



"SANDBAG"

WINCANTON AND DISTRICT ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER

Editor Tony Goddard 01963-824193



NEWS FROM THE BRANCH

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Branch secretary Arthur Pickup 01963-32952

November
2013

Next branch meeting 20th January 2014 at 7 p.m.

Due to the close proximity to Christmas and the fact that lots of branch members are attending the Annual Christmas Lunches, the committee have decided to cancel the branch meeting on 15th December and the next meeting will now be on 20th January 2014 (weather permitting) at the Memorial Hall.

Remembrance 2013

Well we had a beautiful autumn day again this year for our Remembrance Sunday parade on 10th November, the sun shone all day on both our parade and that of our sub branch at Castle Cary in the morning. The Wincanton Silver Band led the parade from the Memorial Hall with the usual stirring marches and bandmaster David Bertie played a faultless Last Post and Reveille in the church with the band accompanying some of the hymns. What was very good this year was the large amount of youngsters taking part, our affiliated cadet unit, 2277 Squadron Air Training Corps provided the standard bearer for our Union Flag along with several cadets and large amounts of Scouts, Guides and students from King Arthur's School took part this year. Again this year, youngsters from the Scouts, Guides and Brownies placed crosses around the War Memorial for each of our War Dead of both

World Wars and also placed crosses for the crew of USAAF Flying Fortress "Old Faithful".

Along with our own branch standard our sub branch from Castle Cary also paraded their standard too which highlighted the bond we now have with them. In fact Arthur and I attended both our parade and church service and that of Castle Cary. This year too we had not only a very large amount of standards paraded and people attending but more than usual amount of wreaths were placed around the Roll of Honour in the parish church. Amongst those in attendance were, our MP David Heath and the Mayor of Wincanton, Cllr. Deryck Lemon. The salute was taken by David Heath MP, Lt. Cdr Neil Loughrey RN on behalf of RNAS Yeovilton, Lt. Col. Colin Thomas, Royal Logistics Corps (V) and our chaplain Rev. Nigel Feaver. Due to constraints on space and the need to collate all the photos taken I promise I will include more photos and more write up in the next edition along with the ceremony on 11th November and at the "Old Faithful" memorial ceremony.



Parade marches down the High Street

Roll of honour in church



Research is still on going regarding the book I am writing on the Wincanton War Dead of the Great War. I am in contact with King Arthur's School who are helping with projects on the subject and I have agreed to be involved in a community project commemorating the 100th anniversary of the start of the war. I never cease to be amazed when startling stories "jump out at me" when trawling for information and I feel I want to share this story which took place 96 years ago almost to the day. Most people think of the Great War as the fighting on the Western Front against Germany but a no less important area of conflict was against the Turks of the Ottoman Empire fought mainly in Palestine protecting the Suez Canal. In that area cavalry were still being used as it was a war of movement and a battle very significant to our area took place on 17th November 1917 involving amongst others the 1st/1st Dorset Yeomanry and a soldier named on our Roll of Honour took part along with Captain Harry Hoare (the sole and last heir of Stourhead - "The Battle of El Mughar")

Pte. William Ernest Hannam. 1st/1st Dorset Yeomanry (Queen's Own)

Service number 230341.

Killed in action 13th November 1917. El Mughar Ridge, Palestine.

William Hannam was born in Everton, Lancashire on 11th October 1883 the son of John and Alice Hannam (nee Fairchild). They were living at 297 Breck Road, Everton at the time of William's birth and his father John was the licensee of a public house.

William's sister Marion married Frederick Hutchings who ran a florist shop at 21 High Street Wincanton. Frederick was a son of the prominent Hutchings family in Wincanton who owned the premises which is now Wincanton Post Office. Marion Hutchings was an active member of the congregation of St. Peter & St. Paul Church and was involved with the erecting of the memorial in the church.

