



THE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2020

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HENLEY & PEPPARD BRITISH LEGION ALIVE AND WELL!

Message from the Chairman

We're anxious to let you know that contrary to the sad demise of the Harpsden branch of the British Legion reported recently in the Henley Standard, your Henley & Peppard branch is alive and well! As you know, our local membership continues to increase, partly due to our programme of speakers and lunches at the Christchurch Centre each month which of course we will hope to resume as soon as possible. Transport can be arranged for anyone unable to attend our meetings under their own steam.

HENLEY CADETS

We are delighted to welcome the Army, Sea and 447 (Henley) Squadron Air Cadets who we have invited to contribute to the Henley & Peppard Branch Newsletter on a regular basis

The Army Cadet Force, is a national youth organisation sponsored and supported by the Ministry of Defence. For 12-18-year olds, designed to deliver challenging and varied training based on military themes and concepts.

The Sea Cadets based here in Henley-on-Thames aim to give young people an experience that will help them grow into the person they want to be in a safe and friendly environment.

447 (Henley-on-Thames) Squadron aim to give the best cadet experience in the area, with qualified First Aid, Adventure Training and Skill-at-Arms instructors and a varied and exciting training programme, they are equipped to deliver that experience.

Dates for your Diary

Meetings are held on 3rd Monday of the month unless otherwise advised.

Venue – The Christ Church Centre

Talk 11.30 (please be seated by 11.20) Lunch 12 for 12.30

Please book for lunch by the Thursday before by email to Helen Walsh on helentwalsh2014@gmail.com or 01491 638885

Meeting & Talks 2020

The scheduled of Meetings and Talks have been unavoidably cancelled owing to the ongoing Covid-19 situation and until the Government give us the all-clear.

However Sara Abey, our Speaker Coordinator has been working on setting up interesting talks for 2021 and would appreciate your involvement, so if you have any suggestions or ideas for a speaker, or even an appropriate lunchtime entertainment, please contact Sara Abey on: henley@saraabey.com

Committee activities

JUST TO BEING YOU UP TO DATE :

During this lockdown period your committee has been holding virtual meetings via Zoom, hesitantly at first, but ultimately successfully. Our focus at present is to consider how we, as a Branch are to commemorate JV Day, taking into account the Government restrictions put in place for our safety. We will keep you informed of our progress by email as soon as we can.

On a lighter note I'm sure you'll be interested to know that we are now fully conversant with the Lockdown lingo!

Coronacoaster The ups and downs of your mood during the pandemic. You're loving lockdown one minute but suddenly weepy with anxiety the next. It truly is "an emotional coronacoaster".

Quarantinis Experimental cocktails mixed from whatever random ingredients you have left in the house. The boozy equivalent of a store cupboard supper. Southern Comfort and Ribena quarantini with a glacé cherry garnish, anyone? These are sipped at "locktail hour", ie. wine o'clock during lockdown, which seems to be creeping earlier with each passing week.

Le Creuset wrist It's the new "avocado hand" - an aching arm after taking one's best saucepan outside to bang during the weekly 'Clap For Carers.' It might be heavy but you're keen to impress the neighbours with your high-quality kitchenware.

Coronials As opposed to millennials, this refers to the future generation of babies conceived or born during coronavirus quarantine. They might also become known as "Generation C" or, more spookily, "Children of the Quarn".

Furlough Merlot Wine consumed in an attempt to relieve the frustration of not working. Also known as "bored-eaux" or "cabernet tedium".



Wet and cold perhaps, but undaunted!

Armed Forces Day may have looked a lot a bit more cheerful last year, but true to form, our Chairman John Green braved the weather and set up stall collecting a respectable £108 for the Poppy Appeal.



