

Annual Report from Veterans' Champion – 2018 – 2019

Councillor Liz Scott

01.04.18 - The Royal Air Force

100th Anniversary Service was celebrated at the Parish Church of Morecambe, St Barnabas on Regent Road. The Service was attended by the Mayor and Mayoress of Lancaster, the High Sheriff of Lancashire and the Mayor and Mayoress of Carnforth. The Service was conducted by the Reverend (Group Captain) Richard Lee, RAF Rtd, Regional Padre of Cumbria and Lancashire Wing Air Cadets.

It was well attended by Councillors, Retired RAF Personnel, British Legion members and members of the Lancaster Military Heritage Group. It was a time of reflection to give thanks for the heroism for all who served to defend our Country for peace. The brutality of war can never be disguised and we honoured and remembered their courage, loyalty and dedication.

My thanks to all who worked hard to put the Service together.

14.04.18 – Lancaster and District Choral Society

Lancaster and District Choral Society presented a concert to commemorate the centenary of the end of World War 1, held at Ashton Hall, Lancaster. The conductor was Mr John Perrin, the Leader was Julian Cann and the Soloist was Rebecca Chandler. The Ashton Hall was packed and the music was robust, moving, haunting and, at times, emotional.

Sir Karl Jenkins, The Armed Man – a Mass, for Peace pays homage to the past, depicting the build up to war, then the focus on the realities of war itself and lastly concerned with survivors and turning to peace. A truly amazing piece of work which reminds all of us that war is ugly and the casualties of war is always regrettable.

My thanks to the musicians and the singers. They did an excellent job.

19.04.18 – Firstlight Trust

I had a request for help from Firstlight Trust, Lancaster, for an ex-veteran regarding a termination of employment. Unfortunately, due to a conflict of interest as the veteran was employed by the Council, I was only able to provide guidance to seek help for the case. Due to the sensitivity, there is no further information for the report.

20.04.18 – RAF 100

To celebrate RAF 100, the Morecambe Branch of RAFA organised a dinner at the Headway Hotel, Morecambe. There were 115 people who attended the dinner which included Lord and Lady Shuttleworth, the Mayor and Mayoress of Lancaster, the Mayoress of Carnforth, Air Vice Marshall John Cliffe, who is the Chairman of RAFA Central Council, the Rev. Group Captain Richard Lee, who is the Northern Regional Chaplain of the Air Cadets, ex-RAF Personnel and both MP's, Cat Smith and David Morris, also attended the event. There were members of the local RAFA and several Lancaster City Councillors. It was good to see

several cadets who will be the future of the RAF and their growth needs to be encouraged. My thanks to David Hodgson and Brian Jefferson who collated an extensive collection of holographic and information for the board which was interacting and informative.

The Centenary Dinner at the Headway Hotel was excellent and the Service was excellent.

The RAF played an important part when they formed in 1908 and the importance remains.

28.04.18 – Anzac Day Anniversary

Anzac Day Anniversary was organised by the Royal British Legion, Morecambe and Heysham Branch and the commemorative service was held at Torrisholme Cemetery. It was held in the CWGC section of the Cemetery. The Mayor and Mayoress of Lancaster City Council, Morecambe MP David Morris, members of RAFA, British Legion, the Deputy Mayor and others attended the service. The weather was kind for this poignant service.

Anzac Day is an Australian National Day of Remembrance commemorating the day Australia and New Zealand force landed at Gallipoli, Turkey, during the First World War, it remembers their sacrifices as the 1915 Gallipoli landing which resulted in a great loss of life. In 1916, April 25th, Anzac Day was made official to remember soldiers that died. Their legacy of fighting alongside our British soldiers will never be forgotten.

The Service paid homage to all that lost their lives and their acts of bravery will live forever.

We had Standard Bearers and when the Last Post was sounded, the Chaplain said the Kohima Epitaph.

14.06.18 – Pennie Care NHS Foundation Trust

Pennie Care NHS Foundation Trust contacted me to have a meeting with a Veteran to conduct an assessment appointment.

I managed to book a room at Cornerstones, Lancaster, for this appointment to take place. Because of the confidentiality, nothing further will be reported.

22.06.18 – The AGM for the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for the North West of England and the Isle of Man

The AGM for the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for the North West of England and the Isle of Man took place at the Reserves Centre, Altcar, Liverpool. After the usual procedures of the meeting there were four main speakers.

Commodore Phillip Waterhouse, Naval Regional Commander, Northern England and Isle of Man, spoke of the importance of the Reserve Forces and their value to the Armed Forces.

