

Ken's Welcome

Ken Rowbottom, County Chairman

We are still in the holiday period. August is rapidly moving towards its end and although September is generally regarded as a good month for an Indian Summer, autumn is not that far away.

Since our last edition of The Suffolk Buzz, we lost Tony Chaplin who crossed the bar at the end of July. Tony was a great and respected stalwart of The Royal British Legion in Suffolk. He was the Branch Chairman of Bacton and District Branch for many years. He was a former Royal Navy Officer who started his Naval career as a shipwright and prior to his retirement, he was the Berthing Officer at HM Submarine Base in Faslane, in Scotland.

Elsewhere in this issue we have managed to gather the usual mixture of articles. I would recommend the article by Vic Lewis of Sudbury Branch RBL. Vic made a private visit to the Normandy beaches and laid his own wreath, in memory of comrades. It is a moving article and a pertinent reminder of one person's pilgrimage. An article that covers the history and background of The Red Arrows is very interesting, especially that during the summer months, The Red Arrows are frequent visitors in the big skies above Suffolk.

In early August, Stowmarket Branch RBL was the host to an evening with Mark Atkinson, the new Director General of The Royal British Legion who in addition to visiting the Branch and the RBL Club, had kindly agreed to a question and answer session by members from Suffolk RBL. It was a successful evening, numerous questions were asked, all of them sensible and covering pertinent issues and annoying problems that affected Suffolk RBL. The DG listened, appreciated the issues that were raised and promised to provide answers and solutions if applicable to the issues that were discussed. His parting words at the end of this gathering were:

"The RBL must move forward." These are words that we must adhere to in Suffolk. We are a progressive County and we must stop looking over our shoulders and harking back to the good old days, times have changed and we must learn to accept these changes and move forward.

In closing, to our readers we value your continued support and enjoy this edition.



Welfare

Representation

Remembrance

Comradeship

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Suffolk Royal British Legion

Website

[http://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/
counties/suffolk/](http://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/suffolk/)

We are also on Facebook

"Suffolk Royal British Legion"

80th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings 6th June 1944 - 6th June 2024

I was privileged to attend the 80th Anniversary Service at the British Normandy Memorial and present our Sudbury Branch Wreath and Pennant in remembrance of all 22,400 lost in the Normandy Campaign.

My father-in-law, Able Seaman Charlie Wing, Royal Navy "L" Commando, landed alongside the 48 Royal Marine commando directly behind the Canadians on Juno Beach on D-Day. Charlie survived his 5 weeks on Juno Beach and also his second beach landing that year at Westkappele, Walcheren Island on 1st November. He was one of the lucky ones.

At Hermanville Cemetery my first grave visit was to my old friend and neighbour, Mrs May Crane, who had her ashes placed at the grave of her first fiance, Rifleman Derek Wright aged 19, Royal Ulster Rifles, KIA 26th July 1944. May's then husband, together with Derek's brother having carried out her dying wish 50 years later.

The 1st Battalion Suffolk Regiment D-Day losses and those KIA from battle of Chateau De La Londe, 28th June 1944 are at rest here. Also, there are two of 48 Royal Marine Commando: Arthur Poole and Sgt Denis Amato KIA, who, with Cpt James Perry (at rest Bayeux Cemetery) have streets named in their honour at Langrune-sur-Mer.

On 6th June we joined the 2,000 people attending the special ceremony at British Normandy Memorial. After the opening remarks by PM Rishi Sunak we enjoyed music by the Band of the RAF Regiment followed by HM King Charles 111 speech. The highlight of the service was the reading of the veterans own words by the actors, Martin Freeman and Douglas Booth and the rendition of "I Won't Crumble With You If You Fall" sung by Sir Tom Jones. I was delighted that part of the honour guard were 1st Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, my Dad's old regiment. We all felt honoured to be with the Veterans that day. The service ended with a fly past by the Red Arrows then we were able to lay our Branch Wreath at the D-Day Memorial Wall. The Standing with Giants Silhouettes looking out to Gold Beach was very atmospheric and perfectly represented the 1,475 soldiers, sailors and airmen lost on D-Day. In Langrune-sur-Mer that evening a service took place around the Memorial to 48 Royal Marine Commando which included speeches by local school children and attendance of Dennis Donovan, a 100-year-old Veteran, as referenced by the Prime Minister that morning in his remarks.

