

## **Annual Report from Veterans' Champion – Councillor Liz Scott**

### **13<sup>th</sup> May 2016 – Lecture**

I attended a talk given by Commander Nick Soul of the Royal Navy. He came all the way from Dorset to explain what the Joint Helicopter Command does – operating in a tri-service environment.

It was educational and extremely interesting to understand and appreciate how and what our services provide even in the most unfriendly war zones and terrains.

The talk was well attended by members of the Lancaster Military Heritage Group (LMHG) and was held at Westfield War Memorial Village, Lancaster.

### **14<sup>th</sup> May 2016 – Campus in the City**

This was organised by the History Department of Lancaster University and was held in St Nicholas Arcade.

There was a lot of interest shown; families wanting information about their loved ones who served in WW1. Moorside School wrote, researched and had their work displayed for all to read. It was interesting how they interpreted the war and war efforts in their research. They also looked forward to seeing the new Mayor of Lancaster, Councillor Robert Redfern and his wife and waited in anticipation for them.

### **18<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

I met up with Dr Hannah Taylor – a Clinical Psychologist for Military Veterans' Service.

She is based in Manchester. I acted as liaison for her to meet a Veteran at CVS who is suffering from his time as a soldier in Afghanistan and he is now homeless.

Both of us went to the Town Hall. A message was left for the officer at the Housing Department. The Veteran was classed Category A due to his condition and housed appropriately.

He cannot be housed in Oak Tree House due to his short temper. He does not like to mix – so is not suitable for private housing – rent or shared accommodation. His benefit will only be £58.00 per week. Our council is sympathetic to issues like the Veterans in this City.

### **18<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade and NW Preston Military Show held a Commanders Reception and Sunset Ceremony at Fulwood Barracks, Preston.

It was also an open day for families and friends. The weather was dry and sunny which made it special for a good turnout. My guests and I enjoyed watching the Tug-O-War competition on the sports field and it was followed by the arena display with the Massed Bands performance and Sunset Ceremony.

The Duke of Lancaster Regiment looked amazing in their uniforms and displayed their musical skills which we all enjoyed.

### **20<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

To mark Armed Forces Week, flags were raised at Lancaster and Morecambe Town Halls at 10.30 am. There was a small turnout from British Legion, the Fire Service, Constabulary, and members of Lancaster Military Heritage Group Councillors, Central High School and a presence from Naval Commander, B Thompson – Chief of Staff, Liverpool. There were Veterans and some local presence. My thanks to our Mayor, Councillor Robert Redfern, who presided over the raising of the flag in Lancaster, and to our Deputy Mayor, Councillor Carla Brayshaw, who presided at Morecambe Town Hall.

### **25<sup>th</sup> June 2016 – Armed Forces Day - Lancaster Castle and on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Morecambe Promenade**

My thanks to Brian Jefferson, Tony Martin, Pete Neave and some members of LMHG who worked tirelessly to make the weekend's success. On both days, the weather was kind to us which helped. The footfall on both sites exceeded our expectations. My thanks to the Army Reserves, Local Cadets, Historic Military Vehicles, Military Modelling, Climbing Wall, Exhibitions and music. We had a special display from RNLI Lifeboat with demonstrations. An inflatable assault course was enjoyed by the children in Morecambe. The parachute display and flyover of WW2 Hurricane were the highlights of the weekend. Bay Radio supported AF weekend. My thanks for raffle donations from local businesses. The raffle monies were divided between Combat Stress and SSAFA.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016 – Remembering the Battle of the Somme in Lancaster**

Peter Donnelly from the King's Own Regiment Museum gave a talk at the Dukes Gallery about the Battle of the Somme and the local impact in Lancaster. There was a good turnout for the talk. I was shocked to hear that the Gas used during the war was created in Lancaster.

After the talk there was a film shown on the Battle of the Somme with its unique images of young men who signed up to fight. It was a difficult to watch for me, seeing the brutality of it all. It became very emotive!

### **30<sup>th</sup> July 2016 – The Great War – King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment 1914 – 1918 Centenary**

An exhibition relating to the Battle of the Somme regarding the act of gallantry by Private James Miller of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion who was awarded the Victoria Cross. The exhibition was organised by Peter Donnelly and sponsored by Sir John Fisher Foundation and Ogilby Trust.

There was a good turnout and the event ended after Matthew Khan – a trainee actor at the Dukes Playhouse – read a poem called "A Message" by Ellis William – 1976.

The poem was poignant. It summed up the total waste of our young men who were brave and gallant to the last!

### **18<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

I attended the Battle of Britain Service which was held at St Barnabas Church, Morecambe.

The annual service had a fairly good turnout. As usual, the service was excellent with RAF Cadets, Personnel and retired Personnel. The Mayor and Mayoress and some Councillors also attended the service.

Rev. Group Captain Richard Lee (RAF-Rtd) gave the sermon. Within his sermon, he talked about the gallant contribution from the Polish Air Force and others who fought to stop WW2. He also paid homage to our Military, the men that sacrificed for their service to this Country.

### **27<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

Professor Adrian Gregory delivered a talk at Lancaster University Management School on Globalising and Localising the Great War. Professor Gregory was from Pembroke College, Oxford University.

