

ANZAC DAY SERVICE & PARADE - Leighterton, Nr Tetbury

Twenty-four members of the Australian Flying Corps are buried in Leighterton cemetery: flying instructors, cadets and ground crew. All except one died in 1918-1919 during flight training, or of other causes. In commemoration on 24 April 2016 The Royal British Legion Gloucestershire County held its annual ANZAC Day Parade & Service in the village to remember those who died. The County mustered over 20 Standards and was joined by those of other organisations. The County Women's Standard was carried by Rachel Perkins, she has just won the contest to be The Women's Section National Standard Bearer.

The service was well attended by the Officers, Standard Bearers and members of RBL Branches in Gloucestershire and included many dignitaries. Group Captain Paul Nicholas represented The Australian High Commission and Australian Defence Force, Mr Carl Berendsen, Counsellor for the NZ High Commission represented The New Zealand High Commission and New Zealand Defence Force. Mr Andrew Crompton represented The Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Uniform presence from RAF Brize Norton was led by Squadron Leader Marshall, OC 501 Sqn RAuxAF, and HQ 1 Artillery Brigade by Lt Col Colin Gordon.



614 (Lydney) Squadron ATC lead the parade and the Nailsworth Silver Band played music for the service which was led for the last time by The Reverend Thoresen, a New Zealander, who soon to move to Dorset. The Lesson was read by Mr Kevin Dixon whose grandfather Henry John Dixon served at Leighterton. Lord Vestey laid the first wreath then further wreaths were laid by respective dignitaries on behalf of UK Forces; The Australian Defence Force; The New Zealand Defence Force; and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Then wreaths were laid for the ex-forces organisations by the RBL County Chairman; and the Western Front Association. Mr Dixon, who was returning to Australia after the service laid a wreath on behalf of those ANZACs were buried here. The

Lord Vestey, The Deputy Lord Lieutenant, inspected the parade before they marched through Leighterton to the cemetery for the Service. The band of





Roll Call was read by pupils of Leighterton Primary School who then laid a sprig of rosemary on each grave which to ANZACs is synonymous with remembrance and commemoration. Its association with remembrance has carried through to modern times; in literature and folklore it is an emblem of remembrance as, in ancient times, the plant was supposed to strengthen memory. The poppy grew



wild in Flanders Fields; similarly rosemary grew wild on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Earlier Gp Capt Nicholas had placed Poppy Crosses on each of the graves from Clifton Hill Primary School in Australia.

After the Service the parade marched back past the dignitaries and Lord Vestey took the salute. Refreshments were then taken in the School Hall and Lord Vestey presented the school with 2 crocheted poppies which were created as part of the 5,000 Poppies Project, which began in Australia to mark Anzac Day. Lord Vestey had been presented with these during a recent visit to Australia by the Victoria State Governor to give to Leighterton School as part of the ANZAC Day Service.

Details of the ANZAC association with Leighterton can be found at:
<http://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/gloucestershire/photo-gallery/leighterton-cemetery-anzac-graves>

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

The Royal British Legion's work is encapsulated in its motto: Live On – to the memory of the fallen and the future of the living. The Legion is the nation's biggest Armed Forces charity providing care and support to all members of the British Armed Forces past and present and their families. It is the national custodian of Remembrance and safeguards the Military Covenant between the nation and its Armed Forces. It is well known for the annual Poppy Appeal, and its emblem the red poppy. www.britishlegion.org.uk