Armed Forces Day Parade

On Saturday, 27 June 2015 a record crowd of approximately 5,000 people watched representatives of the Paratroopers, Army, Navy and Royal Air Force Cadets march through Romford Town Centre. They were accompanied by members of the Romford, Elm Park and Hornchurch British Legion and a marching band. The Army Reservists 71 Signal Regiment which is now based in London Road was also on parade.
World War 1 Commemoration Events

The Council has continued to commemorate the Centenary with particular regard to the 6 key commemoration dates as identified by the Government. As these dates fall outside the period covered by this report the WW1 calendar of events for this period is not as full as that of last year.

However, in addition to the long term WW1 centenary projects, improvements to the borough’s main war memorials and the online diary, published by Havering Local Studies Library will continue and will go on through to 2018. The diary can be viewed following this link: https://arena.yourlondonlibrary.net/web/havering/world-war-one-diary

Havering Show

Residents attending the Havering Show in 2015 were able to enjoy a taste of something new when husband and wife duo Chrissy and Martin Simmonds brought their Victory Arms act to the Harrow Lodge Park event.

The couple, from Gidea Park, perform as pub landlady Joaneý and her glass collecting dogsbody Albert, setting the scene in the east end of London during World War One at the Victory Arms pub.

A wartime bombing the night before has left everyone a little bruised but relatively unscathed, and to cheer things up, somebody calls for a song, and that leads to a cockney knees up sing-song, aided by a guitar, ukulele and accordion. Much is quite rightly made of the tragedy of war however it was nice to also reflect the community spirit that would have been shown by those serving on the home front.

RJ Mitchell

The R.J. Mitchell Primary School in Hornchurch, named after the designer of the iconic Spitfire fighter, had a formal re-opening ceremony on Friday 25 September, following an extensive re-building programme.

The school is situated on the site of RAF Hornchurch, a key airbase in the Battle for Britain. The school is extremely proud of its association with the RAF, and has recently been entrusted with the archives of the RAF Hornchurch Association. The school’s new building pays homage to its link with the RAF in its design which includes a runway corridor, and glass etched aeroplanes on the entrances of the classrooms. The opening ceremony featured fly-pasts of military aircraft, including a
spitfire, and was attended by the Commanding Officer of RAF Northolt and Rt. Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, whose father, Squadron Leader Wilfrid George Gerald Duncan Smith (known as “Smithy”) was based at RAF Hornchurch during the war.

**Ingrebourne Valley Visitor Centre**

Spitfires were back in Havering just a month later in October at the opening of the Ingrebourne Valley Visitor Centre which attracted more than 3,500 visitors. In recognition of the site’s historical significance there was also a WW1 exhibition and themed performances.

**Army Reserves Campaign**

The Council helped promote an Open Evening for 71 Yeomanry Signals Regiment, based in Romford in November. The event provided potential recruits with information on what is involved to join the Army Reserves, including the pay and benefits, as well as an opportunity to look at some of the equipment used by 71 Signals along with interactive stands demonstrating weapons systems and drill.

**Bereavement Services Memorial Service**

Havering Bereavement Services remembered the borough’s civilians who lost their lives during the Second World War in Havering and elsewhere on April 19th. The event will take place on the 75th anniversary of a bombing raid in which the Municipal Borough of Romford suffered 127 casualties, 44 of which were fatal. This was highest number of civilian casualties in any one night, during the 1939 to 1945 conflict. Ninety three houses were demolished and more than 2,000 damaged.

A short interdenominational Service of Remembrance was held at Romford Cemetery, led by the Mayor’s chaplain, the Reverend David Banting. The Mayor, Andrew Rosindell MP, members of the Romford branch of the Royal British Legion, the Salvation Army band and pupils of Crownfield Junior School were in attendance, as were relatives of some of the victims who lost their lives in the raid.
Armistice Day Parade and Service

Remembrance Sunday services across the borough saw thousands of people come together to honour the nation's servicemen and women.

Services took place in Romford, Hornchurch, Elm Park, Upminster, Harold Hill, Harold Wood and Rainham.

Councillor Brian Eagling, Mayor of Havering, laid a wreath on behalf of all Councillors and staff at Romford's War Memorial in Coronation Gardens.

Councillor John Crowder