Cadet Sergeant Tallulah Scott of the Henley Army Cadets produced a video on Armed Forces Day and how they are celebrating the day. Please watch - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJGEMfegZRC>

Our elderly Statesmen fit and well despite the lockdown

Reunion of Henley Town medalists. Dick Charlton celebrated his 100th Birthday on June 2. Dick served with the 4th Battalion Ox & Bucks at the battle of Cassel.

John Green was able to meet him briefly at Chiltern Chiltern Court Care Centre thanks to some relaxation of rules about visits.

“Despite his age, Dick seemed as sprightly as ever and his memory undimmed. He was happy to reminisce about his experiences at the fateful battle of **Cassel** where he was taken prisoner in 1940. A hero and local “treasure”. An example to us all.”

See the Henley Army Cadet Serjeant Forehand's video below about the battle of Cassel - It is an amazing 'must-watch video'!



The Battle of Cassel - Oxfordshire ACF - YouTube

Cadet Serjeant Forehand from Henley Detachment has produced a short video regarding 'The Battle of Cassel'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoZVZQN4ogc>



Brigadier (ret'd) M B Page MBE

Another reunion! This photo records the occasion when it was possible to meet Malcolm face-to-face for the first time in many weeks in that he was allowed a 15-minute garden break at the Chiltern Court Care Centre.

Malcolm was in good form and we were able to take a glass of wine together at 1.5 metres distance. Malcolm's next objective is for me to be able to wheel his chariot to one of Henley's reopened hostelrys soon!

Henley Army, Sea and Air Cadets

The Army Cadet Force is a national youth organisation sponsored and supported by the Ministry of Defence. For 12-18-year olds, designed to deliver challenging and varied training based on military themes and concepts. Henley Detachment at the Drill Hall in Friday Street & parade every Wednesday from 1900 to 2130hrs. We would love for new Cadets and Adult Volunteers to come visit us and experience something new, whether that is our virtual parade night or once we re-open for face to face training. For any Henley Detachment enquires please email AUO Mel Haynes, 336ohayne@armymail.mod.uk

The Army Cadets gives young people - from all walks of life - access to fun, friendship, action, and adventure. We challenge young people to learn more, do more and try more. We inspire them to aim high and go further in life, no matter what they aim to do. With 41,000 cadets and 9,500 adults in more than 1,600 locations around the UK, the Army Cadets makes a big impact on young people, parents, and communities. For more information visit armycadets.com



**PRESS
RELEASE**

Written by Colour Serjeant Tallulah Scot

Over the past few months, Oxfordshire Army Cadet Force (ACF) have been taking part in online training via zoom. The Cadets have been continuing their Army Proficiency Certificate (APC) syllabus and have been making sure the training does not stop, even though the global pandemic. Cadets have been attending virtual lessons every Wednesday night, and are still able to pass their subjects and carry on the progression of their cadet careers at the comfort of their own homes.

As well as Wednesday night training, the Cadets in Neville Company held the first ever virtual company training weekend in which they spent two days learning lessons mentored by the adult instructors. Although it cannot replace the whole camaraderie of the usual weekends, it certainly gave the cadets a chance to spend time with their friends whilst learning new skills in the process. Another national first was the virtual recruitment night where the adult instructors showed a little insight on being in the cadets.

The Cadets have had many fantastic guest speakers throughout quarantine including the Army Sergeant Major, Gavin Paton who gave the senior cadets fireside interview on his day to day role. With this new medium of communication becoming familiar to both the cadets and the adult instructors, carrying on these great opportunities will become easier and hopefully will not stop even when the cadets go back to being face-to-face.

Henley detachment's most senior male cadet, Sergeant James Forehand, stated, "The training is fantastic! I am so glad we can continue to have a bit of normality during this tough time. Thank you to all the adult instructors who have sacrificed their time to teach us". Some cadets have had the opportunity to undertake a Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation (CVQO) qualification before quarantine. CVQO is a charity which enables cadets to gain recognised vocational qualifications through every-day cadet activities such as Leadership, Teamwork, Music and more. Eight Cadets from Henley have been awarded their BTEC Level 1 in Teamwork & Personal Skills. To keep the flame alive, their badges were sent out in the post for them to sew on.

