The Hampshire Link

The Newsletter of RBL Hampshire County
Hampshire & IOW

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We will remember them

To all whom we have lost this month. Our sincere condolences to family and friends. We especially remember Brigadier (Retd) Tom Sneyd OBE Royal Engineers, President of the Kingsclere branch.

Our mission is to safeguard the welfare, interests,and memory of those who are serving or who have served in the Armed Forces

Reminder: Annual Meeting of the County Conference Saturday 18th January 2025

This is a reminder that the Annual Meeting of the County Conference is to be held at The Jubilee Hall, Little Shore Lane, Bishop's Waltham, So32 1ED on Saturday 18th January 2025. It starts at 10h30 and is anticipated to end no later than 16h00. The County Conference is conducted under the County Bylaws and the Standing Orders for Conference issued to Branches.

There are positions on the County Committee to be filled. Any Member of a Hampshire Branch may be nominated for election to the County Committee. Please Note: Elected County Committee members will be required to agree and sign the "Certificate of Acknowledgement of Responsibility" A nomination form for all vacant positions and for Conference Venue 2027 (FORM C) is available from County HQ). All county committee nominees are required to provide a CV. A template is also available (FORM D) available from County HQ. All branches are urged to take part in the county competitions. TR

Feedback on Hants County Committee Meeting of December: MS 1 forms

The Hampshire County Committee meeting was held recently. The Membership Engagement Officer reports that the Branch Accounts returns from the branches currently stands at 91% complete. For branches to remain compliant with the RBL the MA 1 form must be submitted on an annual basis. They are overdue and at present only 19 MS1's (32%) have been received. A reminder has been sent out to branches to submit their forms as soon as possible.

The Membership Handbook states that the MS 1 form for each branch must be completed at or after the branch Annual General Meeting. The completed forms must be sent to the Membership Engagement Officer by 31st December (hard copy by post–recorded delivery, or scanned copy by email). One copy must be retained by the branch for their records. The following branches have submitted their MS 1 forms thus far - Andover, Bitterne, Copythorne, Damerham, Droxford, Fordingbridge, Headley, Hurstbourne Tarrant, Itchen Valley, New Milton, Old Basing, Petersfield, Portsmouth South, Ringwood, Southampton, Sutton Scotney, Wallops, Wickham and Yateley & Hawley. TR

A Time of Hope and a Time of Reflection

The New Year begins when there is turmoil and uncertainty in the world. There is conflict in the Middle East, the Ukraine, Africa and elsewhere. Our armed forces are called upon to defend what is good and right. When one signs up for military service, an oath is taken and once training is undertaken, neither can be "undone". You undertake a transition from civilian to military and life changes forever. When you leave the services you become a Military Veteran. That also cannot be "undone". Experiences remain a part of who you are. They make you who you are. It does not matter which armed forces you served in. You are either a serving member or a Veteran and will be forever. Service personnel and Veterans are an independent lot. They will not always ask for help, but they will not always say no, if it is given to them. They do need a place where they can gather, reminisce, share memories, and be amongst like minded people. In reflection, they also need to be ready for this to happen. In the meanwhile, we need to ask this question- Does the RBL provide this? I wonder. The RBL is not growing in strength. Branches are closing. Maybe we need to do something different? DW

January - Operation Shingle Landings at Anzio, Italy 22 Jan 1944

In Remembrance of Brigadier Tom Sneyd OBE

Brig Tom Sneyd
HQ BOAR Apr 1974

Brigadier Thomas S Sneyd served with the Royal Engineers from 1955 to 1987. He did his basic training over a period of 12 weeks at Royal Engineers Cove, Farnborough and then went on to RMA Sandhurst. where he did his officer training. Brigadier Sneyd had a long career as a regular officer and his service is outlined in the next paragraphs by date.

1956-59. Troop Commander Osnabruck. Including 2 month deployment to Malta during the Suez operation. At that time of the Cold War a Soviet attack was expected to penetrate a long way towards the Rhine with wide use of nuclear weapons. A priority for RE troop commanders was planning demolitions (much use of aluminium ladders on bowstring girder bridges) with a view to delaying the enemy to create nuclear targets. It seemed that the effects of radiation on friendly forces was little understood and probably not considered very relevant to fighting a war which would probably be short! All bridges built in Germany after the war were constructed with chambers ready for rapid placement of explosives. Tom was able to visit a large unit of the East German Army shortly after the Wall came down and glimpsed the good equipment and instant readiness for nuclear and chemical war. There were even tanks of sarin gas under the barrack square.

