

THE POPPY BALL



BALL PROGRAMME
FRIDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2015, GRAND HYATT HOTEL, DUBAI

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THIS EVENING'S

PROGRAMME

- RECEPTION DRINKS
- CALL TO DINNER
- SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT
- CHOIR MEDLEY
- NATIONAL ANTHEMS
- ACT OF REMEMBRANCE
- TOAST - ABSENT FRIENDS
- SONG FOR PEACE
- TOAST TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
- TOAST TO HM QUEEN
- GRACE
- DINNER
- CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME
- DISCO
- PRIZE DRAW / LIVE AUCTION
- FISH AND CHIPS SUPPER
- CARRIAGES

WELCOME

FROM CO-CHAIRS OF THE POPPY BALL COMMITTEE

SEAN HECKFORD | SIMON TUKE | DAVID WALLACE

Once again we would like to extend a very warm welcome to the Dubai Poppy Ball 2015.

You will note that this year's Poppy Ball is a little more intimate, and without a guest speaker, this has unfortunately stemmed from many issues that the committee had no control over.

Our committee has undergone a little change to the traditional format, wherein we now have three Co-chairs, one from each service Army (Sean), RAF (Simon) [who unfortunately cannot be with us tonight as he is recuperating from an operation on his knee] and Royal Navy (David). Having three Co-chairs allows the committee to continue to prepare for this event whilst simultaneously looking at more frequent events, offering welfare and employment advice and supporting the serving and ex-service family in Dubai and the Northern Emirates.

It is a mark of the committee's success that we continue to host the Poppy Ball in light of, and within, the constraints places upon us by the Charity Law, albeit in more intimate numbers than last year.

We are also truly honoured to have the support of many people that believe in what we are trying to achieve. Special thanks must go to Her Majesties' Consul General Paul Fox. Paul joins us for the first time in this role this evening having taken up his post earlier this year. We wish him and his family a very warm welcome to Dubai and a very warm welcome to the 2015 Poppy Ball.

In 2014, the Royal British Legion benefitted from a substantial sum (just over GBP 50K) due to the wonderful generosity of the British 'Ex-pat' Community in Dubai. Every Pound, Dollar, Dirham, Dinar and Riyal sent by you, to the UK, allows the Royal British Legion to reach out to more and more of the serving and ex serving community than ever before. Consequently, and in line with the Legions new strap line, the well deserving can 'Live On' with as close to a normal life as possible.

Albert Figg's 'Hill 112' project also benefitted by GBP 1,000 which helped to source and site a 25-pounder artillery piece in remembrance of those who lost their lives on Hill 112 in Normandy, please see our article later in the programme.

We must remember that even in these modern times many experience great hardship and health issues, either physical or mental, because of the sacrifice they or their loved ones have made in the service of our country. I hope that tonight's event, combined with the tireless efforts of all those involved, will result in as large a contribution as last year and a wider understanding of the work and needs of the Royal British Legion.

The Poppy Ball forms the highlight of a very busy social calendar, but it is by no means the only event to be held by the Poppy Committee here in Dubai. Our monthly 'Pop Down the Legion' evenings (PDTL) are becoming increasingly popular and seen as a great way of getting together informally for a chat and a drink or two with plenty of like-minded people from similar backgrounds and with similar interests. For details of all our activities or to get involved please drop us a line at rbldubai@gmail.com so that we can invite you to our private Facebook and LinkedIn Groups.

In closing, we would like to thank the dedicated group of people who commit so much of their own time

to ensuring the success of this evening and the success of our other events.

We would like to thank the Grand Hyatt Dubai, without whose help, guidance and professionalism the hard and valuable work undertaken by our volunteer committee would not be reflected so radiantly.

We are indebted to each member of our committee for their dedication, support and tireless assistance in bring the Poppy Ball together and the 'behind-the-scenes' support for tonight's event and other events throughout the year, for example the successful 'Pop Down the Legion' nights held every month at McGettigan's JLT.

It is a great privilege for the Co-chairs to work alongside such wonderful people as: Linda Rudkin; Matt Hebditch; Paul Whitaker; Rob Duce; Lee Weatherall; Sharon Black; Richard Brown; Chris Ratcliffe and of course, our wonderful wives Jo; Margaret-Anne and Sharon.