We completed our tribute to Sudbury losses by leaving crosses of remembrance for the following: Sgt Harold Mills, RAF, killed in an explosion 22 August 1944, at rest Bayeux Cemetery. L/Cpl Douglas Hurndel Stock, 3rd Battalion Irish Guards, KIA 19 July 1944 at rest Banneville la Campagne Cemetery. Marine Thomas Frederick

Harrington, 45 Royal Marine Commando, KIA 20th August 1944 at rest Ranville War Cemetery.

All cemeteries visited were wonderfully cared for, set amongst the beautiful French countryside. The rows of headstones of those young lads a sad reminder of the effects of war.

"WE WILL REMEMBER THEM"

Vic Lewis, Sudbury RBL

Poppy Appeal Organiser

A Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) is responsible for making sure that an area's Poppy Appeal is run successfully, ranging from ordering items to banking collections. Ordering poppies, wreaths, pins, security labels, volunteer ID cards, crosses, school boxes and debit/credit card reader, starts with a phone call in July from the County Fundraising Officer (CFO), with any news, new items etc, discussed. Ordering itself started this year on 1st August and, as ordering has been online for the past few years, is easy although occasionally frustrating when items you want are not available or need to be ordered through the CFO. Items are delivered around mid September.

In the meantime, if there is a Service for Remembrance and a parade, the Town Council needs to be reminded that the Church needs to be booked and road closure applied for. This is because the service is a civic event, not run by the Legion. Also at this time, all organisations who usually lay a wreath will be contacted with a reminder, a request for payment and an invitation to the service.

The next job is to confirm with our local supermarket that we can have a table in the store for two weeks before Remembrance Sunday. With that job done, volunteers are contacted and a rota is set up, each one or couple typically doing a two hour shift. Collecting tins, poppy boxes and items left from the previous year are retrieved from storage. New security seals are added and paired up with their boxes which are then filled with poppies. Everything is now ready for delivery to schools, shops, pubs, museums, library, Town Hall, swimming pool and anywhere else that will take a box.

Once Remembrance has passed, it is now time to collect the boxes and collection tins and organise some helpers to count them all. We usually manage this in about three hours. Next, it's off to the bank. By the beginning of December, the Statement of Accounts is compiled and sent to the RBL. This accounts for all monies collected for both poppy items and wreaths.

Finally, a big Thank You to all volunteers who help make Poppy Appeal the success it is. Tony Dawes PAO Bungay.



Red Arrows 60th

Since flying the first time in 1965, the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team has performed more than 4,900 times across the globe. The Red Arrows are lucky to have both a wonderful history and the support and interest of millions of well-wishers.

It was in 1964 when the Royal Air Force amalgamated its display teams into one, premier unit – the Red Arrows. The name was taken from the Black Arrows team and the colour scheme as a tribute to the Red Pelicans, while the aircraft chosen to be flown, the Gnat, had been used by the Yellowjacks.

In the first season of 1965, the team – flying seven aircraft in a display and based at RAF Fairford – performed 65 shows. A media event at RAF Little Rissington on May 6 was the team's first official display, with the first public performance in the UK on May 15 at Biggin Hill Air Fair. The team permanently increased to nine display aircraft in 1968 and the Diamond Nine became the Red Arrows' trademark formation.

The Gnat, was later replaced by the BAE Systems Hawk, a modified version of the RAF's fast jet and weapons trainer, in 1980. Permission was also given for the team to have the motto Eclat – meaning excellence.

RAF Scampton became the team's new home in 1983, moving from RAF Kemble – its base since 1966. The Red Arrows temporarily relocated to RAF College Cranwell between 1995 and 2000.

In 2002, the Red Arrows flew with a British Airways Concorde over London to mark Her Majesty The Queen's Golden Jubilee.

A decade later, the Red Arrows performed another series of flypasts over the capital, for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony and the Athlete's Parade.

