Annual Dinner on Friday 6th October 2023 at 7pm at the Sherfield Oaks Golf Club Sherfield on Lodden, RG 27 0 HB

Guests of Honour
Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans (Retd) KCB CBE DL and Lady Mans



Tickets cost £30 from Steve Day
Bramley.Treasurer@rbl.community
All welcome.

Lyndhurst and District Band Concert

Lyndhurst and District are holding a Band Concert with the Downton Band



Sunday 24th September 2023
2:30 PM

Lyndhurst Community Centre
Tickets £12.50 per person, to include admission and cream tea at interval.
Tickets available from Lyndhurst Community Centre or Lyndhurst Workmen's Club.
All profit to the Lyndhurst and District Poppy Appeal
Kindly sponsored by the Mailman's Arms



Poppy Walk

Royal Victoria Country Park, Southampton
Saturday 11th November 2023

Come together for the Poppy Appeal this November for a short, family friendly walk to lay a poppy tribute and mark Remembrance.

Free entry for a limited time only.

Sign up today, search **POPPY WALK**
rbl.org.uk/poppy-walk



Please support the Poppy Walk to be held at the Royal Victoria Country Park, Southampton on 11 November 2023.

Sign up for a personal remembrance day at rbl.org.uk/poppy-walk

Poppy Appeal Matters

North Hampshire Poppy Appeal. If you have some time and wish to volunteer for this worthy cause please contact our North Hampshire County Community Fund-raiser, Sarah Ferris.

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SFerris@britishlegion.org.uk)



Standard Bearer Training



Hampshire Standard Bearer Training 2023

	 EASTLEIGH Pavilion on the Park 1 Kingfisher Drive, Eastleigh, SO50 9LH	ASH Ash Manor School Manor Rd, Ash, Aldershot GU12 6QH
Please arrive ten minutes before training starts to prepare yourself and your Standard.		
January	No Training	Tuesday 10th 19:00 - 20:00
February	Sunday 12th 14:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 7th 19:00 - 20:00
March	Sunday 12th 14:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 7th 19:00 - 20:00
April	Sunday 9th 14:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 18th 19:00 - 20:00
May	Sunday 14th 14:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 9th 19:00 - 20:00
June	Sunday 11th 14:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 6th 19:00 - 20:00
July	Sunday 9th 14:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 11th 19:00 - 20:00
August	Sunday 13th 14:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 15th 19:00 - 20:00
September	Sunday 10th 14:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 12th 19:00 - 20:00
October	Sunday 8th 14:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 17th 19:00 - 20:00
November	Sunday 5th 14:00 - 15:00	Tuesday 7th 19:00 - 20:00
December	No Training	No Training
Please note: All Standard Bearer must attend two training sessions a year, and be physically fit enough to carry the Standard, as agreed when they signed the yearly MS1 Form.		
Hampshire Parade Marshal: David Graham E: Hampshire.ParadeMarshal@rbl.community M: 07597 455112		

As per RBL regulations all Standard Bearers must undergo two training sessions per year. This is so that Standard Bearers are compliant with health and safety as well as fitness requirements.

The Defence Medal 1939 - 1945



This medal was awarded for three years service at home, one year's service in a non-operational area, or six months service overseas where the person was subjected to an air attack or other close threats. Anti Aircraft Command, RAF ground crews, Home Guard, Civil Defence, National Fire Service were all eligible.

It was awarded to all British and Empire troops who served in the above areas. Some civilians were also entitled to this medal. The Canadian issue was made in silver.

“One cannot and must not try to erase the past merely because it does not fit the present.”
Golda Meir

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.HampshireRBL

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:

HampshireLinkDW@yahoo.com

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 Hampshire.Chairman@rbl.community

Vice-Chairman Robert Bartlett Hampshire.vicechairman@rbl.community

Treasurer Ges Brown hampshire.treasurer@rbl.community

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

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

Community Fundraiser North: Sarah Ferris

Community Fundraiser South: Jackie Lax

Regional Fundraiser Manager: Clare Peppiatt

Poppy Appeal Coordinator - North: Jacki Gatfield

Poppy Appeal Coordinator - South: Pat Prior BEM QVRM

Principal Recruiting Officer: VACANT

Training Officer: VACANT

Community Support: VACANT

CCSC: VACANT

Clubs Liaison: Paul Holyoake

Communications Support: Dudley Wall

County Webmaster: Avril Mitchell Hampshire.Web@rbl.community

Youth Officer: Steve Slack Hampshire.CYO@rbl.community

Events Support: VACANT

Parade Marshall: David Graham, Deputy Parade Marshall: VACANT

County Standard Bearer: Pete Pullin, ppullin@britishlegion.org.uk

Deputy County Standard Bearer: Andy Cassidy

County Youth Standard Bearer: Amelie Neal

Ceremonial Support: David Graham, Karen Graham

County Padre: Reverend Mark Christian

Golf Officer: Rick Bourne

Membership Engagement Officer: Pete Pullin, 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.

[Errors and Omissions Excepted](#)