



(Kilmington Branch)

NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2008

“Honour the Covenant”

Good news! The Royal British Legion Campaign to press the Government into providing better support for our Armed Forces, Veterans and their dependents is starting to work. The Secretary of State for Defence recently announced that compensation payments for those seriously injured have been doubled to a maximum of £570K as well as a guaranteed income for life. Service personnel have been promised preferential treatment for social housing, school places and health services with better access to NHS dentistry. Those serving for more than 6 years will get all tuition fees paid for a first degree education. Major improvements to married and single accommodation will be funded although it is acknowledged that these will take time to implement. Overstretch in commitments has been recognised and there are some attempts being made to lower force levels overseas. Many thanks to those members who wrote to their MP's, and at least one direct to the Prime Minister, supporting the Campaign – let's keep the pressure up by signing the petition to the Prime Minister to provide a dedicated Veterans Hospital; details can be found on: <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/wounded/>. The public at large are supportive of the Campaign with the Poppy Appeal now topping £30M, an increase of over 15 per cent on the last years figure.

Poppy Steam Train

22 members of the Branch joined the Special Poppy train at Buckfastleigh on 10 June for a lovely evening journey alongside the River Dart to Totnes. Refreshments were enjoyed on the way with entertainment by a very talented Melody Quartet. We joined in a rousing sing song of World War 2 songs on Totnes platform before the return journey. Nearly £2K was raised for the Poppy Appeal because of the support of a number of Devon Branches.

Annual Outing

A full coach of Branch members set off on 30 June on a lovely day to visit the Historic Dockyard at Portsmouth. Most took the harbour cruise first to find that the majority of the RN Portsmouth based fleet were in harbour including the three aircraft carriers HMS Invincible, Illustrious and Ark Royal. The good news, announced by the Secretary of State for Defence only a couple of days later aboard Ark Royal, was that three new Carriers are now on order, a multi-million pound project. The tour of HMS Victory, still listed as part of the Fleet, was absolutely fascinating and one marvelled at the way it had been restored to the fit which Lord Nelson had at the Battle of Trafalgar. HMS Warrior, designed to outgun and outrun any ship in the 1860's, which Napoleon described as “a black snake among rabbits” was beautifully restored and a joy to tour. Henry VIII's flag ship the Mary Rose, which sank in Portsmouth harbour after 36 years engaging the French, was difficult to see clearly as it is still being treated with wax spray; however, it was well worth viewing and its museum was packed with interest.

The three Royal Navy museum galleries are a treat to see with everything presented beautifully. A number of the party went up the newly built Spinnaker Tower and enjoyed the views over the dockyard and Isle of Wight, while others took in the high class new shopping centre at Gun Wharf Quays. It proved to be a wonderful day out, and on the journey home the party heard an account of Lord Nelson's life from "Beyond the Grave". Many thanks to the Treasurer, Roger Lovegrove, for organising the visit.

Branch Annual BBQ

Nearly 70 Branch members including a few guests attended the annual BBQ in the New Inn on Friday 25 July. We were lucky with the weather, and Brian and Denise Jenkins did a fantastic job in catering for us all so quickly for which the Chairman expressed appreciation on behalf of everyone. The RBL Devon County Chairman, Brian Cumming, was present with his wife Patricia as our guests, and he presented a certificate to the Branch Secretary, Michael O'Flaherty for contributing to and completing a recent Legion recruitment course.

HMS Cumberland

Commander David Dutton, Royal Navy, son of Ted Dutton (one of our Committee members) and his wife Maureen, has just been promoted to Captain and will soon take Command of HMS Cumberland, a Type 22 Frigate whose home base is Devonport. David recently returned from Iraq having been an advisor to the Iraqi Navy, prior to which he was Commander Training at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. Ted has been asked to send congratulations from the Branch with the assurance that we will watch the activities of HMS Cumberland with great interest.

Annual Lecture – 17 October

Lt Col Guy Lavender has kindly agreed to give the Annual Lecture in the Village Hall at 1930 hours on Friday 17 October entitled "Beijing Olympics and Prospects for London 2012". Guy retired from the British Army a couple of years ago to take up the appointment of Director Olympics South West and has been kept very busy with the Olympic Committee organising training establishments and preparations in the south west for the London Olympics. He has already visited China to inspect the facilities in Beijing and the surrounding area, and will be attending the Beijing Olympics in August.

Trafalgar Day Parade & Service – 19 October

The Ship's Company of HMS Exeter will be exercising their Right of Freedom by marching through the City prior to a Service in Exeter Cathedral at 1130 hours. The Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope and the Lord Mayor will take the Salute at the parade led by the Royal Marine Band, and the Admiral will read the first Lesson at the Service which will include Naval and Marine Officers and Devon Cadet Forces Units. The Branch has been invited to send representatives to what should be a very colourful and interesting event. Please pass your names to the Secretary on 01297 35873 by 12 September to reserve your seats.

Member's News

Harry Price has now moved to Bymead Nursing Home in Charmouth where he is being well looked after. He is awaiting an appointment to get his artificial limb made more comfortable, but Sue Moore continues to give him plenty of support. Mrs Hamblet became more and more immobile at her home in Whitford Road and decided to move into the Seaton Nursing Home to join her husband Phil who was a past Chairman of the Branch. They would be delighted to see friends and members if they were passing.

The Devon County Festival of Remembrance

The Devon County Festival of Remembrance will be held on Thursday 6 November in the Great Hall of Exeter University starting at 1930 hours. Branch Members present last year were very impressed with the ceremony and events of the evening, and we will try to organise a coach again

Remembrancetide Arrangements

The Remembrance Sunday Service on 9 November will be held in the Baptist Chapel at 0945 hours, conducted by the Rev'd Darrell Holmes; the Preacher is likely to be the Rev'd Alastair McCollum who will take up his appointment as Vicar in October. The Branch Chaplain, the Rev'd Lincoln Jones, will lead the Service at the War Memorial. The Otter Inn at Weston has been booked for a carvery lunch after the Service and a coach has been arranged to take members. Maroons will be set off to mark the 2 minutes silence on Armistice Day (Tuesday 11 Nov) from the Playing Field following which refreshments will be served in the Pavilion.

Monthly Get-Togethers

The next gatherings at 1800 hrs are on Friday 1 Aug in the New Inn and Friday 5 Sep in the Old Inn. Please come!

(B W LAVENDER)
Chairman
31 July 2008