



"SANDBAG"

WINCANTON AND DISTRICT ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER

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NEWS FROM THE BRANCH

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Next branch meeting is the AGM on 4th November

Poppy Appeal Service Awards 2013

Olive Moldram our Poppy Appeal Volunteer in Pen Selwood has now completed 35 years service. Sincere thanks go out to Olive and our Poppy sellers, for all the hard work that has been done for us over the many years. Without the help of wonderful people like Olive, the Legion would be unable to continue our vital welfare and benevolent work.



AGM 4th November

Please note that our next branch meeting will in fact be the AGM and will take place NOT on the 3rd Monday as is usual BUT on **Monday 4th November**. It is always important to attend the AGM as this is the evening that we re-elect officers of the branch and make decisions for the coming year. Next year is going to be a busy one for many reasons, amongst which include the 70th anniversary of the crash of "Old Faithful", 70th anniversary of D-Day, 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War. We will need help next year so please attend to AGM to see how you can help.

Annual Dinner 4th October went well !

Just under 50 members and guests attended the annual branch Dinner at the Olive Bowl on 4th October. This year the guest of honour was the Mayor of Wincanton, Cllr. Deryck Lemon and his wife Maureen. Our good friend Lt. Cdr. Rob Stephens RN (Rtd) was unable to attend as he retired from his civilian role as Community Liaison Officer at the Commando Helicopter Force on 30th September and was on a well earned holiday. We did have a "distinguished" person present in the shape of William "Paddy" Fox B.E.M. our member who is an in pensioner at the Royal Hospital Chelsea (Chelsea Pensioners). I did manage to persuade Paddy to bring with him his golden disc, which was awarded for the "Men in Scarlet" for selling over 100,000 records with their Christmas hit in 2010. Members present were able to see first hand our new branch standard which was purchased with the bequest from the family of Ray "Ticky" Judd who passed away in May. Ray's widow and the family were present and agreed with us all what a splendid tribute the flag will be to Ticky and as the flagstaff will have a plaque inscribed to Ticky's memory should be a lasting tribute to him. The last standard, which will be laid up in the Parish Church of St. Peter & St. Paul bore a plaque stating it was over 60 years old so Ticky's legacy will go on for some time yet !



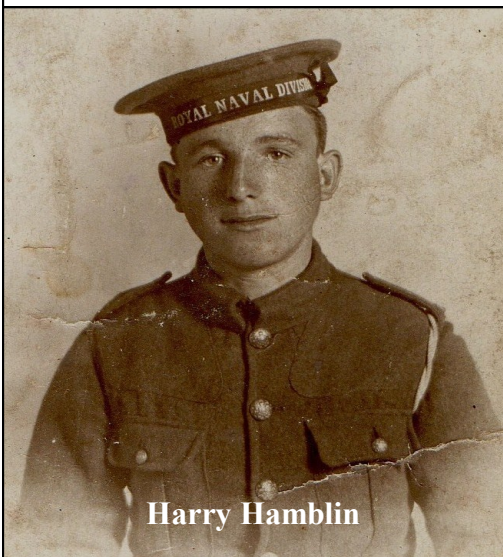
**Paddy Fox welcomes the mayor
Cllr. Deryck Lemon to our Annual Dinner**

A time to remember

At this time of year our minds go to remembering those who gave their lives in the Armed Forces of our Country and those of our citizens who lost their lives in time of war. It can be excused only to think of the two World Wars in this context but that is certainly not true, as many of our military personnel have given their lives since the world wars. In the coming year our thoughts no doubt will be focused on that tragic war which started one hundred years ago next August—The Great War, the war to end all wars. It is also a year when we will remember that it was 70 years ago when Allied forces liberated Europe from Nazi tyranny. The invasion of Europe which started with the D-Day Landings in Normandy will be 70 years ago next June and also in June it was 70 years ago when our own town witnessed first hand death and destruction when an American Flying Fortress named “Old Faithful” crash nearby killing all of those on board.