1959-61. Tom served with the Fortress Engineer Regiment on Gibraltar.

1962-64. Trucial Oman Scouts (TOS) (Starting with a 3 month Arabic course in Aden). This force was responsible for security in the whole of what became the UAE. It had a strength of almost 1,000, locally recruited Arabs and mainly British officers, with the HQ in Sharjah. Tom spent most of his time in the largest emirate, Abu Dhabi. It was a peaceful period, arguably due to the presence of the TOS throughout the area. An important role was to monitor and deter incursions of oil exploration from Saudi Arabia.

Serving with the
Trucial Oman Scouts 1962

In April 1965 Brigadier Sneyd married Mary R Carr.

1967- 1969. Brigade Major 30 Engineer Brigade (TA) HQ in Stafford with regiments centred on Monmouth, Liverpool and Manchester.

1969-1971. Commanded 73 later re-named 11 Field Squadron RE based in Ripon but including 8 months in Sharjah and 3 months in Hong Kong (mainly road building in hill country and construction work).

1974-1977. Commanded 21 Engineer Regiment based in Nienberg am Weser, north of Hannover. This was responsible for engineer support (demolitions, mine warfare, route denial, route clearing etc) for 3 Brigade for its defence plans up to the border with east Germany. During this period the regiment deployed twice in the infantry role to Northern Ireland. Four months with responsibility for Long Kesh prison together with Lurgan and Portadown; later, three months responsible, with the RUC, for security in Londonderry City Centre, Bogside and Brandywell.

1984-1987. Commander Engineers HQ British Army of the Rhine (BAOR). This carried responsibilities for maintaining essential facilities in the rear areas including airfield damage repair. Close cooperation arrangements with the German, Belgian and Dutch armies was required.

General. During Tom's period of service only about one third of Royal Engineer officers undertook specialist engineer training leading to civilian qualifications. Instead he passed the General Staff and the Joint Service Staff courses and filled five widely different staff appointment within the Ministry of Defence.

After retiring he was a Crown Servant 1987-89, Deputy Secretary of The Council of Territorial and Reserve Forces. This was a body outside MOD responsible for much of the support for the reserve forces and cadets other than training. During this time he was appointed OBE. I knew Brigadier Sneyd personally and he was a keen member of the Royal British Legion Kingsclere branch. He will be missed. DW

Petersfield Branch Christmas Dinner

A small gathering out of our 57 membership. Petersfield Branch Christmas Dinner in the Half Moon Sheet on December 5th - small but convivial! David Lloyd

World War One Discharge Badge also known as a Wound Badge

This badge is known as the Discharge Badge, the Wound Badge or Services Rendered Badge. It was issued from September 1916 with a certificate. It was worn on civilian clothing to indicate that the wearer had been wounded or injured while serving in the armed forces. A secondary motivation for the award of the badge was because those service personnel who had recovered from their wounds, could no longer be in uniform and were being targeted by the public as being cowards.

Each badge was numbered on the reverse to identify the recipient and a register was maintained in the United Kingdom. Approximately 1,150,000 badges were issued. The numbering system on the back of the badge was as follows -
September 1916 to March 1918. Issued with just a number (approx 360,000).
March 1918 to September 1918. (90,000 of the second series).
September 1918 to December 1919. The badge number had a 'B' prefix before the number. (Approx 350,000 issued).
December 1919 to January 1920. Badge numbers had an 'O' prefix. (Approx 5,000 issued).
January 1920 to March 1922. Numbers only. (Approx 75,500)

Other services and Empire countries used other prefixes as follows -
Royal Navy. Prefix 'RN'. Approximately 48,600 badges issued.
Mercantile Marine. Prefix 'MS'. 158 badges issued by the Board of Trade.
RAF. Prefix RAF (Approx 11,000 issued).
South Africa. Prefix 'SA'.
Canada. Prefix 'C'.
Newfoundland. Prefix 'N'.
Australia. Prefix 'A'.
New Zealand. Prefix 'NZ'.
India. Prefix 'I'. DW

