

IN REMEMBRANCE



Chris McLean, director, left, and Sir Timothy Laurence, Royal Naval Commissioner for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, officially unveil the new boards

Picture: Andy Payton FM2876396

Proud moment as sailors' war efforts unveiled

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Tom Rainsbury has been to Chatham's Naval Memorial many times, but this visit had extra poignancy.

On Thursday, four information panels were unveiled there, which they will allow visitors to find out more about the brave uncle he was named after.

The panels contain a quick response code, which means people with smartphones can scan it to read the stories of some of the 18,627 sailors honoured at the memorial.

Able Seaman Thomas Rainsbury was just one of millions of men who died defending their country in the two World Wars. He died aboard HMS Jervis Bay, which was based at Chatham Dockyard before the war, in the North Atlantic in 1940.

The vessel held off the German cruiser Admiral Scheer for three hours, despite being hopelessly outgunned. This brave feat allowed the convoy of 31 ships Jervis Bay was protecting to escape.

Mr Rainsbury, from Canterbury, said it was an "immensely proud" moment



Sailor Thomas Rainsbury and, right, his nephew Tom Rainsbury, who attended the unveiling



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for him and the panels were a "fantastic development".

"I'm now going to bring my children and their children, so I'm going to bring the next two generations of my family up here," he said, speaking in front of his uncle's place on the memorial.

"They've all got their smartphones so they can have a play with the QR code, but, with a more meaningful reason behind it, they can learn at the same time."

The panels have been installed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. Another was put in place

at Gillingham Cemetery in Woodlands Road earlier this year. The Chatham panels were officially unveiled by retired naval officer Sir Timothy Laurence, commissioner of the CWGC and husband of the Princess Royal.

Sir Timothy said the passing of the years since the conflicts meant a new generation might not know as much about them, adding: "The human stories are fascinating."

"For young people today, who wonder what the First World War was about and why people were involved, to find out about the 17 to 20-year-olds involved in this and commemorated here is very important."

Stories spanning both world wars



Another one of the human stories told through the QR code is that of the captain of the Jervis Bay, Edward Stephen Fogarty Fegen, pictured.

He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on the day the ship sunk.

He served in both of the World Wars and survived his ship being sunk just two days after the outbreak of war in 1914. Captain Fegen then spent the rest of the The Great War serving on destroyers.

In 1918, he won the Silver Medal for Gallantry in saving life at sea, for coming to the assistance of the crew of an oil carrier, which had collided with another ship and burst into flames.

After the armistice, Capt Fegen was seconded to the Royal Australian Navy. He later served as executive officer at their naval college, which was located on Jervis Bay in a coastal enclave on the south coast of New South Wales.

The vessel on which he later achieved fame and lost his life was named after this bay.

Ceremonies to mark Remembrance Day

Ceremonies will be held across the district to mark Remembrance Sunday.

Civic leaders will join the ranks of Medway residents in the annual salute to fallen servicemen and women, with the Remembrance Day salute and march past in Rochester High Street a focal point for memorial services taking place at across the Medway towns.

Mayor of Medway Cllr Josie Iles said: "It's very important that we remember those who gave their lives and obviously the families that have been left behind."

"What the Royal British Legion do is very commendable and I always support them. It's important to keep it going because there is a need for it with the current conflicts like Afghanistan."

Rochester

The Royal Marines Association will hold its annual remembrance service and turning the page ceremony at Rochester

Cathedral on Saturday, November 9, starting at 10.45am, attended by the Mayor of Medway, Cllr Jose Iles.

On Sunday, at 10.45am, the Royal British Legion service of remembrance will take place at Rochester Cathedral, led by Canon Neil Thompson.

The mayor will be part of a procession of civic leaders making their way to the cathedral from the Guildhall Museum, leaving at 10.40am.

The service will be followed by a wreath-laying ceremony at Rochester War Memorial.

Cllr Iles, Medway Council chief executive Neil Davies, and council leader Cllr Rodney Chambers will lay wreaths.

The salute and march past will take place in the High Street at the precinct near the City Wall Wine Bar.

Gillingham

There will be a Royal Naval Service at the War Memorial, Great Lines, Gillingham, at 9am, on Sunday, where Cllr Iles and council chief

executive Neil Davies will attend a short service and wreath-laying ceremony. Cllr Iles will also lay a wreath.

At 9.55am there will be an act of remembrance and wreath-laying ceremony at the Black Lion War Memorial, followed by a procession to St Mark's Church for a service of remembrance.

Deputy mayor Cllr Jane Etheridge will lay a wreath.

At 11am there will be wreath-laying ceremony at The Brompton War Memorial, Wood Street, Brompton. Cllr Geoff Juby is to lay a wreath.

Rainham

There will be a remembrance service at 10.15am at St Margaret's Church/Rainham War Memorial, together with a wreath-laying ceremony, where Cllr David Royle will lay a wreath.

Chatham

There will be two minutes of silence at 11am at Chatham's Historic Dockyard dockyard on Remembrance Sunday, with a piper in attendance

to play before and after the silence.

The tower clock will mark the start of the silence and the bell on HMS Cavalier will be rung at the end.

On Monday, November 11, there will be an act of remembrance, led by the Rev Andrew Hackett, chaplain, HMS Cavalier Association, to mark Armistice Day.

The ceremony will include the two minutes of silence, spoken words of remembrance, Last Post and opportunities to lay poppy wreaths and crosses at the Bronze Monument.

An act of remembrance and wreath-laying ceremony will take place on Sunday, at 10.45am, at Victoria Gardens, Chatham, where Cllr Vince Maple will lay a wreath.

It will be preceded by a parade through Chatham, which will follow the historic route after volunteers stepped forward to assist police with marshalling duties.

The parade will leave James Street car park at 10.10am.

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