Our town has many sons to remember who never came back from two wars and it is always a poignant time for me when I read their names in the parish church at the Remembrance Sunday Service. But since researching the forthcoming book on our War Dead of the Great War and finding some of their stories and photographs I now find I almost “know them” or at least they are again “real people”. Visiting many of their graves too brings it home to me very strongly knowing that some of our sons are buried in places far from home and loved ones. One such place is the strangely named Gordon Dump Cemetery near La Boisselle not far from Albert, Somme. It was in this place on 1st July 1916 that many sons of Somerset lost their lives. It was the site of the action of the 8th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry and the cemetery gives testimony to the many men of Somerset who lost their lives there. I am always quite emotional to see their rows of graves and always go to visit the grave of Walter Humphries who lived at Lawrence Hill. I have said before that when we remove wreaths from the Parish Church each year before Remembrance Sunday I keep them and when I go to France place them on local soldiers graves. A few weeks ago I went on my own to his grave again, all was quiet and peaceful and I was drawn to think “Walter you are not forgotten in your home town, I remember you and here is part of it - a wreath which has been in your church”. I always put on each wreath I place - “Remembered with pride and gratitude in your home town of Wincanton Somerset” a sentiment I feel strongly should be said, meant and continued.

Another grave I always try to visit when I am nearby is that of Harry Hamblin - Ian Hamblin’s uncle. His grave is in a small remote village



Harry Hamblin

not far from Arras. Harry and his friend Ernest Hinks both volunteered for the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in November 1915. Because of the surplus of sailors to ships Harry found himself in the Royal Naval Division which was serving as infantry in France. His friend Ernest Hinks went to sea and he was lost in a collision, having already once been on a ship that was sunk. Harry’s story is so typical of the patriotism and bravery of that generation because with severe stomach wounds which he knew he could not recover from he was carried on a stretcher to a dressing station and tried to sing “Tipperary”. Being comforted by a medical orderly as he was dying he said “I want to die like an Englishman”. When I last visited Harry’s grave with David Mills and a French friend, out of respect we stood by his grave and sang “Tipperary”.

It is so important to remember all those who gave their lives and never forget the Legion exhortation.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them



Walter Humphries

Wincanton Branch formally “affiliates” with Castle Cary Army Cadet Force Platoon

When we joined together with Castle Cary RBL branch we realised that Castle Cary has a thriving Army Cadet Force Platoon and we were very keen to officially affiliate to this ACF unit as it falls in line with our thinking of encouraging youth to the RBL. One of our other already affiliated units is 2277 Squadron Air Training Corps with whom we have long standing relations are also based in Castle Cary but are in fact “Wincanton” and Castle Cary Squadron. Our other affiliated unit is Sexey’s School Platoon who were our first unit to be affiliated when David Hill was officer commanding the platoon. At a ceremony on 16th October we achieved our ambition and affiliation papers were signed Castle Cary ACF Platoon making it that we now have three youth groups affiliated to us.

The purpose of a Legion Branch affiliating with a local youth organisation is to promote within the local Community, mutual support and encouragement for each other’s aims and objectives. Affiliation is for the mutual benefit of the Royal British Legion and the Youth Organisation. Helping the local community is part of the Cadet force’s programme. Cadet units and British Legion Branches, working together have much to offer each other and their local community.

The ACF (and CCF Army) can trace their origins back to the 1850’s. The ACF, as we know it today, was re-formed in 1942 and as a result of the Thorneycroft Report in 1957 it became a national youth organisation sponsored by the MOD.

The ACF provides challenging military, adventurous, and community activities. Its aim is to inspire young people to achieve success in life with a spirit of service to the Queen, their Country and their local community, and to develop in them the qualities of a good citizen. There are presently some 50,000 cadets between 12 and 18 years; over 8,500 volunteers, and 1,700 cadet centres. The Somerset Cadet Battalion is linked to ‘The Rifles’. With its base at Taunton, it consists of 5 Companies, 32 Units and has around 1000 cadets. Castle Cary Platoon, forms part of Salamanca Company.

As well our branch officials we were also pleased to have with us at the ceremony Major Robert McDonald the new County Vice Chairman for Somerset County and the County Youth Officer John Headford. We were also privileged to have present Colonel Paul Richardson, Commandant, Somerset County Cadet Battalion (The Rifles) ACF and Salamanca Company ACF Commanding Officer Major Rupert Elliott.