Kingsworthy Memorial and graves

22 January 1944 - Anzio Landings

The Casablanca Conference was held in January 1943 and was attended by Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt and their Chiefs of Staff to discuss the forthcoming invasion of Europe in 1944, as well as the landings in Sicily and Italy once the Tunisian campaign was concluded as well as the strategic bombing of Germany and the war against the Japanese in Burma and the Pacific theatre. Losses due to U-boats and the shortage of shipping would prove to be significant constraints on Allied plans. Operation Husky (invasion of Sicily) took place on 10 January. The US government were somewhat reluctant stating that the invasion of Europe via France was a higher priority. This operation was conducted by the US 7th Army and the British 8th Army. The defeat of the Germans and Italians on Sicily allowed the Allies to gain control of the Mediterranean Sea which has strategic advantages for them.

Anzio Italy 2-7th Middlesex Regiment Anzio bridgehead 10 February 1944

A member of No 9 Commando at Anzio

January 1944. Since the beginning of the Italian campaign both the US Fifth and British Eighth Armies suffered heavy casualties. The decision was made to conduct an amphibious landing of elements of US 6 Corps with British 1st Infantry Division under command at Anzio on the 22nd December and at the same time attack the Gustav Line and German positions at Monte Cassino. The German reacted swiftly and the US and British forces became bogged down on the beaches and in the flooded adjacent marshlands. As the landings took place British units under command of the US Fifth Army crossed part of the Garigliano River and the French forces under command crossed the Rapido River. US forces conducting the First Battle of Cassino suffered heavy casualties. The Germans repelled all attacks, requiring the Allies to re-plan their advance.

A Company Duke of Wellingtons Regt cleaning rifles.

The following units participated in the operation -

British Force

1 UK Infantry Division. This force attacked Peter Beach, six miles north of Anzio.

2nd Infantry Brigade. 1st Bn Loyal Regt, 2nd Bn N Staffs Regt, 6th Bn Gordon Highlanders.

3rd Infantry Brigade. 1st Bn Duke of Wellingtons Regt, 2nd Bn Sherwood Foresters, 1st Bn KSLI.

24th Gds Infantry Brigade. 5th Bn Grenadier Gds, 1st Bn Irish Guards, 1st Bn Scots Gds.

Support elements. 1st Recce Regt, 2/7th Middlesex Regt, 2, 19 and 67 Fd Regts Royal Artillery, 81 Anti Tank Regiment Royal Artillery, 90 Light Anti Air Regiment Royal Artillery, 23, 238, 248 Field Companies Royal Engineers, 6 Field Park Company Royal Engineers, 1 Bridging Platoon Royal Engineers, Royal Tank Regiment No 2 Special Service Brigade. No 9 Commando, No 43 Commando Royal Marines

South Eastern Force. This force attacked the port of Anzio.

6615th Ranger Force. 1st Ranger Battalion. 3rd Ranger Battalion. 4th Ranger Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, 83rd Chemical Battalion. Support elements. US 93rd Evacuation Hospital, 95th Evacuation Hospital.

South Western Force. This force attacked X-ray Beach six miles east of Anzio. It was initially intended to deploy 524 Parachute Infantry Regiment by air but this was changed to a seaborne landing.

3rd US Division. Under command were the following –

7th Infantry Regiment. 1/7,2/7,and 3/7 Inf Battalions.

15th Infantry Regiment. 1/15, 2/15,3/15 Inf Battalions.

30 Infantry Regiment. 1/30, 2/30 and 3/30 Inf Battalions

Support. 3 Division Artillery. 9 Medium Artillery Battalion, 10,39 and 41 Field Artillery Battalions, 10 Engineer Battalion, 610 Tank Destroyer Battalion, 751st Tank Battalion, 441st AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion, Battery B, 36th Field Artillery Regiment, 69th Armoured Field Artillery Battalion, 84th Chemical Battalion (motorised).