Lieutenant Colonel Julian Smith from The Queen's Own Yeomanry Commanding Officer who is based in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, spoke about the logistics regarding deployment to places where the soldiers are needed.

Neil Hutchinson, Head Teacher of Royton and Crompton School in Oldham, spoke with great enthusiasm about developing the pupils with social issues, using Army discipline techniques. This has shown a measure of improvement and progress in their behaviour.

I learned a lot from just talking and sharing with others about Veterans issues.

25.06.18 – Armed Forces Flag Raising

The Annual Armed Forces Flag raising event was held at Dalton Square, Lancaster. The Mayor, Councillor Andrew Kay, attended the event. Rev. Chris Newlands said a short prayer remembering those that served and who are still serving their Country.

There were representations from British Legion, Ambulance Service, two ex-Mayors and a reasonable turnout of Councillors and members of the public.

Refreshments were provided at the Town Hall after the proceedings.

25.06.18 – Luncheon for Armed Forces and Veterans Association

I was invited to attend the Luncheon for Armed Forces and Veterans Association from the Chairman of Lancashire County Council, Councillor Anne Cheetham, OBE, UJP and Champion for Armed Forces, County Councillor Alf Clempson. The reception was an opportunity to meet new friends and share good practise. The Tom Davies Trophy was presented to “Dig In North West”. It is based in Preston which gives Veterans a place to meet and be active at the same time. The trophy was presented by Mrs Christine Davies and the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, the Rt. Hon Lord Shuttleworth KG KCVO. It was the first award commissioned by the County Council’s Champion for Armed Forces and Veterans in recognition for their significant contribution to both the Armed Forces and Veterans throughout Lancashire.

An excellent lunch was enjoyed by all attendees.

30.06.18 – Annual Armed Forces Day Event

The Annual Armed Forces Day event was held in Morecambe on the Promenade. The weather was at its best and the day’s events started from the “Tin Mountains” with the Band, Service Personnel, Veterans and Cadets.

The parade halted at the “Lest We forget” and “RAF 100” flowerbeds, to salute the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Claire Cozler, gave a short thanksgiving speech about the Royal Air Force in 1918 and the ultimate price in the service to the country.

We then had the Drumhead Service near the War Memorial. The Service was conducted by Rev Andrew Osborn. The Mayor, Councillor Andrew Kay, made a speech reminding us about the valuable work done by our Armed Forces. The Service was packed with people. Later on, the Platform had exhibits, stalls and the Brass Band. In the afternoon there was a skydiving display by the Northwest Skydiving Team, Heroes and raffle draw at The Platform.

It was an excellent event and my thanks go to all who did so much hard work behind the scenes especially to Commander Tim Roberts and the team, Brian Jefferson and all the helpers that made AFD 2018 a success.

The Armed Forces Day events ended with a free public lecture in the Storey Institute, about “The Hundred Days Campaign” the final allied offensive of WW1. The talk was given by Col.

Chris Owen. During the Hundred Days Offensive, the Allies launched a series of offensives against the Central Powers on the Western Front.

It was an interesting and educational lecture to understand how the offensive pushed the Germans out of France.

An excellent buffet supper was available after the lecture.

09.07.18 – Archie's War

Archie's War is the story of a young boy growing up in the midst of the First World War and was performed by pupils from year 8 at Central High School. This is to commemorate WW1.

The play was performed with the backdrop of the Poppies displayed in London and the poem "For the Fallen" by Laurence Binyon was cited. Nine Million died during the First World War.

Archie enjoyed playing football. The soldiers at war had a truce on Christmas Day 1914 and both sides played football and a German soldier sang Silent Night. No doubt, it became the message of hope and humanity.

It was well performed and moving. The play was attended by the Mayor, Councillor Andrew Kay, Friends' of the school, County Councillor Susie Charles and parents.

18.08.18 – RAF 100 held in Kendal

The Vice Chair of Kendal BID organised RAF 100. The event was held by the river. The main attraction was a model Spitfire which came all the way from Suffolk. It attracted huge amounts of people who were keen to have their photographs taken with the Spitfire.

The highlight of the day was to welcome a Veteran aged 96 years who flew the Spitfire. He even managed to get into the cockpit to the delight of bystanders and his family.

The Cadets did an excellent job of demonstrating CPR to the public.

The RAF History and Model Planes exhibition attracted all age groups and historians.

It goes without saying that the day was a success.

01.09.18 – RAF 100 Celebration

RAF 100 celebration of the Royal Air Force was celebrated at St Barnabas Parish Church with the robust and excellent music from Morecambe Band.

The concert started with the Standards Procession for the RAF March Past.

