

“In these unforeseen circumstances, we must remember those who sacrificed their lives for us to see today. We must remember them in whichever way is safe to do so. Please let’s celebrate in a way that is correct, raise a glass to thank those who made a sacrifice and also let’s remember those on the frontline today.”

Councillor Mark Spencer, Newport’s Armed Forces Champion

“Over these last weeks we have spoken to many people who are doing all they can to keep our country and communities working, from those in the big supermarkets to friends trying to run their own small businesses; from those who are Serving to politicians and to delivery drivers and from other charities to staff working across the Legion and with members who are supporting our beneficiaries in communities across the UK and Europe.

We are all facing real and fundamental issues with huge unknowns and many common challenges and shared concerns. All are doing their very best to understand and navigate this new world. None have all the answers. None expect to get everything right but everyone I have spoken to are determined to play their part as best they can and build stronger communities and nations as we emerge from this.

The Legion was created as a response to massive challenge and change. The red poppy took root and grew as a national (indeed international) symbol of remembrance and hope.

This short message reflects those challenges and that shared determination.”

Alan Lawson, Chairman Newport Branch, Royal British Legion

“By VE day the British Merchant Navy had lost around two and half thousand ships totalling eleven and half million tons and more than 36,000 personnel, even excluding those who had died ashore as a result of war.

I cannot imagine what it must have been like after sailing through almost six years with the threat of the German U-Boat hanging over your head to be finally able set sail and ply the trade for which you were trained with the only enemy being the sea itself.

I have talked to men who sailed those war torn days who had been torpedoed, not once but two and three times, but still returned to the sea to support the troops and deliver the essential supplies our country needed, whether war munitions or food for our tables.

On behalf of the British Merchant Navy and the Newport branch of the Merchant Navy Association I can say with the certainty and unanimity, *we will remember them.*”

Alan Speight, Chairman Newport Branch, Merchant Navy Association

“We are eternally grateful to all our brave, men and women, who answered the call. To defend our country, in its time of need and give us, *peace in our time*”.

Graham Smith, Royal Regiment of Wales Standard Bearers

“The 104th Regiment Royal Artillery has been an enduring presence within the local community in the South Wales region since its formation on 1 April 1967.

The Regt has deployed individuals into all key military campaigns and specifically saw two batteries, the 323 (Glamorgan) and 324 (Glamorgan), serve in North West Europe from June 1944 attached to the 53rd (Welsh) Infantry Division during World War 2.

Tragically the Regiment suffered losses and these soldiers were members of the local community who lived and worked in the Gwent region. The selfless dedication of those soldiers will continue to be remembered and recognised accordingly. Their generation gave us the freedoms and security that we currently enjoy. The conduct and commitment set by them has set the standard by which we measure ourselves today; we do and must continue to honour their legacy.

‘I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.’ Winston Churchill.”

Lt Col B M D Ingham MBE RA, 104 Regiment RA

“The Royal Artillery Association celebrating its centenary in May and throughout its existence all its members have, in one way or another, either fought for their country or defended its proud traditions, and even in peacetime have been active in providing extra help when needed.

All this is celebrated on parade at the VE celebrations, when each member proudly remembers artillery soldiers, who have lost their lives in conflict, and they praise all those who continue to serve the Queen and country.

To lose this event due to exceptional circumstances is a great loss to the RAA, but with our indomitable spirit we will look to the time when we will remember and march once again behind our standard. *Once a Gunner, Always a Gunner.*”

Rev. Richard Grey QVRM, Hon. Secretary of the Newport Branch, Royal Artillery Association

“We in the Armed Forces have tremendous pride in wearing our uniforms because of what those uniforms represent. The uniforms represent all those who were involved in both World Wars, those that paid the ultimate price, those who have worn them with such outstanding bravery, passion, commitment and determination and all those who fought and won the freedom we all take for granted today.”

WO David Stroud, RAF St Athan MOD

“VE Day is a great day of celebration to mark a hard fought victory on the Western Front.

It is a poignant opportunity for all of us to remember the members of the Armed Forces and Merchant Navy from many countries who gave their lives or returned home injured in body and mind from conflicts across the world.

It is also a time to remember the women and men who operated the factories, mines, shipyards and farms; the ARP wardens, police officers, doctors, nurses, fireman, local defence volunteers and others who toiled day and night selflessly on the home front during difficult frightening and uncertain times.”

Luke Pearce RAF Officer, RAF St Athan MOD

“VE day marked not just the end of years of struggle and of loss for Great Britain but also of the beginning of peace, prosperity and security for the next 75 years. Those that lost their lives made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. It is vital, therefore, that we as today’s Royal Navy, not only remember this sacrifice, but embody the same sense of loyalty, courage and duty as those that went before us.”

Cdr Philip Harper RN Commanding Officer, HMS Severn Royal Navy

