

From: Brigadier (Retired) Peter Gilbert QVRM TD DL VR



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5 November 2025

To all participants in and supporters of the 2025 Rochester Festival of Remembrance.

Please forgive the impersonal format of this letter and please do not doubt my sincerity as I seek to reach as many as possible with a message of thanks which I hope can be sent to everyone who supported the Rochester Cathedral Festival of Remembrance on Saturday 1 November.

Personally in my role as Royal British Legion County President for Kent, and speaking on behalf of the beneficiary charities, the Poppy Appeal, the Army Benevolent Fund and Royal British Legion Industries, I write to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who planned and organised the Festival, who backed it financially, and who took part and performed or facilitated it in any way. And on their behalf, I also thank all who attended as guests and audience, making the hard work in preparation so worthwhile.

In deciding to produce a second festival, we were naturally determined that we should meet the standard set in 2024. All the feedback suggests that this year was even better, and I suspect the addition of the amazing Gurkha pipers may have been the deciding factor. I must say that I was bowled over by its success, found the music both moving and inspiring and felt that the band, the choirs, the soloists and the speakers produced a performance of quite exceptional quality.

The muster was a little larger this year, with the standards of The Royal British Legion in the vanguard and representatives of the Regular Army, reservists and cadets of all three services and an impressive group of veterans including representation from Kent Fire & Rescue. I hope you all found the muster and ceremony of Remembrance as poignant and memorable as I did.

Our first speaker, Mark Bathurst brought our own Wonderful Medway Queen to life with the story of her extraordinary contribution to the miracle of Dunkirk. Air Marshall Chris Nickols' personal reflection linked the sacrifices of "the few" of the Battle of Britain to the RAF pilots (his friends and colleagues) who made the same sacrifice to stop the cold war becoming hot and to those of today who may yet face the same tests.

For all those who serve and have served, our duty is to protect and promote their legacy - our freedom.

Thank you.

*with very best wishes,
Peter.*