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-  The Legion was founded in 1921. It is one of the UK's largest membership organisations with around 350,000 members.
-  More than 30 million Remembrance poppies, 500,000 poppies of other types, 5 million remembrance petals, 100,000 wreaths and sprays, 750,000 remembrance crosses and other remembrance items are made at the Poppy Factory in Richmond, Surrey, each year.
-  More than 9 million in the UK are eligible to call on the Legion for help.
-  Last year the RBL's Independent Inquest Advice Service supported 69 bereaved relatives through the process of the coroner's inquest.
-  RBL gave £24 million in grants to 42 organisations last year and supported over 22,000 beneficiaries through grant giving.
-  There are around 2,500 Legion branches including 92 overseas branches with over 350,000 members.
-  RBL's pioneering Be the Boss scheme has provided more than 2,000 Service leavers with the tools to expand or set up their own business.

PAUL FOX

HM CONSUL GENERAL
DUBAI



United Kingdom in the United Arab Emirates

Paul Fox took up his appointment as Her Majesty's Consul General to Dubai and the Northern Emirates in August 2015 after working as Deputy Head of Mission in Abu Dhabi for nearly three years.

Paul joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in 1987 after completing his post-graduate studies at Oxford University. He has been posted to India, Azerbaijan, Thailand and Poland. During Paul's assignments in London, he was press spokesperson for two Foreign Secretaries and worked on the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Paul is married to Vicki and has three daughters (Olivia, Eleanor and Amelia).

Paul has a keen interest in football and enjoys most forms of sport. He also continues his interests in history, and as a trained historian seeks to understand better the background and culture of the countries in which he lives.

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A POPPY HISTORY

The first donations for artificial poppies were given in Britain on 11th November 1921, inspired by John McCrae's 1915 poem 'In Flanders' Fields'.

Some of the bloodiest fighting of World War 1 took place in the Flanders and Picardy regions of Northern France. In the aftermath of the war's total devastation the only thing which would grow on the land was the poppy. McCrae, a doctor serving there with the Canadian Armed Forces, wrote about what he saw.

Moina Michael, an American War Secretary with the YMCA, was moved by McCrae's work to write:

"And now the torch and Poppy red,
wear in honour of our dead."

She bought red poppies and sold them to her friends to raise money for Servicemen in need. Her French colleague, Madame Guerin, proposed the making of artificial poppies and their sale to help ex-Servicemen and their dependants.

In Britain, Major George Howson, a young infantry officer, formed the Disabled Society, to help disabled ex-Servicemen and women from World War I. Howson suggested to the Legion that members of the Disabled Society could make poppies and the Poppy Factory was subsequently founded in 1922.

The original poppy was designed so that workers with a disability could easily assemble it and that principle remains today.



THE STORY OF HILL 112

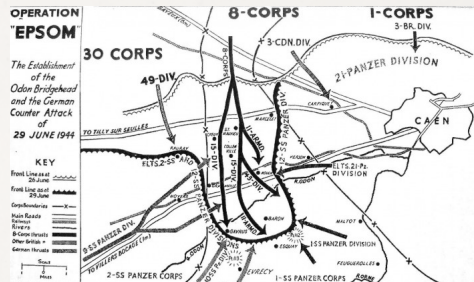
GILLES OSMONT
PRESIDENT COTE 112 ASSOCIATION

The Cote 112 Association is a group of wonderful locals from Normandy who maintain and look after the memorials on Hill 112. The following article was written by Gilles setting out the action at Hill 112 during the day subsequent to the D-Day landing in June 1944.

The original plan by the Allies was to take the strategically important town of Caen in the first days following the D-Day landing. This was impossible and frustrating, so on June 18th 1944 Montgomery issued a directive for the capture of the high ground south-west of the town between the Orne and Odon rivers.

This high ground overlooked the city and taking this position would make the German positions in Caen untenable and force them to withdraw. The top of this high ground is named "Hill 112" on the Allies maps, not so much a hill but a high point on a long, low ridge. Unimposing as it looked, Hill 112's tactical importance was the view it gave over the countryside to the south, west and east of Caen, and had prompted Rommel before the invasion to remark that should the Allies land in the area that "the one who control Hill 112 will be the one who controls Normandy"

The attack was due to start on 22nd June, and was given the code-name "Epsom".



