



KENT COUNTY NEWS

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September 2017

BRANCH SECRETARIES: PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ITEMS IN THIS MONTHLY CIRCULAR SHOULD FORM PART OF THE REPORT TO YOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE

COUNTY CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Whilst many of you have been busy in August with the many fundraising events and local parades you have been involved in I personally have spent some of it on holiday so have little to comment on this month except to say: The County this coming year needs new blood to join the County Committee. If you would like to offer your services please feel free to contact me and I will gladly take you through what would be expected of you and give you a guide to the call on your time that this entails.

However, whilst I was not busy with County Matters my Vice Chairman Richard Graham was over the Bank Holiday Weekend. He has penned the following:

Bank Holiday Weekend for the Vice Chairman

Just a usual relaxing August Bank Holiday and a chance to catch up with the grandchildren so I thought! Well, a few things cropped up for the Legion too, so on Friday afternoon I found myself attending an Appeal Tribunal in support of a member who had been snared in the drive by HMG to save monies spent on Mobility Vehicles by regrading folk and ensuring many no longer qualify for this benefit. The Tribunal team were in a hurry to complete the day's business so some of the questions asked were very harsh to the point that the poor chap became quite distressed. If you have to hand back a mobility car that has an electronic handbrake requiring no effort to apply but then have to replace the car with something less suitable and on grounds of cost it has a traditional handbrake that is difficult to apply when you have lost strength and flexibility in your left hand due to health issues it is hardly surprising - but to use that as a denying point is amazing! Thanks to our Legal team for their hard work and support.

I'd just got home and hardly taken a sip of tea when the phone rang with a request to find a Branch that a recently deceased centenarian veteran had belonged to so that the family might have their Standard Bearer attend his funeral on 1st September. There was a choice of four likely branches and I immediately e-mailed two of the people most likely to be able to help. Within minutes they responded and the Chairman of Cheriton & Morehall, enjoying a weekend in Chester with family, volunteered himself to carry out the mission along with a bugler from the branch. He let the undertaker know first thing on Tuesday so the family could be put at ease. So well done all, for their rapid response. How heartening that good communication and comradely spirit go hand in hand in our County.

Saturday my wife Jane and I attended a BBQ organised by my Branch Treasurer and her husband to celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary and his birthday - it makes it easier to remember one date

perhaps! It was a joy to see so many friends and family from the Branch having a great social time together. So important for the health of any branch! Managed to escape before the port and too many toasts took their toll!

Sunday morning after Church took coffee with some of my former branch members at Smeeth, good to see one who has been very ill looking better and appreciating the Legion. In the afternoon we attended the Regatta at Dover Sea Front where the Branch had a Poppy Appeal stall and managed to reach their target for this year of £50k - brilliant! So a lovely Bank Holiday weekend that was so rewarding to share and see many RBL members following the motto of "Service not Self".

Richard Cast
County Chairman

DONATIONS TO COUNTY FUNDS

The following donations have been gratefully received:

£50 Lenham, Harrietsham & District Branch

BRANCH ACCOUNTS - END OF YEAR

Please ensure this information is passed to the Branch Treasurer

Treasurers are reminded that Branch Accounts were to be closed at 30th June and that a copy of the accounts together with supporting Bank Statements plus a letter of 'Authority to Disclose Information' **for each account** must be submitted to the County Office by 30th September at the very latest.

I have to report that, to date, 15 sets of branch accounts have been received at County Office. They are:

Canterbury	Rochester & Strood
Edenbridge	Royal Tunbridge Wells
Fordcombe	Shoreham
Greenhithe & Swanscombe	Sutton Valence
Halstead	Swanley, Crockenhill & Hextable
Lenham & Harrietsham	Tenterden
Pluckley & Little Chart	West Kingsdown
RBL Village	

The remaining 54 have only until the end of September to get theirs in. If any branch is having problems with their accounts please contact the MSO soonest.

Branch Officers should be ensuring that as much help as possible is given to the Treasurer to ensure that they can successfully close down the books and produce the Branch Accounts.

AUDIT/EXAMINATION OF BRANCH ACCOUNTS

Please ensure this information is passed to the Branch Treasurer

We have arranged Branch Audit Days with the Independent Examiners in the RBL Village although because of available space, this will have to be on a timed appointment basis only. If your branch wishes to take up this opportunity to get your books audited, there is no cost to you except the travel costs by your Treasurer. The dates for these audits are:

Thursday 7th September
Wednesday 13th September
Wednesday 20th September

All are from 10am until 1pm. Please contact Richard Cast on 01795 474179 or at richardcast@btinternet.com to arrange your appointment. Audits will take place in a meeting room provided by RBLI and treasurers must report to RBLI Reception in the first instance. Car parking is in the Capel Morris car park and the postcode for satnav is ME20 7NL.

Further information on auditing accounts can be found in the July issue of County News but remember, if you have any difficulties please let the MSO know sooner rather than later; we are here to help.

BRANCH AGMs / COMPLIANCE

The Legion year ends on 30th September and your Branch AGM's are to be held between 1st October and 30th November. Branch are reminded that to be compliant there must be four separate members holding the main officer roles of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. There also needs to be a minimum of three additional committee members and there must be a named Branch Community Representative (formally Welfare Officer) who can be one of the committee members.