The Cadets are due to have another online weekend on 14 July. These have been challenging times but has proved to us all that the Cadets in Oxfordshire never give up and can overcome any obstacles thrown their way

Serjeant Tallulah Scott, Henley Detachment, Army Cadet Force

Colour Serjeant Tallulah Scott has been in the Cadets for just over four years. She has been on an array of extracurricular courses and has achieved the highest star level in her cadet career. She works at a company level, organising the more junior cadets, on a detachment night she focuses on teaching the APC syllabus.

"I love every aspect of cadets, from the family mentality to all of the amazing things we do. Never a dull moment" Tallulah said. So, what does she want to do moving forward? Tallulah said, "I really want to start honing my skills and try and get on even more advanced courses to broaden my skill set."



CSjt Tallulah Scott inspecting her cadets on parade.



"I have really enjoyed engaging online with the air cadets during lockdown, I have been to virtual STEM talks which have been really interesting and first aid training that has helped consolidate and develop my first aid skills. Connecting through our squadron's Facebook group and google classroom has allowed us to stay informed and continue to achieve." **Cadet Flight Sergeant Hammond**

Henley on Thames Air Cadets is a uniformed youth organisation for ages 12-18. We are part of the Royal Air Force. With an emphasis on team spirit and a zest for adventure, 447 (Henley-on-Thames) Squadron aim to give the best cadet experience in the area. With qualified First Aid, Adventure Training and Skill-at-Arms instructors and a varied and exciting training programme, we are equipped to deliver that experience.

We have an in-house Flight Simulator and a vast range of equipment with committed instructors to deliver our training and activities programme. To be a part of this exciting experience, drop in on any parade night.

Although at present there is nothing happening with Henley Air Cadets at our Friday Street HQ, we are still very much in touch via Facebook and the new Cadet Portal, where cadets are able to continue with virtual studies and parades. There is no firm date for a return to face-to-face activities - the latest info is that we are following the schools lead and are aiming for a possible return end September/October. So far as I am aware, Cadet Forces are in discussion as to the process of return with safety factors the prime consideration - state of buildings, utility services and supply. However, at the moment it is very much a 'wait and see' scenario.

Flt Lt Tim Keating RAFAC, Officer Commanding 447 (Henley-on-Thames) Squadron



Address:

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Email: info@henleyseacadets.co.uk

At Henley-On-Thames we aim to give young people an experience that will help them grow into the person they want to be in a safe and friendly environment. Through various activities and adventures, we learn teamwork, respect, loyalty, self-confidence, commitment, self-discipline, honesty and how to be the best version of ourselves. You learn life skills

"It makes me feel I can do things others can't. I do not want to stay in my house every day. I want to see how the world is."
Shaun, 13

We offer a range of different activities from sailing, windsurfing and powerboating - to rock climbing, camping, and music - plus, so much more! At Henley-On-Thames you are also able to gain different qualifications that you can take with you once you leave Sea Cadets!

I was 12, very quiet and shy. Cadets makes you find the confidence. You feel part of something special. **Serafina, 15**

Naysha is very sensitive, but here you have to pick yourself up. She is become calmer and better at making friends. She has a sense of self now; it is not any more about what others want to do. It is about confidence. About acknowledging you can fail, but you can still make the future right. **Michelle, mum of Naysha.**

VE Day Competition

Although we celebrated VE Day we had not forgotten those still in conflict until 14th August 1945 when it was announced that Japan had surrendered unconditionally to the Allies, effectively ending World War II.