There was a good mixture of students, lecturers and members of Lancaster Military Heritage Group. Central to the talk was examining the linkages between local and global during the First World War. Four medium sized cities such as Oxford, Halifax (Nova Scotia), Jerusalem and Verdun were mentioned, looking at the ways that each of them embodied their roles and Professor Gregory illustrated different aspects of a genuinely global conflict.

### **11<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

Today was Armistice Day.

The signing of the Armistice that ended World War 1 – on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918. The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment held their Annual Service of Remembrance at the Priory Church. The Service was poignant, the Bishop of Lancaster, the Right Reverend Geoff Pearson, spoke about love which reflected what people did to help one another in times of disaster and danger. The Regimental Band also played their part during the service. The Mayor, Mayoress and Leader of the Council were present.

### **13<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

Remembrance Sunday this year had a bigger turnout than 2015. We were honoured this year to have the Right Reverend Julian Henderson, Bishop of Blackburn, Reverend Chris Newlands of Lancaster and the Very Reverend Steve Pearson, Dean of Lancaster Cathedral.

The Mayor, Councillor Robert Redfern and the Mayoress, Cadets, Military Veterans, Civic Dignitaries and Councillors were present.

As usual, the service was sombre and reflective. The laying of the Poppy Wreaths signified the loss of lives and for us living, to treasure their memories and the service they gave to our Country.

After the service at the Garden of Remembrance, we went to the Priory Church for a Civic Service. The choir was at its best, the prayers, sermon and hymns were about peace, reconciliation and mutual understanding. After the service, the Cadets, Veterans, Councillor Mace and I marched back through Lancaster with the shoppers clapping with gratitude. We were then greeted by the Mayor and Mayoress, Representatives from the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, the Royal Navy, the Bishop of Blackburn, Vicar of Lancaster and the Chief Executive of Lancaster City Council on the steps of the Town Hall.

### **13<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

I attended a Christmas lunch at the Headway Hotel with members of the Royal Air Force Association. It was good to see 42 members who enjoyed the lunch and for me to learn the amount of work that the Association does to honour the Veterans that served in the RAF.

Coming from an RAF background, it meant a lot to me.

### **13<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

Lancaster Military Heritage Group held its annual Christmas Service at the Priory Church in Lancaster. The service started with the opening carol of "Once in Royal David's City" sung by a soloist whose voice was pure and breath-taking in the majestic Priory Church. The Standards of each group was presented during the opening carol.

As usual for this service, the church was packed with uniformed cadets, members of LMHG and the public. Mr Mayor, Councillor Robert Redfern, attended the service and also did a reading on St. John.

The service ended with mulled wine and mince pies.

### **1<sup>st</sup> January 2017**

The Gingham Café on Marine Road West, Morecambe, is owned by retired RAF Fight Sergeant Phil Johnson. He decided to dedicate a corner of his café for the Royal Air Forces Association for members and veterans to access information, have a coffee and a chat. A much needed drop-in café on Morecambe front.

Phil's generosity will be appreciated by all that will use the café.

I felt honoured to officially open it. My thanks to Bob and Jane Latin who helped to organise and also to several members from the Morecambe and Lancaster Branch of RAFA who attended the event. A big thank you to Councillor David Whitaker from Harbour Ward who also attended the event and has promised to advertise it in his next newsletter.

### **8<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

I had meetings with the Army's Logistics Corp to discuss support from them for Armed Forces Day 2017. They have also agreed to provide soldiers for Flag Raising Day in Lancaster and Morecambe for 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017. Various other military issues regarding welfare and veterans were discussed and how I could help them more in the future. It was a useful meeting.

### **15<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

I met up with a managing director of a local firm who currently employs three Army veterans. She is interested and willing to support and employ more veterans but feels strongly that the Council on their part, having signed up to the Covenant, should be more pro-active. From these meetings, I have arranged to meet our Chief Executive to discuss the Armed Forces Covenant given that it has superseded the Community Covenant.

### **24<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

I had an email from a PhD student from Lancaster University who is writing a thesis on "Military Families". We met up and I took her to Westfield Memorial War Village and arranged for her to have a chat with the secretary. We spent two hours there and from there, I took her to the Priory Church and showed her the Military Chapel and explained the history of the Priory Church. After that I took her to Storeys and explained the link with Westfield Memorial. It was the Storey family that bought the land for Westfield. Then we visited the Military Museum. In all, I gave the student four hours of my time and will keep in touch to support her.

### **Conclusion:**

In the last municipal year I have made six welfare referrals from veterans.

I have enjoyed working with the other Champions, meeting up, sharing our work, concerns and actions that we can take. This has been facilitated by Councillor Margaret Pattison.

Can I also remind all Councillors to please try and attend Armed Forces Day this year 24<sup>th</sup> June in Lancaster Castle and 25<sup>th</sup> June in Morecambe on the promenade and in the Winter Gardens.

The flag raising event will be held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at 10.30 am outside the Town Hall in Dalton Square, Lancaster and in the Gardens at Morecambe Town Hall. Please attend if you can and I look forward to seeing you there.

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all that have shown support for my role as Armed Forces Champion from the Caretakers, Democratic Services, Mark McTigue, Lancaster Military Heritage Group and Councillors.