Branches should ideally have a succession plan so that each role is covered by a non-official deputy who can step in should the need arise. Now is the time to plan so that everything is in place for the AGM.

BRANCH STANDARDS OVERSEAS

Authority for taking Branch Standards abroad is given by the County Committee/County Management Board whose meetings are held once a month. Requests therefore need to be submitted to the MSO at least a month before departure.

The Standard Bearer must have submitted a signed MS1B to County Office to be eligible to carry. Branches must be aware that taking a Standard overseas without authority is not permitted. Neither the Standard nor the Standard Bearer would be covered by the Legion's insurance.

STANDARD BEARER TRAINING

There is Standard Bearer training on 17th September at 2.00pm until 4.00pm at the Capel Morris community hall. Please bring full uniform as well as standard, sling and gauntlets. This session is for competition entrants only, normal training will resume after Conference in January.

If you want to confirm attendance or have any questions, please contact me on 01227 731385 or at annjaneausten@yahoo.co.uk.

Ann Austen
County Ceremonial Coordinator

STANDARD BEARER COMPETITION

This year's County Standard Bearer competition will take place on Sunday 8th October at the Army Reserve Centre, London Road, Ditton, Aylesford ME20 6DB. Those taking part should arrive by midday for a 1.00 pm start. There will be refreshments available. Spectators are more than welcome.

If you would like to take part in the competition, please contact me on 01227 731385 or at annjaneausten@yahoo.co.uk by 24th September please.

Ann Austen
County Ceremonial Coordinator

COUNTY PARADE 2018

The County Committee has agreed that the proposed date for next year's parade will be 10th June 2018. Branches interested in hosting the parade should contact the MSO by 6th October.

ANNUAL COUNTY CONFERENCE 2018

Next year's County Conference will take place at Headcorn Village Hall on Saturday 20th January commencing at 1 pm. Branch Secretaries will shortly receive the papers branches will need. All paperwork concerning Conference will be printed on green paper to make it immediately identifiable. If you wish to send a delegate to County Conference or to Annual Conference in May **your audited Branch Accounts must have been received at County Office by 30th September and your MS1 must be received by 31st December**. Remember, if your Branch Delegate does not attend your voice cannot be heard. This is your chance to put your points of view over for discussion. **Delegate applications must be received at County Office by no later than Tuesday 5th December.**

The guest speaker will be Mr Terry Whittles, the Legion's National Chairman. There will be time for a question and answer session and it is hoped that all branches will make an extra effort to attend so that they can put their questions to him. Any questions should be submitted to the MSO in advance, by no later than 5th December please, to give him time to obtain answers – he doesn't know everything.

COUNTY AWARDS

We are fast approaching the time of the County Conference and I ask that if you were presented with a Trophy at this year's Conference in January could you please return it to County by the middle of November so we can get them checked out for any repairs and get them cleaned and engraved. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

LAYING UP OF BRANCH STANDARD

Following its recent closure the Meopham, Cobham & Luddesdowne Branch is laying up its Standard on 17th September at St John the Baptist Church, Wrotham Road, Meopham DA13 0AA. The Branch Chairman would like Standard Bearers to attend the service. Please arrive at 9.15am and report to Geoff Lees, County Parade Marshal.

YOUTH AFFILIATIONS

Recently the Membership team at Head Office has been investigating ways of improving the Youth Affiliation Scheme and affiliated cadets have been interviewed as the basis for their research. The findings have been very interesting.

Out of 2,100 service cadet units across the country, only 1,168 of them are affiliated to the Legion - only just over half. This figure could be so much better. **Is your local cadet unit affiliated to your Branch?**

Each and every one of those cadets could become an individual member in their own right, and thereby give the young people some real sense of belonging, rather than just being connected via an affiliation. This is especially possible now as there is no youth membership fee yet there are only 323 individual youth members across the whole of the United Kingdom. **What can you do to improve this situation?**

Cadets have reported that they are well involved and informed about Remembrance parades and ceremonies and are happy with their involvement in Poppy Appeal collecting. When asked what they would like to see happen with their affiliated branch, the top point that they mention is that they say they want more visits from branch members. In some cases they do not know even the face of a single Legion member! They would like to hear from veterans and have the opportunity to listen to veterans' experiences. **Are you a branch member where this is not happening and what could you do about it?**

Finally, and to me shockingly, is the fact that the third thing cadets want, after more visits and more information about how their volunteering for the Poppy Appeal can link in with the Duke of Edinburgh Award, is that they are lacking information about affiliation badges. Every affiliation certificate that is sent to branches is accompanied with information about how to obtain affiliation badges and I would have expected every branch to be acquiring badges on behalf of the cadets. **What better way to make the cadets feel involved right from the beginning than to present each of them individually with a badge which they can proudly wear on their uniforms?**

Very soon I shall be visiting affiliated units across the county to carry out research on behalf of the Membership team at Head Office. **It would be great if I can report back that Kent contradicts the national trend - but that will only happen if YOU carry out the ground work.**

If you would like help to think of ways to offer greater involvement to your affiliated youth units, please do get in touch, preferably by email susanfoster61@btinternet.com or by phone 01303 862779.