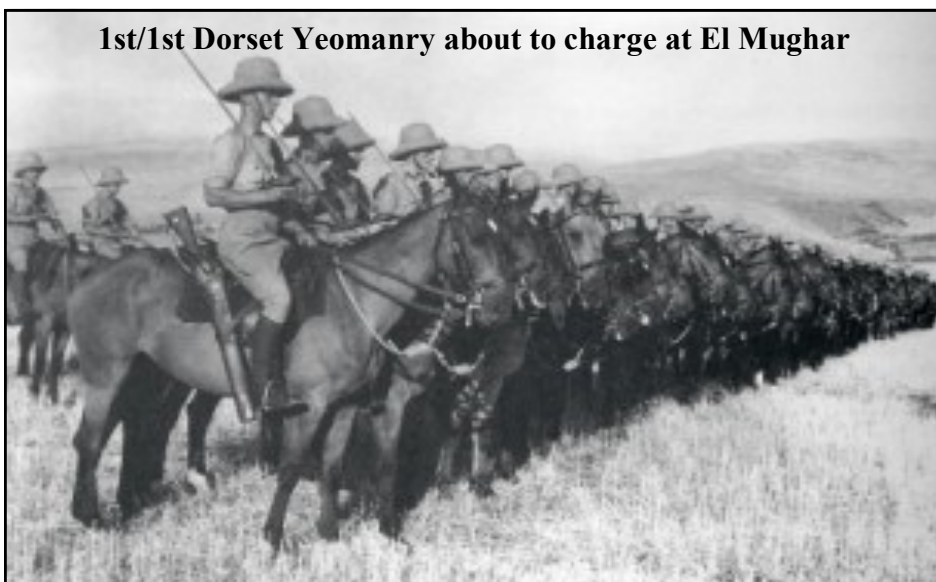
The 1st/1st Dorset Yeomanry mobilised at Sherborne in August 1914 and were assigned to the 1st South Western Mounted Brigade part of the 1st Mounted Division. In September 1914, they were moved to the 2nd South Midland Mounted Brigade, 2nd Mounted Division. In 1915 they were deployed overseas to Egypt then onwards to participate in the Dardanelles campaign where they served as dismounted troops and were involved in the Battle of Gallipoli the Battle of Sari Bair and the Battle of Scimitar Hill. After the evacuation of Gallipoli they returned to Egypt in January 1916 and became part of the 6th Mounted Brigade an independent Brigade which was involved in the Battle of Aqqaqia in February 1916. At this battle the retreating Turks

were attacked by the Dorset Yeomanry with drawn swords across open ground. Under fire, the Yeomanry lost half their horses, and about a third of their men and officers were casualties (58 of the 184 who took part). This brigade later joined the Imperial Mounted Division in February 1917, and took part in the First Battle of Gaza and the Second Battle of Gaza, they later transferred to the Yeomanry Mounted Division in June 1917, for the Third Battle of Gaza and the Battle of Beersheba.

Through the end of October and into the beginning of November Turkish

positions fell as General Allenby (the commander in chief) worked towards his aim to take Gaza, but still the Turks managed to hold the high controlling ridge from Katrah to El Mughar.

At 1245 hrs on the 13th November orders were received for the 6th Mounted Brigade, of which the Queen's Own Dorset Yeomanry was a part, to capture this ridge. On the ridge were two prominent spurs, the Bucks Yeomanry were to attack the right hand spur and the Dorset Yeomanry the left hand spur. At 1500hrs the Bucks Yeomanry emerged from the wadi (a bed of a stream) to cross some 3,000 yards of open shot-over



ground to reach their objective. The Dorset Yeomanry also emerged on their left to cover some 4,000 yards of similar ground. "A" squadron was ordered to gallop the spur and then attack dismounted. B and C Squadrons followed to where the dismounted horses were being held, dismounted, fixed bayonets and also charged up the hill. The Dorset Yeomanry took their spur, captured 8 machine guns and many prisoners. Capt (Adj) Robertson, although wounded, turned one of the captured machine guns on the retreating Turks and for his gallant action was awarded the MC. In this action The Regiment lost Sergeant Guppy and 8 Other Ranks killed, Captain Harry Hoare (the sole heir of Stourhead) mortally wounded, Captain (Adj) Robertson and Lieutenant Beechcroft and 43 other ranks wounded. The Regiment won two Distinguished Service Orders, one Military Cross, three Distinguished Conduct Medals and seven Military Medals and gave the County of Dorset a legendary action fought by their sons. Pte. William Hannam was one of those eight killed in the epic cavalry charge, he was 33 years old. Along with the soldiers who were killed 80, of their horses also died. After the battle over 400 dead Turks lay dead on the hill top. William Hannam is buried at Ramleh War Cemetery Israel. (Known then as Palestine) Row P. Grave 56

Chairman Annual Report 2012/13 to the AGM

We have had another good year, which started with us winning the Colin McKenzie cup again for the "Most Efficient Branch of our size". This was presented at the County Conference in January. Arthur's motion to conference that the membership fee be abolished was not accepted by the conference for inclusion in the national conference – but we will try again next year.