The 4,500th Red Arrows display took place at the RAF Waddington International Air Show in July 2013, the team's 49th season

In 2014, the 50th display season was marked as a major milestone with a series of celebrations throughout the year. The Red Arrows were the main feature and theme of the year's air shows.

A special, one-off, tail fin was revealed on the team to recognise the anniversary season, with the design incorporating both a Gnat and Hawk jet outline to reflect the two types of aircraft flown by the team in its history.

For the 2015 season, instead of returning to the traditional three-stripe tailfin livery used since the 1960s, a fresh new paint scheme was revealed on the jets. This Union flag-inspired design features flowing red, white and blue lines and emphasises the Red Arrows' role as national ambassadors for the United Kingdom.

For 2018, the Red Arrows spearheaded celebrations marking the Royal Air Force's centenary- including providing the colourful finale to a flypast of more than 100 aircraft over central London in July.

A move to a new home, RAF Waddington, came in late-2022, with the team leaving its celebrated home of RAF Scampton after a near 40-year presence there.



Veterans in Custody

For three years now the local RBL has had an active involvement with the Veteran prisoners in both Hollesley Bay and Warren Hill Prisons. A member of the Leiston Branch is a Prison Officer at Hollesley Bay and suggested that a Legion presence would enhance their AFD flag raising ceremony. This has developed beyond just AFD and regular Veteran's meetings are attended and we will be involved in the dedication of a Memorial being designed and built in the prison grounds. The prisoners have had a large input in this project and are actively involved in the building work.

We have also been involved in the dedication of the original memorial built inside Warren Hill Prison and a ceremony to make an extension this year. This memorial was also designed and built by the Veteran prisoners and staff.



Please see the passage below, [REDACTED] our prisoner veterans rep spoke to all the veterans and has written the following regarding RBL @ the AFD ceremony.

“ All us veterans agree that having the RBL flagbearers at the AFD ceremony at Hollesley Bay was very welcome and gratefully received. We were all proud to be part of the day and have the flagbearers there made it feel professional and brought back memories for us too. We feel it helped us serve our own ongoing obligation to ensure that current and future generations never forget the sacrifices made by the military to protect our freedom and democracy. We think that having the RBL flagbearers and the trumpet (played by one of the residents) made it a special day with a deep military theme.”

I know that speaking to others who watched the ceremony found it very moving and much appreciated. Jan Camara. VIC Support

VJ Day Ceremonies



Bury St Edmunds RBL held a VJ Remembrance Service at the VJ Memorial in the sunny Abbey Gardens Rose Garden, The Service started with a short-potted reminder of the circumstances around Japan's Surrender. At the Start of the second world war, the United States had remained neutral, Japan was struggling under a US imposed oil embargo and British and Dutch sanctions that were limiting supplies, and impacting heavily on their war effort, Japan sought a strategic advantage, from almost simultaneously attacking European Colonies in Asia, including the southeast and central pacific, in an attempt to prevent American interference in the Pacific War, Japan bombed Pearl Harbour.

Two days later, on December 11, 1941, Hitler declared war on the United States, Benito Mussolini of Italy followed suit. Hours later, the United States declared war on both countries. Particularly from and during conflicts with Japan, British troops and her Allies suffered not only from the ravages of war, but unimaginable cruelty.

On August 6 and 9, 1945, in desperation and before something similar happened to us, the Allies dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On August 9, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan. on August 10th the Japanese government communicated its intention to surrender under the terms of the Potsdam Declaration.

On August 15th, it was announced that Japan had surrendered, that date became the official VJ Day for the United Kingdom, the official US commemoration is the 2nd September, when the formal surrender was signed in Tokyo Bay, aboard the battleship USS *Missouri*.

Several Wreaths were laid at the Dedicated VJ Memorial. After the Service the attending Dignitaries, Veterans, RBL members and attending guests retired to St Mary's for Conversation and Refreshments.

Nigel Wolstenholme Branch Chair.

Suffolk Regt Old Comrades remembered in Leiston to mark VJ Day

On 17th August 'Suffolk Old Comrades' were remembered at a service held in the Long Shop Museum, Leiston. This ceremony has been held at the museum for many years in front of the Union Flag that came back home with the FEPOW's of the 4th Bn Suffolk Regt.