Susan Foster
County Youth Officer

CANTERBURY BRANCH

On Monday 31st July members of the Canterbury Branch, plus the City's Lord Mayor Cllr Rosemary Doyle, veterans and members from 3 PWRR held a short but moving service at the Cross of Sacrifice in Canterbury Cemetery to honour those who gave their lives in the 3rd battle of Ypres, also known as the battle of Passchendaele. The service was led by Canon Paul Kerr, Branch Chaplain and his wife Canon Jean Kerr. The service included the reading of two poems, one written by a 17-year-old Canterbury College student and one by Dan Lake. Wreaths were laid by the Lord Mayor on behalf of the City, Branch President Gerry Ferret MBE and a member of the Royal Artillery Association. After the service, wooden

crosses were laid by those attending on some of the 140 First World War graves maintained by the War Graves Commission in Canterbury Cemetery.



SHOREHAM BRANCH

On the weekend of 12th/13th August 27 members and non members enjoyed a trip to Ypres to lay a wreath at the Menin Gate for Cecil Cheeseman, who was born in the village, on the 100th anniversary of his death. Standard Bearer Mike Robinson took part in the Last Post ceremony where the wreath was laid by Jenny Walking, a descendant of Cecil's. During the weekend they were also taken on a tour of some of the WW1 war cemeteries where they were able to see and lay crosses at the graves of other Shoreham men who fell at Passchendaele. It was a very emotional and thought provoking weekend.



NEW ROMNEY BRANCH - PASSCHENDAELE SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

Thankfully the weather was kind and at 1830 hours on the evening of Monday 31st of July the New Romney Branch hosted a service to remember and give thanks to those who, 100 years previously, had begun a battle now known as Passchendaele, the Third Battle of Ypres. In just over three months of stalemate fighting over half a million fighting men died.



The service attracted a good turn out and was conducted by the Branch Padre Peter Firth with the Reverend Julie Coleman in attendance. The Chairman, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) George Harvey OBE, gave both the Exhortation and the Kohima Epitaph. A piper played laments to mark the last post and reveille. The hymn and National Anthem were accompanied admirably by the musicians of TS Veteran Sea Cadets. Wreaths were laid by the Branch Chairman, Councillor Peter Coe the Mayor of New Romney, the TS Veteran Sea Cadets and the 1st New Romney Scout Group.

At a time when remembrance is having a positive resurgence it was pleasing to see young and old sharing this experience together. Finally thank you to the members of Brabourne & Smeeth Branch who came along and showed true comradeship on a very special evening.



STAPLE BRANCH

An Army v Navy Veterans Cricket Match at Ash Recreation Ground on 23rd June, organised by member Russ Timpson and in aid of the Poppy Appeal, was a huge success. Branch members ran the BBQ and, together with a bucket collection made the magnificent sum of £416 for this year's Poppy Appeal.

The family of the late Rev. Eric Alder, former Padre to the Branch, have installed a bench in his memory in the grounds of Canterbury Cathedral. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Branch Secretaries attended a moving service of dedication on 15th July. Additionally, the family have made a generous donation to the GP90 Branch fundraising appeal in the Rev. Eric's name.

Fifteen members and supporters, with ages ranging from 6 to 90, had an exciting and most interesting morning at the Dover Lifeboat Station. The skill and expertise of these dedicated crewmembers is inspirational. The visit was followed by a jolly good lunch in Dover.



Regards to you all

Tony West

Membership Support Officer



LEST WE FORGET

Notification has been received that the following members have passed on:

Mr Jack Spitty	Dymchurch
Mr George Gates	Leigh & District
Mr Harold Pollard	Littlebourne & District
Mr John Cooper	Maidstone
Mr Claude Harrison	Margate
Mrs Susan Lock	Sandgate
Mrs Gwendoline Cato	South Darenth & District



Our deepest sympathies go to their families and friends



KENT COUNTY DIARY OF EVENTS - 2017

SEPTEMBER

Sat	16th - 17th	Salute to the '40s - Chatham Historic Dockyard *
Sun	17th	Standard Bearer Training - Capel Morris Centre
Sun	17th	77th Battle of Britain Service - St Stephen's Church, Lympne (2 pm)

OCTOBER

Sun	8th	County Standard Bearer Competition - Ditton
Wed	25th	Poppy Launch - County Hall, Maidstone
Sat	28th	County Poppy Lunch - Brompton Barracks

NOVEMBER

Fri	3rd	Thanet Festival of Remembrance - Winter Gardens, Margate
Fri	10th	Dover Festival of Remembrance
Sat	11th	Armistice Day
Sat	11th	Festival of Remembrance - Royal Albert Hall
Sun	12th	Remembrance Sunday

DECEMBER

Sat	16th	Carol Service - Capel Morris Centre (2.30 pm)
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JANUARY 2018

Sat	20th	County Conference - Headcorn Village Hall (1 pm)
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* County Recruiting Stall

Updated: 4th September 2017