During this year Ticky Judd passed away and his family asked that the bequest from him be used for a new branch standard, which has been purchased and a brass plaque has been attached to the pole in his memory. The standard will be dedicated at the Remembrance Sunday church service on 10th November. We were also donated a new American flag for use at the Old Faithful ceremonies.

We have continued our involvement with youth and in fact have our first youth member Brecon Lee officially signed up. King Arthur's School have become closer to us and for the first time a large group from the school attended our Old Faithful ceremony in June and will be attending the Remembrance Sunday parade. We have also become officially affiliated with Castle Cary Army Cadet Force who are now our third affiliated cadet unit along with Sexey's School and 2277 Squadron Air Training Corps.

Poppy Appeal is down on last year but most charities are suffering from the recession, it is still a fantastic sum (£12206) and this is due to Arthur's tireless efforts and the many collectors thanks Arthur and everyone ! Several one off things helped with Poppy Appeal fundraising though. Arthur also saved Castle Cary's Poppy Appeal which is a great credit to him and I believe they raised £3000. A first for Wincanton branch was the splendid Armed Forces Day event at the Millers Inn in June which raised a profit of around £400. Last November the Silver Band also greatly helped Poppy Appeal too with the benefit concert last November, which they have just repeated at the launch of this years Poppy Appeal.

Our events continued to be popular and started back in March with a "Boy's Day Out" at the Tank Museum Bovington, although not enough for a coach we did all go by members cars and had an excellent time. I won't list all the trips we had, but just say we had a fantastic year of trips together which do generate good friendships amongst the members and I know are greatly enjoyed. The last two trips were most successful and have enabled me to carry forward a float into next year which will not only mean I will continue having the trips but can do so still at £12 each. This year we have taken up our full allocation of tickets for members to attend the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall.

Next year will be a very full year too with the many significant dates coming up. We are awaiting full details from Legion Headquarters but there will be several significant commemorations of the Great War taking place throughout the year and I will keep everyone informed. We also have our own major commemoration taking place on 25th June which is the 70th anniversary of the crash of "Old Faithful" the American Flying Fortress. It is also the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Landings on 6th June.

Our monthly trips start in April and let us hope they will turn out as good as this year.

Tony Goddard, Chairman

Christmas Lunch at the Millers Arms 18th and 19th December

As we thought, numbers of members wishing to attend the Christmas Lunch has exceeded the 32 person maximum of the venue at the Millers Arms. Arthur has agreed with Dave at the Millers that there will be a lunch the following day on 19th December (as well as on 18th). Please double check with Arthur which day you are allocated. If you have not already done so, would you please ensure that the menu choice form is completed and handed to Arthur along with your cheque for £8.95 each - made out to Wincanton RBL. Anyone wishing to go who has not yet informed Arthur please do so by the closing date of 1st December. Timings are :- assemble around 12.30 p.m. for drinks and lunch will be served at 1 p.m. (both days). Anyone wishing to be picked up by the CAT Bus should also confirm this by 1st December. Due to new rules set by the Council the CAT Bus must now charge £2 each (if you have a bus pass) which should be paid to the driver on the day on production of your pass.

100 years old and still going strong

Eric Sartin has been a long time supporter of Wincanton branch and a few weeks ago he had his 100th birthday. Eric still looks wonderful and we offer our sincere good wishes to him.



Eric on his 100th birthday

Rev. Stafford Low in France

I was very pleased to received an email from our former rector and chaplain the Rev. Stafford Low. When Stafford retired to France I promised to send him Sandbag by email each month, which I do. You will remember we presented Stafford with an RBL chaplain's stole before he left and we see he is continuing to put it to good use with his first Remembrance service in France. Stafford has also sent me details of a British Military Cemetery near him and I will include this in the next Sandbag.

Poppy Appeal off to a good start

Wincanton Silver Band did us proud again this year, launching Poppy Appeal on 26th October with the traditional concert. Numbers were slightly down in the most part due to the bad weather but we still sold 55 tickets which raised £412.50. We had two raffles that day, one at the Coffee Morning and the other during the concert together these raised £213. The tea bar at Coffee Morning raised £55 and concert programmes £8 making a grand total for the day £688.50 going directly to our Poppy Appeal. Arthur is obviously still counting up the poppy donations but he tells me we are looking good. I will give you some figures in the next Sandbag.



Rev. Stafford Low and members of his French congregation



Wincanton Silver Band in concert