

**"SANDBAG"****WINCANTON AND DISTRICT
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER**Editor **Tony Goddard 01963-824193****NEWS FROM THE BRANCH**

Volume 14 Issue 2

Branch secretary **Steve Lee 01963-34374**March/
April
2018**Next social event our Quiz at the Bear 7 pm 23rd February****EVERY ONE
REMEMBERED**

'Every One Remembered' – The Royal British Legion, in partnership with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, has set up an online project to remember all 1.1 million Commonwealth Service men and women who were killed during World War One in this. The losses were felt in almost every town and village in the UK and throughout what was then the British Empire. 'Every One Remembered', is an opportunity for us all to be part of a great collective act of Remembrance. To take part visit www.everyoneremembered.org you can then find a relative, a casualty with the same surname, from a particular part of the country or Regiment. You can then add your own words of remembrance and photographs if you wish to. At the time of writing there are 742 636 fallen still to be remembered so any help would be greatly appreciated. If you have any difficulties in registering please contact me. If you do not have access to a computer or tablet and would like a particular casualty to be remembered, again, please contact me. *Steve*

"The Great Pilgrimage 90"

You will have read in the latest Legion magazine that plans are advancing well with the "Great Pilgrimage" which will culminate in massed Royal British Legion standards being paraded at the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgian Flanders on 8th August this year. The date chosen was in fact the first day of the last offensive which led to the Armistice of 1918 and was known as "The Last 100 Days". Ten years after that date on 8th August 1928 11,000 British Legion War Pilgrims - veterans and war widows visited Ypres on the first "pilgrimage" - this year's event will not only replicate this but will visit the key places of the Ypres Salient and travel on to Arras and the Somme. I am very pleased to tell you that in line with our vote at the last AGM two branch representatives, Martin Holmes and Michael Holmes will be taking part and their application has been accepted. We are sure this will be truly an amazing adventure for them.

Remembrance Sunday 11th November 2018

I have had some sort of role in Wincanton Royal British Legion for 16 years and it was always accepted that Wincanton Royal British Legion would hold their Remembrance Sunday Church Service at 3 pm on Remembrance Sunday preceded by a parade led by Wincanton Silver Band. In the long history of Wincanton RBL and Wincanton Silver Band it had been that way and although I realised this enabled Wincanton Silver Band to also attend Shepton Mallet Remembrance Service in the morning I did not realise how it started that way or why. The norm throughout the Country is that Remembrance Sunday church services start at 10.30 am with the National Two Minutes Silence joined at 11 am. This year is the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War of 1914 to 1918 and there will be special services observed nationally. We along with most other RBL branches wish to take part at the traditional time and we approached Wincanton Silver Band to ask if they could rearrange their attendances to that time to enable us to take part. I am very pleased to say that Wincanton Silver Band have agreed and consequently Remembrance Sunday will be different for us this year in many ways. I cannot give you details yet but expect something very special.

Tony

Donald Colbourn

The article below was compiled by Brenden Adams, we are very grateful to Brenden not only for this article but for attending Don's funeral on our behalf. Don was 94 years old. Tony

On the 7th December last year I attended the funeral of Donald Frederick Colbourn. He lived in Wincanton and he and his wife Barbara became friends of my Mum and Dad.

In July 1942 Don was called up, and after training he was sent to the 24th Lancers of the Royal Armoured Corps. This Regiment was a revival of a regiment formed in 1792 and disbanded in 1802.

In 1942 the 24th Lancers was formed from a cadre of officers and men from 17th/21st Lancers and 9th Lancers. They were to be an armoured unit using tanks. From my research Don appears to have been trained as a driver in January 1943. Then in December 1943 he was attached to the Tank Delivery Unit, returning to the Lancers in February 1944. The war diary of the 24th Lancers shows extensive training being conducted and much firing on the ranges along with courses on the new Stuart and Sherman tanks. All this was in preparation for the eagerly anticipated opening of the second front or D day as it was later to be known.

Don landed either on the 6th June or early on the 7th at Le Hamel on Gold beach, Jig Green, which is just east of Arramanche.