VE Day - RBL Henley & Peppard Branch held a competition calling for families to decorate their windows and turn Henley Red, White and Blue in a show of remembrance, unity, and respect to commemorate and celebrate the end of WW2. It was heart-warming to receive many pictures of the window displays done by families and their children, and from the Henley Army Cadets. The winners were:



Caroline Barefield



Kim Deeley & Trevor Bailey



(Lance Corporal Cdt Natasha Bryant

joint 3rd

Georgina Tilby)



VJ Day 75 Event update from RBL

On Friday 8 May this year, the nation commemorated the 75th Anniversary of VE Day under challenging lockdown conditions and I am writing in the first instance to thank all of those that reacted so positively and at in such short notice to ensure that the service and sacrifice of the Second World War generation did not go unmarked within our communities. I also wanted to update you on preparations for the upcoming 75th Anniversary of VJ Day, as well as provide some sense of where we are in terms of planning for this year's Remembrance Sunday ceremony.

On the 15th August 2020, the nation will commemorate VJ 75 and the recent easing of HMG social distancing restrictions means that we are now able to develop plans for a formal event centred around the Act of Remembrance at 11am. This year's commemoration will be broadcast on BBC One from the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire and will incorporate wreath-laying activity at several of the relevant memorials and artefacts linked to the WW2 campaign in South-East Asia.

In consequence, this will allow for a wider attendance than would normally be the case under extant social distancing restrictions although regrettably, it is highly unlikely that we will be able to allow for mass attendance by members of the public.



Allied forces during the VJ Day parade in Nairobi, Kenya, on 15 August 1945. Over 5,000 servicemen and women took part in the parade, including troops of East Africa Command, nursing officers, and men of women of the RAF and Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

Ground crews of No. 356 Squadron RAF in the Cocos Islands celebrate - 14 August



The evening of 15 August on BBC One, there will be a second 90 minute broadcast based on a MoD-led commemorative programme from London. Whilst the war against Japan was truly Tri-Service, it is worthy of note that the Fourteenth Army in particular, was notable for being the most diverse fighting force raised in modern times with less than 20% of those involved in fighting originating in the British Isles.

The coordinated effort of servicemen and women from over 40 countries very much reflected the diversity of the UK's modern-day communities and organisations such as the Armed Forces and the Emergency Services and this theme will be integral to this year's event programme. The Royal British Legion is therefore asking all organisations and associations, both military and civilian, that share our commitment to remembering the service, suffering and sacrifice of all those involved in that most challenging of environments to either lead or participate in local activity centred on the Two Minute Silence at 11am on Saturday 15th August. The Legion strongly urges all those planning events to adhere to extant HMG and Local Authority guidelines on social distancing and to shape their commemorations in whichever way is most meaningful to their local community.

At this time of year, it would also be usual for the Legion to initiate proceedings in support of The Cenotaph Dispersal, the military veterans' component of the traditional Remembrance Sunday ceremony on Whitehall. This year is the centenary of the unveiling of the iconic Whitehall war memorial, designed and built by Edwin Lutyens, and the Legion is working closely with all of the relevant HMG agencies to ensure that this year's event can go ahead in some form.

Mindful that mass events are not permitted under current restrictions, a range of representative optionsder consideration by HMG; the Legion will provide the relevant details as soon as we are able. Similar restrictions will also apply to community based remembrance activity and direction for these will be promulgated by the appropriate civil authorities.



The Burma Railway, the construction of which led to the deaths of over 12,000 Allied POWs, 6,904 of whom were British

also called Burma-Siam Railway, railway built during World War II connecting Bangkok and Moulmein (now Mawlamyine), Burma (Myanmar). The rail line was built along the Khwae Noi (Kwai) River valley to support the Japanese armed forces during the Burma Campaign. More than 12,000 Allied prisoners of war (POWs) and tens of thousands of forced labourers perished during its construction.

VJ Day And the War in The Pacific

Victory over Japan Day had been a long time coming – learn about the gruelling campaign that led to it ...