The Welcome was given by Bob Latin, Branch Chairman of RAFA in Morecambe, then we had the National Anthem.

The Conductor was Mr Steve Simpson and the crowd of nearly 80 people enjoyed the excellent music.

The Mayor, Councillor Andrew Kay, attended this concert and he also enjoyed the evening.

12.09.18 – Launch of Lancashire Armed Forces Hub

Launch of Lancashire Armed Forces Hub held at County Hall, Preston.

The Hub was initiated by Lancashire County Council and partners to improve the delivery of Armed Forces Covenants across the County. The partnership is between Councils in Lancashire, University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), Lancashire Care Foundation Trust (NHS) and Army Headquarters North West.

It was good to meet new friends and to bring new ideas and initiatives to the table.

This “Hub and Spoke” model will be a “go to” place for Veterans Champions across Lancashire and to help delivery for our Veterans in Health and Wellbeing, Education, Employment and Skills, Councils and Housing, Welfare and Fellowship and Communications. A much needed service that was welcomed by all attendees and is a work in progress.

14.09.18 – RAF 100 – Aircraft Tour and Civic Reception

I was invited to attend RAF 100 – Aircraft Tour and Civic Reception at Manchester Town Hall. This is part of the Centenary event that the RAF took aircraft from across the last 100 years of aviation to cities throughout the UK.

The Aircraft and Exhibits on display were: Sopwith Snipe Biplane, Supermarine Spitfire MK1A, Lancaster Bomber fuselage – “S for Sugar” Airframe, Harrier GR3, Eurofighter Typhoon – 100% scale facsimile, BAE Systems Heritage and Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Interactive Zone.

It was a lovely showcase of planes at Albert Square and I had the privilege to get into the cockpits of both the Lancaster Bomber and the Typhoon. It was such an honour to get the chance. There was a good turnout of members of the public at Albert Square.

16.09.18 – Royal Air Force Battle of Britain

Royal Air Force Battle of Britain and closure of RAF 100 Service was held at St Barnabas Church, Morecambe.

Retired RAF Wing Commander Bob Latin, Chairman of RAFA, Morecambe and Lancaster Branch, did the introduction. The greetings and welcome was led by Rev'd (Group Captain) Richard Lee RAF Rtd who is the Regional Chaplain (N) RAF Air Cadets. Thanks were given for the dedication and heroism of members of the Royal Air Force and allied Air Forces.

The hymns were sung robustly especially when we sang the Recessional hymn “Jerusalem”. The Mayor, Morecambe MP, David Morris and several Morecambe Councillors also attended this service. My thanks to Bob and Jane Latin for all their hard work. They work tirelessly to keep the Royal Air Force Association going in this district.

27.09.18 – For the Fallen: Now that the War is Over

For the Fallen: Now that the War is Over was a new exhibition that was held at the King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster, to mark the Centenary of the ending of the Great War. This exhibition will run until 24th March 2019.

The exhibition tells the story of the end of the Great War and the aftermath for the Regiment and Lancaster District. The black and white photographs of the young soldiers, showed their youth and ignorance to what they were about to experience in the bloody war which killed so many of our young men. On this anniversary, the action by Lance Sergeant Tom Neely, who was awarded the Victoria Cross, was on public display for the first time.

Sir John Fisher Foundation Army Museums Ogilby Trust, Friends of Lancaster City Museum and many donors generously supported this exhibition.

11.10 18 – Age UK

Anne Oliver from Age UK had a meeting with me at the Town Hall. She wanted to know if we could work together and she was considering to set up a Shed Project for veterans possibly in Heysham. Ideas were exchanged and I mentioned the concept of a NAAFI style café that was started by County Councillor Ed Nash in Lytham St. Annes. We went out on the 17.10.18 to check the place. It was a good meeting place for veterans.

Nothing further has developed since this meeting.

03.11.18 – WW1 Armistice Centenary Concert

A WW1 Armistice Centenary Concert was held at St Martin's Chapel, University of Cumbria which featured the Lancaster and District Male Voice Choir.

Although I had to cancel this concert at short notice, I just wanted to say a massive thank you to Hugh Cutter and the Male Choir for their effort. He gave me a run-down of the event.

The first performance of "The Soldier", a setting of the Brooke poem, which was composed by Ann Shuttleworth was enjoyed by all present.

The choir also sang a version of the Chorale from Britten's Ballad of Heroes which the choir was given special permission to perform four years ago.

This choir performed four years ago to mark the opening of hostilities at the Chapel and it was poignant to have a closure for the Armistice Centenary at the same place.