The short service was conducted by the Revd Richard Finch, with wreaths being laid by Leiston Town Council, Friends of Suffolk OCA, Leiston RBL and 1379 Sqn RAF Cadets. Leiston Branch Chairman, Stuart Smith recited the Exhortation and Kohima and RBL Leiston Band members, Phil Glennon and Vicky Tishler played Last Post and Reveille.



The Battle of Arnhem- The 80th Anniversary- September 1944. A Bridge too Far-A Gamble too Far.

This Country and Suffolk, commemorated the D Day Landings on the 6th June 1944. The landings paved the way for the liberation of Normandy, Paris and the speedy advance and liberation of Belgium. In September 1944, the allied forces, advancing on a broad front had reached and halted at the Belgian/Dutch Border. The senior allied commanders at this point were undecided as to how the next phase, the advance into Germany, would take shape.

Field Marshal Montgomery conceived a bold plan involving the eizing of bridges over the main rivers; Waal, Maas and Lower Rhine at Arnhem and canals of Holland. The plan involved an "airborne carpet" of parachute divisions to capture the key bridges. Whilst this action was taking place, the 30 Corps forces, commanded by Lt Gen Brian Horrocks, would advance up the main highway to Arnhem, where they would link up with the British 6th Airborne Division, who in the original plan, were given the task of seizing the main bridge. Once this task had been completed, Montgomery's plan was to swing right and capture the Ruhr, the industrial heartland of Germany, resulting in the hastening of surrender by Nazi Germany.

It is not intended to give a historical account of the Arnhem Battle, suffice to say that it all ended in failure and the blame lay between Montgomery and the overall commander of the airborne forces in the campaign, Gen Sir Frederick "Boy" Browning. A number of key mistakes in the planning of the operation to seize the Arnhem bridge were; the failure of allied intelligence to appreciate that two German panzer divisions were resting and re-equipping in the area, the dropping zones were nearly 10 kilometres beyond the city and that the RAF could not airlift the airborne forces in one day. Plus the radio sets did not work properly, and effective communications between units was nearly non-existent.

The battle for the Arnhem Bridge and The Oosterbeek Pocket effectively ended on the 25th September. Its lasting legacy is that it illustrates the superb fighting spirit and tenacious qualities of the Parachute Regiment, a legacy that still lives, 80 years after the battle had ended.

Postscript- I have always been interested in the Battle of Arnhem. My late Uncle Raymond, my father's youngest brother, served as a "tom" in one of the rifle companies of the 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment, that during the battle was commanded by Lt-Col John Frost and held the bridge for 4 days, before they were forced to surrender. Veterans from the war are often reluctant to talk about their experiences. However, during some quiet moments, he talked about having to constantly move because the houses that troops occupied were being deliberately set on fire, they moved from room to room by "mouse holing", knocking small holes in the room with their entrenching tools, finally when ammunition was almost expended, they fought the Germans using their entrenching tools, pick axes and shovels!! These men were heroes, deservedly so. Veterans of Arnhem become fewer each year. We must never forget their efforts; the Dutch nation remembers with gratitude their contribution each year. **Long may we remember them. Ken Rowbottom**



Images from IWM archive



Suffolk Poppy Appeal 2024

The Suffolk Poppy Appeal Team are busy with preparations for the forthcoming Poppy Appeal 2024.

This year's Poppy Appeal will launch on Thursday 24th October, marking the start of our collection period that continues to Remembrance Sunday on the 10th November. In the last newsletter Poppy Appeal Organisers (PAO) received in June, they have been asked, if they are able, they may put out unmanned collections from 17th October for example in high street shops – butchers, schools, hairdressers, pubs. Both Supermarket and Street collections are to align with the information the PAO will receive in their Pre-Appeal Pack due in September.

The 2023 Poppy Appeal was a tremendous success, raising more than £50 million to help fund the life changing work of the Royal British Legion. You will be interested to know that through cash, contactless terminals and QR codes, during the Poppy Appeal financial year our total stands at £795,536.55, so far, up by 6.59% from last years end of year total.

Cashless—QR codes and contactless terminals - Poppy Appeal 2023

Nationally - £8.7m was raised, of which £147,841.66 was raised in Suffolk through contactless terminals and PAO district specific QR codes.