The Germans had established a strong defense using their best available troops, the I and II SS Panzer Korps. The British VIII Corps start line for the attack was along the Caen-Bayeux railway. However bad weather delayed the operation, and only by the 25th of June the 4 divisions to attack were ready: 7th Armoured Division, 11th Armoured, 15th Scottish and 43rd Wessex.



The attack started on the morning of the 26th by the 15th Scottish Division. The SS defenders forced the Scottish to advance very slowly, and eventually the Scots moved into the village of Baron just to the south of the river at the foot of Hill 112. The 11th Armoured Division then took over and pushed up to the top of the hill, they were immediately ambushed by the 12th SS Panzer Division Grenadiers, who were dug in there and although they successfully beat off three German counter attacks, they were unable to gain complete control of the summit.

Despite further attacks, on the 29th of June the British Forces were forced to withdraw almost everywhere against strong German counter-attacks. Allied intelligence identified the German 9th 10th and 12th SS Divisions and was fully expecting a major counter-attack, so all armoured forces were withdrawn south of the river, and the SS again re-occupied Hill 112.

The capture of Hill 112 was still considered as an absolute necessary to take Caen, so a second operation

code named “Jupiter” was planned for July 10th. In this attack the British 43rd Wessex Division was to attack positions held by the 10th SS Panzer Division supported by the 102nd SS Heavy Tank Battalion equipped with Tiger Tank. Despite a massive pre-bombardment, the British Churchill, Cromwell and Sherman tanks supporting the Wessex Division were no match for the Tiger tanks and the attack immediately stalled. After the 9th SS Panzer Division were brought back to reinforce the 10th SS Division already engaged, the British forces were unable to take the summit and the British attacks were finally halted on July 22nd. In the twelve days of Operation Jupiter the 43rd Wessex Division suffered 7,000 casualties, about 40% of the Division.

Several other British operations were conducted in the Odon valley during July, but it was only finally on the night of August 4th, after the Germans withdrew during Operation Cobra and Operation Bluecoat further west, that a patrol from the 53rd Welsh Division discovered that with Caen no longer in their control, Hill 112 had lost its importance for the German defenders and they had withdrawn, allowing the 53rd Division to finally occupy the high ground without a shot being fired.

A stone memorial to the 43rd Division was built on the hill in the late 1940s. In 2000, a Churchill tank was installed on the site,





thanks to the huge efforts of veteran Albert Figg who managed to organize a funding of this operation. This was to commemorate all the tank crew killed during action for Hill 112.

Having continued relentlessly with his fund raising in July 2015 a Statue of a WW2 Infantryman was installed to commemorate all the infantrymen that have fallen during the campaign and a '25-pounder' field gun to commemorate all the artillery.

Particularly significant to Albert, as he was a Sergeant in the 112 Field Regiment (Artillery) of the 43rd Wessex Division and in charge of a '25-pounder', which he and his men were firing from Carpiquet airport over Hill 112 during the campaign.

Finally in 2016 a plantation of 112 "liberty trees" will be planted in the shape of a Maltese Cross.

Albert now feels that all divisions have now been properly remembered and the history can be told for future generations.

We from Cote 112 Association feel deeply indebted to Albert and his efforts.



IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Major John McCrae





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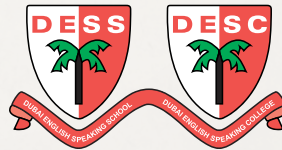
THANKS

OUR SINCERE THANKS...

We are deeply indebted to the following companies, organisations and individuals whose belief in our aims has been reinforced by their generosity in providing event support, fund raising assistance and prizes for our raffle and auctions.

Without their support, our annual fund raising event for the Poppy Appeal, on whose support more valiant but less fortunate people than ourselves depend so much, would have been in vain.

Any omissions due to print deadlines is regretted:





LIVE ON

TO THE MEMORY OF THE FALLEN AND THE FUTURE OF THE LIVING

The Royal British Legion created the Poppy Appeal to help those returning from the First World War. A Century on from that conflict, we're still helping today's Service men and women, veterans, and their families, whether coping with bereavement, living with disability, or finding employment. Without your help, none of this would be possible. So please make sure you wear your poppy with pride, knowing that you are helping the Armed Forces community to Live On.



THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



HELPING VETERANS LIVE ON






Emma Hickman, Fiancé to Private Daniel Wade
Killed 6th March 2012, Afghanistan

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LIVE ON





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