Apparently it was so moving that it reduced one or two to tears. What the Choir achieved was "to remember them" who lost their lives to save many.

11.11.18 – Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute – 100 Years of Remembrance

The day started with the following: at 5.45 am, the Mayor, members of the public and dignitaries assembled at the front of the Castle (John O'Gaunt Gateway) to listen to the lone piper.

At 10.00 am, the proceedings for the Remembrance Service began at the Garden of Remembrance at the Town Hall. Despite the heavy rain, there was a good turnout of people who wanted to show respect.

From the Town Hall, we, the Service personnel, cadets and other organisations, attended the service at the Priory Church. The Church was packed.

After the Service, the Uniformed Group and Cadets paraded through the town and they were shown much appreciation by the town's people.

Then the parade marched past the Town Hall. The salute was taken by the Mayor and the Colonel.

A reception was held at the Town Hall.

Later that afternoon, the Museum had various activities for the town's people.

At 6.50 pm, the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire read a "Tribute to the Millions" on the grounds of the Priory. The last post was played and the lighting of the beacons at Lancaster Castle, the Priory and the Ashton Memorial took place simultaneously.

At precisely 7.05 pm, ringing of the Church Bells took place across the district.

The Battle's Over.

I also want to say thank you to all the organisers in our district who held the Remembrance Day Services and Parades in Morecambe, Heysham and Carnforth. A good turnout of attendees was reported in all areas. Much hard work and effort was put in place for this memorable Centenary Commemoration.

Although the core events for WW1 has concluded, a series of special exhibitions, talks and performances continues. See the Museum Website and Global Link.

"Battle's Over" but those that served our Country are never forgotten nor will they ever be forgotten.

26.11.18 – Meeting

I was contacted by Michelle O'Brien, Senior CPN, North Region, for a meeting which was arranged at the Town Hall. Michelle was accompanied by Wesley Timblin who works for the Team as the Mental Health Nurse. Veterans suffering from combat stress which is a trauma linked to mental health issues, anxiety, depression and problematic stress disorder are topics that veterans struggle to discuss and to get help as soon as possible.

We also discussed the newly created CMVES – College for Military Veterans and Emergency Services – based at UCLAN, Preston. The work to help and support our veterans is slowly happening and to access it is not as challenging as before. However, the message and awareness of the support needs to be provided from the start of a soldier's life.

27.11.18 – Holistic Foundation

County Councillor Alf Clempson and I were invited to a meeting with David Christopher and Gemma Gardner to find out and lend support to the Holistic Foundation which will be based at Skerton.

The Holistic Foundation in partnership with the Veterans Foundation have just launched a social enterprise for veterans with physical disabilities and/or mental health related problems but will also consider candidates without it.

The project aims to create stand-alone light installations using trees.

This Foundation is work in progress and I do believe that it can and should achieve its aim.

11.12.18 – Lancaster Military Heritage Group Annual Carol Service

Lancaster Military Heritage Group held its Annual Christmas Carol Service at the Priory Church, Lancaster.

It was attended by Lord and Lady Shuttleworth, Lieutenancy Cadet, CSM Oliver Pallister, Col. Robin Jackson, Mr Mayor, Councillor Andrew Kay, Councillors, Cadets, uniformed personnel and members of the public. It was a packed church with the readings read by Emily Bower, Morecambe and Heysham Sea Cadets, KC Marie Tyson, Normandy Company, Lancashire Army Cadet Force, Corporal Joshua Quick 345 (Lancaster) Sqn RAF Cadets, Sergeant Ben Roch LRGS CCF – RAF Section, Commander Tim Roberts RN (Rtd), Squadron Leader Brian Jefferson, Mayor Councillor Andrew Kay. The Prayers of Intercession were led by Revd Robert Canham.

My thanks to the British Legion Standard Bearers and to Canon Chris Newlands.

It was an excellent service and mulled wine and mince pies were served at the end of the Service.

24.01.19 – The Annual Holocaust Memorial Service

The Annual Holocaust Memorial Service was held at the Garden of Remembrance at Lancaster Town Hall. The symbolic lighting of a candle was carried out. The choir also sang reflecting the occasion. Chris Henig did the prayer in Hebrew. After the service, we went back to the Town Hall where the music was played and performed by students from Lancaster and Morecambe College. Speakers spoke with precision about refugees and about sufferings that people have endured and still enduring. This event was well attended and the service is organised by More Music working together with Lancaster and Lakes Jewish Community, Faith in Lancaster, Lancaster University, Global Link, the National Education Union, Lancaster City Council and Lancaster Priory Church.