

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR ARMED FORCES 2020/21

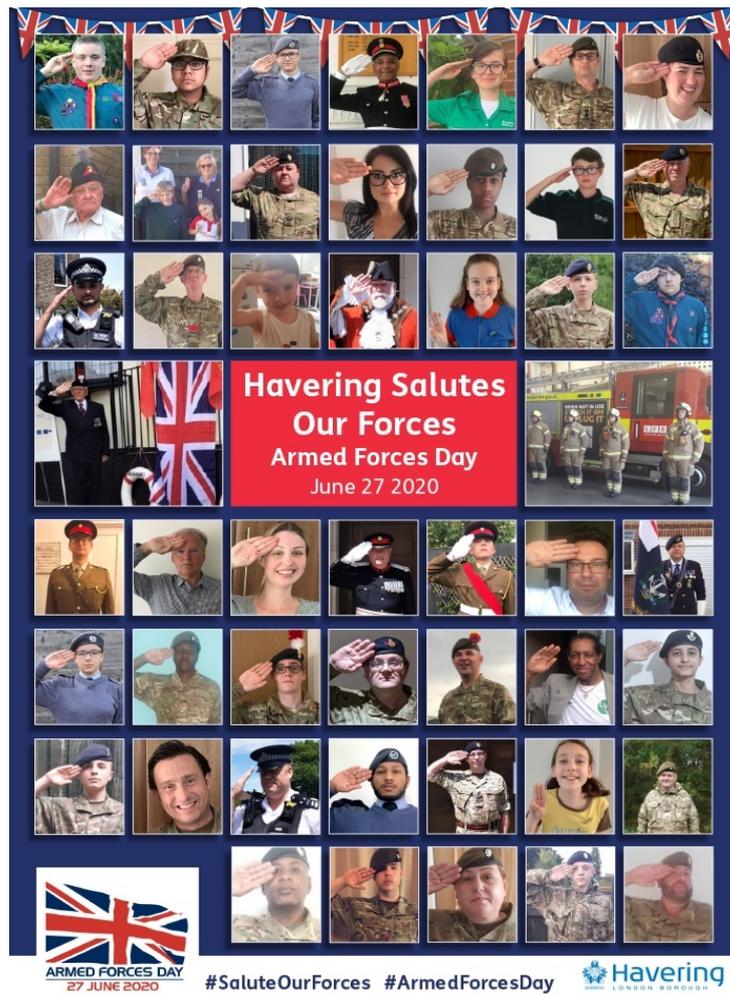
This year, in common with other Champions has been impossible to respond to meet the normal obligations that would do justice to the role of Champion for the Armed Forces, a role I felt highly honoured when I was elected by members this year.

I have had a small chance to chat with some ex-servicemen and a woman who served on an anti-aircraft battery where she met the man she would later marry. Love blooms in the most unlikely places.

I also had a meeting with a gentleman in a wheel chair. Thanks to Street Care I was able to offer some help and was doubly grateful when it turned out he was a former member of my old regiment having served some years before my time.

Armed Forces Day –Virtual Event

Owing to the Coronavirus pandemic restrictions, celebrations in the Borough were severely curtailed this year and the occasion was marked by a series of online events instead. These included a vocal tribute by the Lightnin' Drama Group and a picture collage composed of images submitted by members of the Council and public.



The Armed Forces flag was raised at the Town Hall to mark the occasion.



Armed Forces Covenant

During the period covered by the report (from April 2020 – March 2021), 2 ex-service personnel were housed under the Armed Forces Covenant. Currently there are 3 ex-service personnel on the housing register waiting for a property. They have all been awarded the Community Contribution (CC1) priority in line with the Housing Allocation policy. This is a high priority in recognition of the contribution that they have made to the community through their service

75th Anniversary of VJ Day

Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day) marked the day Japan surrendered on the 15 August 1945, which in effect ended the Second World War.

The Prince of Wales, accompanied by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall, led the UK in a national moment of remembrance and thanksgiving for all those who served in the Far East.

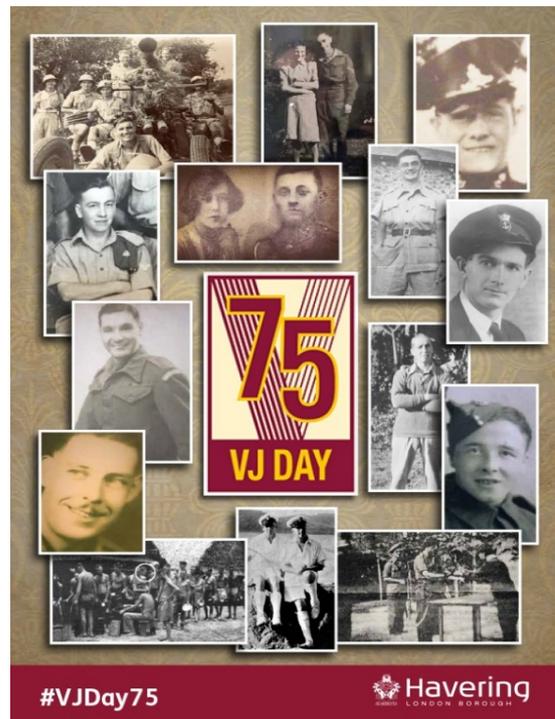
Since traditional celebrations were not possible, Havering commemorated the day online with stories, photos, and messages of thanks to mark the significance of the day.



*Picture from the Romford Times, 29th August 1945, featuring
A street party to mark VJ Day in Heather Close*



Mr Harry Bass, Standard Bearer for the British Legion for over 30 years and VJ Day veteran.



Armistice Day Service



Sadly, the annual Romford Remembrance Sunday parade and service did not take place this year because of the pandemic, so residents were encouraged to mark the occasion in a different way and asked to “Remember at Home”. A pre-recorded ceremony was available to view in partnership with the Royal British Legion.

The most touching time was our memorial service on Harold Hill and in spite of the restrictions we did have a sizeable turnout on the day and those attending paid full respect to the safety demands on the day.

Harold Hill residents would not be denied their right to pay respects to the memory of our service men and woman of our armed forces of two world wars to whom we owe so much and of whom we have been always been so proud.

Tribute was paid to the police and firemen who lost their lives in the course of doing a dangerous job to control fires that threatened our homes and police who tried to protect our homes from looters as we sheltered from the bombing,

The service concluded with the singing of the Queen and a Church service at Saint George’s. I hope this report does some justice to the occasion.

Councillor Denis O’Flynn