



FRESSINGFIELD & DISTRICT BRANCH - Annual Report to the Parish Council 2023

2023 has been another successful year for the Branch, with events being run and attended, charity Draws being organised, leading to ongoing donations which helped veterans and RBL members. We sadly lost our oldest and most esteemed member Air Commodore Bernard Wellingham in April; Bernard had occupied almost every position in the Branch, and was well represented by Branch members at his funeral and wake in Wingfield in April.

Our first major event was the Platinum Jubilee Fete in early June. We couldn't show off our planned 'Falklands at 40' display due to the wind, but we had specially designed, one-off Jubilee mugs for sale which flew off the shelves. We also ran a Grand Raffle, together raising over £700.

We organised the popular summer Village Car Boot and Garage Trail. With over a dozen stands, and numerous stop-off points around the village, many people were able to enjoy the sun and fresh air, and part with a few pennies. This all resulted in over £200 being raised for the Branch, plus an incredibly generous donation from Raymond Cross & Maxine McCrindle of £540 from their own garage clear out sale.

The Remembrance Service in the church saw the pomp, reverence and Standard paraded, with the names of the fallen from the six parishes read out – Lest We Forget. We led the Commemoration at the War Memorial – joined by many parishioners, friends, the Baptist congregation (and generous donation), as well as marching Cubs, Scouts and a record turnout. The Poppy Appeal raised over £4,000 thanks to our Poppy Appeal Organiser and tireless team of volunteer collectors, whom we personally thanked at a subsequent Branch Social evening.

And finally, the Fressingfield Christmas Tree, an annual generous gift to the Branch from Halesworth's Bob Stevenson. With the Branch decorating the tree, it always makes a fabulous sight in the village, and splendid backdrop to the Christmas Market and Fayre. We held our Branch raffle on the day - warding off the bitter cold - raising a further £300.

So where does the money raised go? The Branch has long since supported our local RBL Care Home in Cromer. Members of the Branch travelled up to Cromer in October to present a cheque for £1,250 to a grateful staff, and we even 'gate-crashed' a veteran's 100th birthday! Their specialist dementia wing (The Danbury) looks after 16 people and will directly benefit from our donation, with it going towards musical instruments, and specifically an outdoor xylophone which will be a great addition to their equipment. Secondly the Poppy Appeal monies raised goes to the RBL for their ongoing national activities and veteran support. And thirdly we continue to provide a small Christmas 'box' to those veterans and elderly past Branch members who still live in the local area.

Planning for the Coronation weekend is ongoing, and a further Car Boot and Garage Trail in the summer, alongside our usual meetings and fundraising activities. We are also updating our tired old equipment to the new RBL brand. If you think you'd like to join the Branch (you don't have to have been a member of the Forces) we'd love to talk to you – come and see us at our events or contact us through our details in the Parish Magazine.

Jeremy Troughton
Lt Col (ret'd)
Branch Chairman

Get in touch or Join Online Here:

