**East Knoyle Report**

**January 2023**

The Branch AGM at the end of November provided the opportunity to review a year of mixed fortunes that included:- the sadness at losing three of our members (including our renowned Chairman, Mike Waterhouse) and the positives of a record breaking total for the 21/23 Poppy Appeal, the election of new officers and, importantly, the recruitment of three new members.

Newly elected officers are Sir Nick Wright (Chairman), Paul Naish (Vice-Chairman) and Andrew Knight (Treasurer). Ron Clark remains as Branch Secretary with Ian Gurney continuing as Poppy Appeal Organiser.

The total raised to date for the 22/23 Poppy Appeal has reached £8,800 as events on the wider stage continue to highlight why our fundraising is so important. The current economic situation combined with the pressure on health and social services have resulted in an unprecedented increase in demand for the support services provided by the RBL.

To meet this increased demand a new fund has been established by the RBL to provide serving and ex-serving military personnel, together with their dependents, access to cost of living grants. Turn round for applications is five days and support continues for up to six months with over a million pounds available to assist those in crisis.The hotline number is 0808 802 8080.

The RBL is also the lead organisation and co-ordinator of a partnership of military charities called the ‘Veterans Gateway’. So, if we cannot help we can put you in contact with an organisation that can. That hotline number is 0808 802 1212. Don’t forget that the RBL is here for you today, tomorrow or as long as it takes. Please pass on those numbers to anyone you are aware of who may be in need of them.

**Social and Events 2023**

Events in the planning for this year are visits to the REME museum, Navy Wings at Yeovilton and a talk by Lee Evans, test pilot for Leonardo (nee Westland). Dates to follow.

Ron Clark

Branch Secretary (830354)