I must say that I was most impressed with the turnout of the cadets and I know they will be a great credit for us to be associated with. We all will have a chance to see these fine young people at our Remembrance Sunday Church Parade on 10th November and they have also volunteered along with 2277 Squadron ATC to assist with collections at Wincanton Racecourse on 9th November. One of the parents of a cadet has also agreed to accompany some cadets to Morrison’s during Poppy Appeal period and help us with poppy collections.



Rita, Ron, Arthur and Tony along with County Vice Chairman, Col. Richardson and cadets

Branch Christmas Lunch 18th December

I mentioned at the Branch Dinner that I would try to get a Christmas lunch organised again this year. The date is now fixed for Wednesday 18th December assemble at 12.30 p.m. for drinks and lunch will be served at 1 p.m.

I approached the Miller's Arms in Wincanton and Dave has agreed that he will keep the price the same as last year at £8.95 for a two course lunch. I will distributed a selection form which needs to be given to Arthur along with a cheque to Wincanton RBL for £8.95 by 1st December. The choices are :- either Roast Beef or Turkey with all the trimmings and dessert is either Apple Crumble or Christmas Pudding. As our branch is registered as a member, I have also arranged with the CAT Bus again that they can pick up those in Wincanton who wish to be picked up at home. If you hold a bus pass this will be totally free if you produce the pass. I must emphasise though that the Miller's Arms have agreed to hold the lunch for **32 people** as the dining area comfortably holds this amount and names are already on the list from the Branch Dinner. **Please urgently contact Arthur if you wish to go.** There may be a chance to hold a second sitting the next day if there is demand. But we will only know this once we know the numbers of the people interested.

Poppy Appeal Lunch 26th October

The branch will launch Poppy Appeal 2013/14 with a rousing concert given by Wincanton Silver Band at Wincanton Memorial Hall on 26th October starting at 7.30 pm.

From the glorious Prussian cavalry march Father Rhine to the stately Grenadiers Waltz and from the songs of South Pacific to the melodies of Irving Berlin, this concert will entertain from start to finish.

The forthcoming anniversary of the First World War will be represented with music and poetry and the rousing Last Post will be performed to the intimate setting of Douglas Pope's Nightfall in Camp."

The band are also playing Highlights from Les Miserables, the Thin Red Line and The Wee Macgreegor.

Tickets cost £7.50 each and are available from Wincanton Town Hall and Divine Wines in Wincanton High Street.

Early boost to the next Poppy Appeal

At the end of September I had the privilege of being invited to the unveiling of two new Canadian memorials in the Somme area of France as part of the forthcoming 100th anniversary of the Great War.

Having a very good relationship with the organisers from the 48th Highlanders of Canada I was asked if I could help supply wreaths. The problem they had was to transport the wreaths needed from Canada for their tour of the battlefields of the Somme and Flanders. Canadian poppy wreathes are slightly different than the British equivalent and are very costly to transport by air. Arthur ordered the blank centre wreaths and I copied and laminated the Regimental badge and mounted it. A generous £200 donation for the wreaths was given to me by the Regiment and this is a very nice start to our 2013/14 Poppy Appeal.

Wreath of the 48th Highlanders of Canada



Coffee Morning is also 26th October

We normally hold a Coffee Morning to coincide with Poppy Appeal launch and this will also happen on 26th October starting at 10 a.m. in the Memorial Hall. There is also a Nearly New Sale in the main hall organised as a private venture by member Rich Dunn's wife, so this should make for an interesting morning .

Remembrance 2013

Nothing has changed, church parade is on 10th November with assembly at 2.15 p.m.— march off 2.30 pm. Church Service 3 p.m. afterwards tea with the Scouts in the Masonic Hall. The new branch standard will be dedicated at the service. Two Minutes Silence at the War Memorial is at 11 a.m. on 11th November with assembly at 10.45 a.m. Afterwards wreaths will be laid at the Old Faithful Memorial on Bayford Hill.