As more people become aware of QR codes, our hope is, we can raise further cashless donations, at unmanned static points together with the contactless terminals placed in high footfall areas.

National Partnerships

Asda, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Morrisons will be continuing to offer their support hosting manned stands and banking donations collected in their stores for the 2024 appeal.

With out the support of all the volunteers and branches, these totals would not be possible. You are the lifeblood of the Royal British Legion. A heartfelt **thank you** to everyone that is involved and good luck with Poppy Appeal 2024.

Mandi Cox-Osborne, Poppy Appeal Manager, Suffolk.





CPD CONTINUING
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

CPD & Training Awareness Update

You should all know that we are all under more pressure to maintain our level of Legion knowledge, including policies and procedures. Through the Discover Learning System we have courses available on all Legion subjects, many online with additional face to face delivery provided by the national trainers and your County Training Officer.

One good element of this is that my face to face Branch Management course has been accredited by the L&D Team to satisfy part 2 of the mandatory training required to be completed by all Branch Officers and Committee members. This course is in my opinion one of the most important for everybody to complete. When running alongside the subject specific courses it gives you all the opportunity to learn or update your knowledge.

Unfortunately due to budget restrictions I am possibly going to have to reduce my planned activities through to July 2025. The County only received about 40% of the total we applied for from Headquarters, and must therefore make savings where we can. I will be looking for free/cheap venues in all areas of the County to deliver what I had planned. I will also be doing some elements online via MS Teams however, I fully appreciate that is not the best way of doing things. I am also prepared to visit a Branch with a venue/club and deliver to other local Branches to help make it cost effective. I have tried to keep most sessions as central as possible for everybody, but we must now move perhaps to a more regional approach.

In the meantime, I ask all who have not yet registered on the Discover System to please do so. Follow the instructions and complete the necessary online courses applicable to you position in your Branch. The instructions for registering and for enrolling on courses have been distributed by both our County Secretary and MEO. Please contact me direct if you have any problems with any part of Discover, details below.

You will all have noticed the number of changes we have had to our systems and procedures during the past few years and must all do our best to keep up with this evolution and progress. The only way to do this is to attend CPD/training/awareness events. We live in an ever changing world and everyone must move with the times. I know that we don't always agree with these changes but as members of this organisation we sign the MS1 each year and must abide by the terms of our membership.

Denis Bloomfield, CTO
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Compliments & Complaints

The editorial team needs your opinions and comments on the content of this newsletter. We don't get a lot of feedback usually and are also not too sure of the local member distribution our efforts get.

We need to know that we are getting it right, giving you what you want to see/read. A lot of effort goes into producing these newsletters every two months and is often limited by a lack of Branches sending us pictures and editorial of your activities. We do this for you, the member, so now we want you to do something for us.

Please give some of your valuable time to respond to this request. Are we getting it right? Is there a good balance of articles? Is the content interesting for you? What would you like to see included? Is the publication too big/too small? Is there anything else you would like us to know? Is this format correct?

So, over to you, our valued members. We are all big boys in this team so give it to us on the chin, we can take it. We are not looking for a pat on the back, that's not why we do this however, we do need to know that we are not wasting our time and effort as we all have many other things we could do with our time.

Please send your comments **via email only** to our Secretary Colin Smith at sudbury.chairman@rbl.community.

Advance notice

The November edition of this newsletter will focus mainly on the Poppy Appeal and Remembrance plans, including Festivals of Remembrance. Please send details to Colin Smith (as above) so we can add your content and let the Legion world know what you are doing in your Branch areas.

The deadline for content to be included is 7th October to give us time to prepare the newsletter.

Thank you.

The deadline for the November edition is no later than 07.10.2024. If you have an article or some news you would like to see published, then please email sudbury.chairman@rbl.community

Suffolk RBL County Communications Team

Ken Rowbottom - Chairman

Colin Smith (Sudbury RBL) - Secretary

Denis Bloomfield (Saxmundham RBL) - County Training Officer

Tony Dawes (Bungay RBL) - Information Technology

Pete Chivers (Stowmarket RBL) - Editor of the Newsletter



Service not self