

Remembrance
Thanksgiving and Dedication

The War Memorial, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Sunday 8 November 2026

10.50am

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/mayor

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Service conducted by

Pastor Gareth Jones
Pantiles Baptist Church
129 (Tunbridge Wells) Squadron RAFAC Chaplain

Lt Colonel Ian Kelso
Officer Commanding, Skinners' School CCF
Narrator

John Cohen OBE
Royal Tunbridge Wells Branch, Royal British Legion
Declaiming Officer

Lt (SCC) Matthew Vanns GCGI RNR
Parade Commander

Lt Cdr (SCC) Jon Vanns MCGI FIoL RNR
Parade Marshal

Sgt James Groves – Chatham RMC
Assistant Parade Marshal

David Fawcett
Director of Proceedings

Speakers:
Rorie Evans, Royal Gurkha Rifles Veteran
Seth Youdan, Cadet Warrant Officer, CCF

Duty Band 129 (Tunbridge Wells) Squadron RAFAC

Buglers provided by
T S Brilliant, Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadets

Royal Tunbridge Wells Orpheus Male Voice Choir

Royal Tunbridge Wells Salvation Army Band

Laments by Piper, Rorie Evans

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When the parade formed, the
Mayor, Councillor Beverley Palmer will proceed to the
War Memorial

2026 Royal British Legion

Theme of Remembrance

Service in a Changing World and our Cadet Forces

Since the end of the Cold War, some 35 years ago, the British Armed Forces have undergone a significant transformation. Shifting geopolitical landscapes, economic pressures and technological advancements have brought new challenges and evolving demands on our service people. But the core sacrifices we ask of them remain unchanged: separation from family and loved ones; challenging conditions on operations; and the very real dangers to life and physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

The world continues to change. As our Armed Forces community adapts to new challenges, it remains crucial to recognise and honour their service and sacrifices.

The uniformed cadet movements played a valuable part in supporting the war effort in World War Two. Cadets from all branches acted as messengers for the Air Raid Precautions network, supported events to raise money and provided 750,000 male and female recruits for active duty between 1939 and 45. Tunbridge Wells Cadets were amongst those that joined the Navy, Army and Air Force

17 RAF Air Cadets from 129 (Tunbridge Wells) Squadron that joined the RAF paid the ultimate sacrifice and are buried at Tunbridge Wells cemetery.

Tens of Sea Cadets joined the Royal and Merchant Navies through the Bounty Scheme from TS Brilliant several serving with distinction including Lt Noel Cashford MBE a mine clearance officer.

Cadets from the local Army cadets enlisted in a number of regiments including the local 4th Battalion The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt and local Home Guard units. Skinners School proudly displays it's honour board showing pupils that have served their country.

Sadly 35 Air Training Corps Cadets died during World War Two in the UK. The biggest loss in one day was 3 cadets from 1180 Buxton Squadron who died when a Lancaster bomber JB153 crashed near RAF Wymeswold.

In 1943, Peter Fry, a Sea Cadet from Tunbridge Wells was attending a camp on a military base in Poole and was accidentally shot and killed by a sentry at the camp. He is buried in Tunbridge Wells Cemetery and TS Brilliant annually awards a trophy in his memory for the best cadet in the unit. Sea Cadets biggest loss in one day took place in February 1945, Five Dartmouth Sea Cadets serving under naval discipline were killed when their ship, HMTS Alert, a civilian ship in military service, was struck by a mine off Dover.

Sadly, due to fragmented record keeping, it is not known how many cadets in total lost their lives in World War Two.

Order of Service

Pastor Gareth Jones: We thank you all for joining with us this morning as we remember those who gave their lives for this country in WW1, WW2 and conflicts since then. Let's pause and seek God's blessing upon our time.

Almighty God, our Father in Heaven, we come before you now and seek your help as we pause to remember the peace that we have in this land and for the price of that peace. We ask that we might know Your presence upon us all as we gather together. We ask in the name of Your son Jesus Christ.

All: **Amen**

Our hymn this morning helps us focus our thoughts upon this act of remembrance. God, as with silent hearts we bring to mind.

Hymn: God, as with silent hearts we bring to mind
how hate and war diminish humankind,
we pause – and seek in worship to increase
our knowledge of the things that make for peace.

Hallow our will as humbly we recall
the lives of those who gave and give their all.
We thank You, Lord, for women, children, men
who seek to serve in love, today as then.

Give us deep faith to comfort those who mourn,
high hope to share with all the newly born
strong love in our pursuit of human worth:
'Lest we forget' the future of this earth.

So, Prince of Peace, disarm our trust in power,
teach us to coax the plant of peace to flower.
May we impassioned by your living Word,
remember forward to a world restored.

Speaker 1: Rorie Evans, Royal Gurkha Rifles Veteran

Speaker 2: Seth Youdan, Cadet Warrant Officer, CCF

Pastor Gareth Jones: Loving God, as we work for peace – give us wisdom,
as we strive for justice – give us courage,
as we tear down the walls that divide – give us strength,
as we care for those in need – give us compassion.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

Remembrance

Declaiming Officer: They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

All: **We will remember them**

Last Post: *(NB – Gentlemen are to remove hats during the Last Post and replace on Reveille.)*

Cannon

Two Minutes Silence

Cannon

Reveille

Declaiming Officer: When you go home, tell them of us and say, 'For your tomorrow, we gave our today'

Pastor Gareth Jones: Loving God, as we work for peace – give us wisdom,
as we strive for justice – give us courage,
as we tear down the walls that divide – give us strength,
as we care for those in need – give us compassion.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

Placing of Wreaths

Pastor
Gareth Jones: Let the Mayor place a wreath
Let the Deputy Lieutenant place a wreath
Let the Royal British Legion place a wreath
Let the Member of Parliament place a wreath
Let the Officer Commanding of 579 Field Squadron place a wreath
Let the Representative of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment place a wreath
Let the Senior Police Officer place a wreath

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Orpheus Male Voice Choir will sing *Nearer My God to Thee, Be Still My Soul, and Steal Away* while wreaths are placed by representatives of service organisations, political parties and local groups, and members of the public.