The Regiment was part of the 8th Armoured Brigade, and as such was involved in some of the toughest fighting in the early weeks of the Normandy campaign. The tank crews of the armoured formations were to learn costly lessons in the fighting. The 24th Lancers were up against the SS Panzer Divisions, namely the 9th, 2nd, 10th, and 12th Hitler Youth. These were of course equipped with superior Panther and Tiger tanks. However, the 24 Lancers gave a good account of themselves and inflicted heavy losses in the battles to the east of Tilly-sur-selles and point 103.

Sadly the lessons learned were not without cost. At some stage Don was wounded and spent a spell in hospital in Bayeux. When he returned to his unit he found them, or what was left of them, in an orchard near the Jerusalem crossroads. This would have been early August and by this time the 24th Lancers had suffered 44 all ranks killed and 90 wounded. As a result, on the 10th August the 24th Lancers was disbanded. Despite much disappointment, moral remained high and officers and men were transferred to other armoured units to make up losses.

Don was posted to 21st Army Group and drove an armoured car in the troop set up to guard Field Marshall Montgomery for the rest of the war. Don said he drove Monty to the place on Luneburg Heath where he took the surrender of the German high command in that region.

At the end of hostilities Don was transferred to the Scots Greys and remained with them until demobbed on the 1st June 1947. Demob for the armoured formations was delayed due to the political situation with regards the Russians.

Don, like most of his generation, did not have a choice, but he did his duty.

Duty is such a small word, but it meant such a lot to his generation and he did his bit.

I was proud to have known Don. I was also proud represent the Royal British Legion of Wincanton at the funeral and presented a wreath. This was well received by the family.



The 24th Lancers has but one memorial (picture right). It stands a few feet above the ground outside of a small museum in Tilly-sur-selles.

Records of the 24th Lancers are scant as they only existed in Normandy for 9 weeks and 2 days.

But as you can see `we will remember them`. *Brenden Adams*

The road names !

In the last two Sandbag I mentioned that “two roads in Wincanton named after our War Dead of the Second World War have so far been completed”. This is technically correct but there is also a footpath also included in the project which is in fact quite a busy pedestrian route leading to Wincanton Health Centre. It is **Andrews Way** and it starts just outside the Health Centre goes past the future Dementia Unit site and David Sharp Centre (old Red Cross hut) and finishes at a footpath junction in Rickhayes recreational ground. Sadly the name sign was vandalized some time ago but I am working to get it replaced. As a mark of respect we will vigorously pursue its replacement.

Raymond Speed Andrew was killed in action 18th September 1944 serving with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise’s).

He was born in Ireland on 30th September 1919, the son of James and Annie Speed, the family moved to Wincanton. Unfortunately little is known of their life in Wincanton. Raymond married Theresa Hannah Andrews and for some reason took her surname, his wife lived in Nottingham.

Raymond volunteered for the Army on 29th November 1939 joining the Royal Artillery but transferred to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders on 15th December 1943. His Army service was spent entirely in England until 15th June 1944 when the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders moved from Britain to take part in the assault on Germany. The regiment went straight into the thick of the action in Normandy in the area of Caen. On the night of 26th/27th June the Argylls, with the aid of tanks from the 23rd Hussars seized the town of Colleville and went on to capture the strategic bridge at Tourmauville across the River Odon. Then on to capture the bridge at Gavrus on 28th June.

Raymond was with The Argylls when they crossed the River Seine on 27th August and moved into Belgium on 7th September. On 17 September 1944 the largest airborne assault in history, codenamed Operation Market Garden, commenced. The object was to secure no less than five key bridges over the River Rhine. Once these were taken, there would be no further river obstacles between the British Army and Germany. Probably the most famous of these bridges was the bridge at Arnhem, the fabled “Bridge Too Far”. The plan was to drop 35,000 parachute troops in various parts of Holland, capture the bridges and link up with the bulk of the British Army to the south, coming up through Belgium. Amongst the British infantry in this force was the 2nd Bn. The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders who were part of XII Corps on the left flank. During the evening of 17th September they successfully crossed the Hasselt Branch Canal in assault boats without losing a man. The Argylls were holding the bridgehead at the canal along with the King’s Own Scottish Borderers (K.O.S.B.) when they encountered a strong German counter attack on the evening of 18th September. Enemy tanks supported by infantry advanced along a track to the west of the town of Aart. No sooner had the K.O.S.B. repulsed this attack than an even heavier attack took place on the Argylls from the north at around 6.45 p.m. bitter and confused fighting took place in the main street of Aart until about 10 p.m. when the Argylls with the aid of artillery drove back the enemy with heavy casualties. It was during this fighting that Raymond Andrews died, he was 24 years old.