Just copy and paste the address below into your browser (google perhaps)

<https://www.forces.net/heritage/remembrance/9-things-you-need-know-about-vj-day>**VJ Day And The War In The Pacific**

“A Fleet Aircraft Maintenance Group (FAMG) was created which comprised the maintenance carriers Unicorn and Pioneer together with a number of specialist maintenance ships capable of repairing airframes, engines, instruments and equipment such as hydraulic and electrical assemblies. Additionally a number of escort carriers were used to ferry naval aircraft as freight from the UK to Australia and to carry fully operational replenishment aircraft from Australia to the fleet carriers in the operational areas. The FAMG proved capable of carrying out nearly all the aircraft repair work needed by the BPF up to August 1945.”

This is why the importance of the war isn't confined to remembrance – operational lessons learnt during the conflict have proved highly as influential in subsequent years:

“The more I studied it, the more I came to realise that the post-war Royal Navy in which I served for thirty-three years owed much of its concept of operations to the outstanding achievements of the BPF in the year from November 1944 to November 1945. The ability to improvise and make replenishment at sea both possible and practical and to absorb new ideas, working within international coalitions when necessary, were also key elements in the modernised post-war Royal Navy that fought so effectively off *Korea*, in the *South Atlantic* and in the *Gulf*. Not least, the implementation of the true potential of the carrier-borne aircraft to project power, rather than act merely as an auxiliary arm shackled by political limitations, provided the catalyst that allowed the Royal Navy to become one of the world's leading proponents of air power in the immediate post-war period.”

Obituary - Major-General The Lord Alvingham CBE, DL 1926-2020



Lord Alvingham was closely associated with the Royal British Legion, for whom he worked tirelessly, and the Army Benevolent Fund. Recognition of his work for these two charities, which were so close to his heart, were reflected in his appointment as Deputy Lieutenant for Oxfordshire in 1996.

Lord Alvingham was born in London 1926 and died in Bix Manor 2020

Having served as a soldier for so long, he knew that these charities were crucial to looking after those who had given a lifetime of service and the rattle of collection tins in the run up to Remembrance Day was a familiar sound to anyone he came into contact with. You ignored him at your peril

GUY ALVINGHAM was born in London in 1926 and lived and died in Bix Manor 2020

A Brief History of 'The Chindits'



In 1943, 77 Brigade, commanded by Brigadier, later Major General, Wingate, attacked and destroyed Japanese targets in occupied Burma. Casualties were heavy, only half the force were fit to fight after the operation. The campaign caused little damage but the Chindits' ease of penetration changed Japanese military thinking and prompted their offensive in Assam against Imphal and Kohima. This operation led to their eventual defeat in Burma in 1944-45.

The concept of 'Long Range Penetration' caught Winston Churchill's imagination and six brigades were trained as 'Chindits'. They became known as 'Special Force' but the men eventually came to consider themselves 'The Forgotten Army'. Their equipment weighed 70 to 80lbs. They fought in temperatures of 43°C plus, in high humidity and visibility of only 10 metres. Tropical diseases were rife and deadly. Rations sometimes arrived successfully from the air but the threat of ambush or the encounter of a Japanese patrol was constantly on their minds. Foot patrols disturbed the Japanese, but it was the airborne assaults in gliders which gained the allies a foothold in Burma and caused real damage to the enemy.

General Wingate was tragically killed in an air accident. The Chindits, however, blocked the Japanese railway for some time but they were trapped in an enclave. Air supplies were cut off by Japanese air defences. Eventually, about 2000 Chindits miraculously escaped to fall out of the frying pan into the fire!

Finally, the Chindits came under command of an American, General Stillwell. They were misused as assault troops during the monsoon and probably suffered the worst infantry fighting experience of World War 2. By the end they were all suffering from one or more serious medical conditions: malaria, dysentery, or jungle sores. Many had lost a third of their body weight and few could eat solid food.

Today, the new 77 Brigade inherits the proud legacy of the Chindit Flash, known as the 'Fabulous Lion'. It means more today to the handful of surviving veterans, than words can possibly express.