Wreaths will now be laid by members of the community starting with the ex-forces groups under the direction of the Parade Marshal. Members of the public who wish to lay a wreath, please come forward now to the right-hand side of the War Memorial, where the Wreath Marshal will guide you to lay your wreath.

We would ask that wreath layers attend alone unless they require assistance. Please do not attempt to approach the War Memorial from the left-hand side. Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Pastor
Gareth Jones: O God of truth and life, during these turbulent times – with violence and loss once again at the forefront of world affairs – help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world. As together we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life, health and hope, now and forever. Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict, and ask that God may give us peace:

All: **May God give peace**

Pastor
Gareth Jones: For the service men and women who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered by and known to God; may God give peace.

All: **God give peace**

Pastor
Gareth Jones: For those who love them in death as in life, offering the distress of our grief and the sadness of our loss; may God give peace.

All: **God give peace**

Pastor Gareth Jones: For all members of the armed forces who are in danger this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray for their safe return; may God give peace.

All: **God give peace**

Pastor Gareth Jones: For our King and his family, for our Prime Minister and the government, for all those who serve in the Houses of Parliament for peace-makers and peace-keepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free; may God give peace.

All: **God give peace. Amen.**

Pastor Gareth Jones: Let us join together in saying the Lord's Prayer:

All:
Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
The power and the glory
For ever and ever.

All: **Amen**

The National Anthem

All:
God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King.
Send him victorious,
Happy, and glorious Long
to reign over us;God save
the King.

(NB: Marks of Respect to be Paid)

The Blessing

Whilst the parade is forming up. **Piper, Rorie Evans** will play a Lament.

The March Past

Would members of the public please be mindful of those taking part in the March Past.

Compliments will be paid at the War Memorial and to the Mayor who will take the salute.

The Poppy as a Symbol of Remembrance

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.

The poem was written in 1915 by Ontario-born Lt Col John McCrae, a surgeon, artilleryman and poet serving with the Canadian Armed Forces in Northern France. Three years later he was to die in a Military Hospital on the French Channel coast, within sight of Britain and it is said that on his deathbed he murmured "Tell them this, if ye break faith with us who die, we shall not sleep."

Flanders and Picardy, in Northern France, saw some of the most concentrated and bloodiest fighting of the First World War. There was complete devastation: buildings, roads, trees, and natural life simply disappeared. Where once there were homes and farms there was now a sea of mud – a grave for the dead where men still lived and fought. Only one other living thing survived. The poppy, flowering each year with the coming of the warm weather, brought life, hope, colour and reassurance to those still fighting.

After the war Moina Michael, an American War Secretary with the YMCA, bought red poppies with money given to her by work colleagues, and sold the flowers to raise money to help needy ex-servicemen. Her French colleague, Madam Guerin, proposed the making of artificial poppies, and their sale, to help both ex-servicemen and their dependents. The first Poppy Day, held in Britain on 11 November 1921, was a national success, and Major George Howson, who had founded The Disabled Society to help those disabled in the war who now seemed unemployable, recognised that the making of the artificial poppies might offer opportunities for his Society. His proposals were put to the British Legion (now the Royal British Legion), founded by Earl Haig, formerly Commander in Chief in France, and the outcome was the establishment of what we now know as The Royal British Legion Poppy Factory, which employs mainly disabled people, making poppies, wreaths and other items associated with today's Poppy Appeal. So, from John McCrae's emotive poem has arisen a powerful and achieving international charitable organisation, which has helped many thousands of people.

Join the Legion and become part of an international network of people who care about British Armed Forces personnel, ex-Servicemen and women and their families. You don't have to be a member of the Armed Forces community to join — membership is open to all. The Royal Tunbridge Wells Branch 07766 313047 can keep you in touch with local events and anniversaries. Call 0800 3077 773 or go to www.britishlegion.org.uk/membership

Tunbridge Wells Cemetery Civic Event
Sunday, 8 November 2026

At 12:45pm in the Tunbridge Wells Cemetery Garden of Remembrance, her Worship the Mayor invites citizens to join her in the Laying of Wreaths at the four War Memorials which are located in the Cemetery.

The Garden of Remembrance is located at the bottom of the Cemetery, close to the boundary wall with the Nevill Golf Course.

The Event will close at the RAF Memorial at 1:15pm.

The laying of Wreaths by the Mayor and or Deputy Mayor on Remembrance Sunday, has been taking place since the World War One Cross of Sacrifice was installed in the Cemetery in 1923. World War 2, Garden of Remembrance, with its own Cross of Sacrifice, was opened in September 1950.

Armistice Day Ceremonies
Wednesday, 11 November 2026

Armistice Day this year falls on Wednesday 11 November when we remember the day in 1918 when the fighting in the First World War ended. There will be two short ceremonies organised by the Royal British Legion in Tunbridge Wells. The first will take place at the main War Memorial on Mt Pleasant Road at 10.55am. The second will follow at about 11.45am at the VC Memorial Grove in Dunorlan Park close to the Bayhall Road entrance with the support of the Friends of Dunorlan Park. All are welcome to attend.


Tunbridge
Wells Borough
Council