The Victoria Cross throughout the Commonwealth

As you know Steve Lee runs the very popular website “Memorials to Valour” devoted to winners of the Victoria Cross. On my travels I always look for interesting photos for Steve to include as to do others of us. When I was in Canada recently I took many photos of the Canadian VC Memorial in Toronto and now Andy Chilton has visited New Zealand he has sent Steve photos of the New Zealand VC Memorial in ANZAC Square, Dunedin, New Zealand. I always think it special when I see Commonwealth countries who like us are commemorating the very bravest of their brave. If you ever come across a memorial to the Victoria Cross please take a photo and send it to Steve.



First trip of the year

Our trip to Winchester on 24th March is proving popular and we do have seats still left. Please send in your name and cheque payable to Wincanton RBL in advance if you wish to go. We will depart at 9 a.m. from the Memorial Hall. On this trip we will keep the price at £12 for adults and £6 for children (under 5 free). There is lots to do in Winchester and bearing in mind the March weather most things in Winchester are not weather dependant. As well as the cathedral there are many museums including several army museums (including the Gurkha Museum which we visited several years ago as a branch).

Armed Forces Day 30th June

The branch will definitely be commemorating Armed Forces Day again this year, which is on 30th June. We do have plans which are taking shape so make sure you put the date in your diary. I will give you firm information in the next Sandbag - but obviously the date is correct.

April trip is to Teignmouth 28th April

It was three years ago when we last went to Teignmouth and several members have asked me if we can now go there again. This year coach prices have increased significantly and it is obvious to me that unfortunately we would make a definite loss if I charged £12 so for this trip I must charge £15 adults, £7.50 children (under 5 free). We do have a social fund so I am determined to use this wisely this year to ensure all our trips go ahead where possible.

Departure for Teignmouth will 8.30 am from the Memorial Hall - returning approximately 7 pm.

A new great additional asset for the town

One of our supporters Corenza Anderson has just embarked on what I feel is a very interesting idea. It is certainly not a new concept and has been happening in dozens of Military Camps across the British Armed Forces for many years. It is a shop called "Thrifty at No. 1" and Corenza has taken this idea and brought it to the High Street in Wincanton for the general public to use. Corenza told me "Military families often move house and are always having a clear out either before moving or after, so a place to drop unwanted items to sell have been popular on the bases. I wanted to bring the idea to the High Street, so I set about opening my own shop in Wincanton". She also explained "The concept of the shop is that Thrifty sellers may bring items to her at the shop for her to sell on their behalf and they are given an account number. The seller is then able to pop by the shop to have a browse, purchase other peoples items and ask if they have gained any money from the sale of their own things. They can withdraw any money from their account at any time that they visit the shop. Account holders will also receive a text message each month with details of their balance. A sellers account runs on a 70/30% split of the selling price in favour of the item owner for the first 4 weeks, sales between 4-6 weeks will attract a 50/50% split and any items that have not sold after 6 weeks will become owned by Thrifty at No 1. All items with a value of over £7.00 may be collected at the 6 week point by the owner, should they want them back".

"Thrifty at No 1" is located at 1 High Street, Wincanton, nestled in between the Bear Inn and Sew & Sew.

Remainder of the year

As it stands at this moment, I have in mind trips to the following destinations planned for this year.

Bristol - May

Exmouth - June

Paignton - July

Weston Super Mare - August

Lyme Regis - September

I also have in mind a special trip for October which needs some more planning but I will update you in the next Sandbag I will also give you more firm dates too (usually the 3rd or 4th Saturday of the month where possible). On appropriate trips I will also keep the cost to the £12 adult range.

Quiz Night 23rd February

Don't forget it is Quiz Night on 23rd February at the Bear Inn which starts at 7 pm with "Pie & Mash", price including the food is £7 please pre-register !!