504th US Parachute Infantry Regiment. 1/504 Parachute Inf antry Battalion, 2/504 Parachute Infantry Battalion, 3/504 Parachute Infantry Battalion. Photos from Imperial war Museum DW

Other News

Petersfield Branch Recruiting

Petersfield barnch of the RBL are in urgent need of volunteers for the position of Secretary and Treasurer. If you are willing to assist a worthy cause supporting our armed forces community in the Petersfield area please make contact with the Chairman.

Basingstoke, Overton and District Branch Recruiting

Basingstoke, Overton and District Branch are recruiting for a Secretary and Standard Bearer, Volunteers are urgently required. If you are willing to assist a worthy cause supporting our armed forces community in the Basingstoke area, please make contact with the Chairman.

Distinguished Service Order

This decoration was instituted in 1886 and was awarded for distinguished service in time of war for acts not appropriate for the award of the VC. As a result of the 1993 review of Gallantry Awards it is now awarded for exceptional leadership. It cannot be awarded posthumously. The Conspicuous Gallantry Cross is now the equivalent award for specific acts of gallantry.

Image from the Chairman of Petersfield Branch

County Contact Details

Postal Address for Hampshire County Committee
Hampshire & IOW MEO (or Name), Royal British Legion, 199 Borough High St, London SE1 1AA

RBL Website: www.BritishLegion.org.uk, County Website: http://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/hampshire

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/groups/hantscountyrbl/ Facebook Email - Hampshire.web@rbl.community

Poppy Appeal - www.facebook.com.poppy.HamsphireRBL

Contact us
It`s your newsletter!!!
If anyone has any articles that they would like published in the Newsletter then please contact the editor (Colonel (Retd) Dudley Wall MSM MMM) with any information or articles by the 20th of the month at:
HampshireLinkDW@yahoo.com

ALL LEGION ENQUIRIES
(including Welfare requests) should be directed to the national call centre
0808 802 8080

County Personnel
Patron Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL
County President Col Andrew King
County Vice President Brian C.N. Soffe
County Vice President Robert G. Knight
Chairman Tim Russell Hampshire.Chairman@rbl.community
Vice-Chairman Robert Bartlett Hampshire.vicechairman@rbl.community
Treasurer Ges Brown hampshire.treasurer@rbl.community
Independent Examiners - G.S. Brown and M. Davis
Committee members - Secretary Melvyn Cole, John Davies, Paul Holyoake, Brian Mansi, Avril Mitchell, Vic Thorn, David Barton
County Management Board: Tim Russell, Robert Bartlett, Ges Brown, Melvyn Cole, John Davies

Conference Committee: Chairman Brian Mansi, Secretary Avril Mitchell, Pat Prior BEM QVRM, Melvyn Cole, Nigel Thomas, Rev John Morley
Cups Sub-Committee: Avril Mitchell, Pat Prior BEM QVRM. Brian Mansi
Annual Conference Delegate: Tim Russell

Poppy Appeal Manager North: Sarah Ferris
Poppy Appeal Manager South: Claire Smith
Regional Poppy Appeal Manager: Clare Peppiatt
Poppy Appeal Coordinator - North: Vacant
Poppy Appeal Coordinator - South: Pat Prior BEM QVRM

Principal Recruiting Officer: VACANT
County Training Officer: John Davies hampshire.cto@rbl.community
Community Support: VACANT
CCSC: VACANT

Clubs Liaison: Paul Holyoake
Communications Support: Dudley Wall HampshireLinkDW@yahoo.com
County Webmaster: Avril Mitchell Hampshire.Web@rbl.community
Youth Officer: Steve Slack Hampshire.CYO@rbl.community
Events Support: VACANT

Parade Marshall: David Graham, Deputy Parade Marshall: Andy Cassidy
County Standard Bearer: Pete Pullin, ppullin@britishlegion.org.uk
Deputy County Standard Bearer: Dudley Howard up to County Conference and then Andy Dawes

County Youth Standard Bearer: Natalia Szymkiewicz

Ceremonial Support: David Graham, Karen Graham
County Padre: Reverend David Roache
Golf Officer: Rick Bourne
Membership Engagement Officer: Holly Church, Membership Engagement Manager: Martin Pelling
Membership Council Representative: Gerry Nunn
Public Relations Officer: VACANT
Independent Examiners: Ges Brown, Mike Davis
UK Honours Awards: County President, County M.E.O.

Errors and Omissions Excepted