

Rail remembers our troops and their sacrifice

November 10, 2021



The rail industry has truly rallied round to help remember the sacrifice our troops make in times of conflict.

Here are just a few highlights from the lead up to, and including, Armistice Day on 11 November.

October

In one poignant moment, at the end of October, Nuclear Transport Solutions' (NTS) rail division named a locomotive The Poppy. Locomotive 68033 was named in a ceremony at Euston Station, with veterans from across the country attending to mark the ceremony.



With November on the horizon, businesses, including intermodal specialists Maritime Transport, also began to rally around and show their support. For the seventh year, volunteers put poppies on the grilles of the business's 1,400 tractor units. Maritime Transport says those remembering included service and ex-service personnel in its 40+ depot network.

November

November proved an important time to raise money for the Royal British Legion, after the COVID-19 restrictions last year severely limited how volunteers could help collect funds from the public.

People were seen collecting at railway stations across the UK, as operators and infrastructure owners threw their doors open to welcome the dedicated fundraisers.



Transport for London (TfL), for example, helped by making 50 of its stations available for collections. They redecorated the stations, with roundels being replaced by poppies and similarly-themed livery being added to trains in order to raise as much awareness and show as much support as possible. Armed Forces ambassador and actor turned investigative journalist, Ross Kemp, took to the announcement system to record a special message to motivate the public as much as possible.

Others train operators found unique ways to assist local and national charities in their efforts. For instance, many joined with The Veterans Charity and its Community Rail Volunteers to support the 'Routes of Remembrance,' where wreaths were being laid by services up to and including 11 November. Operating companies included:

- Great Western Railway
- Avanti West Coast
- East Midlands Railway
- West Midlands Railway
- Greater Anglia
- Northlink Ferries
- Govia Thameslink
- ScotRail
- Logan Air
- Northern Ireland Veterans Support Office
- British Transport Police Scotland (Aberdeen)
- Royal Air Force Cadets, Shetland
- AFVBC Orkney
- AFVBC Caithness



Thameslink invited officers from RAF Henlow to transport a wreath to London as part of 'Routes of Remembrance'



As part of routes of remembrance, veterans and reservists who work for Avanti West Coast accompanied wreaths donated by local organisations, charities, as well as military units on trains to London Euston.

As part of the 'Routes of Remembrance' initiative, Southern Rail laid a wreath to remember the remarkable tale of Subedar (Lieutenant) Manta Singh and Captain George Henderson. During the Battle of Neuve-Chappelle, Subedar Singh saw his friend, Captain Henderson, had become severely injured – and during perhaps the bloodiest battle of WW1 risked his life to take him to safety. Subedar Singh rescued his friend but was shot in the effort and later died from his injuries.

Remembrance is something being taken to the hearts of staff across all stations in the UK every year, so it is no surprise they work to organise services which include staff and the public. For example Kent and East Sussex Railway invited people to join them for a service, the backdrop being the Cavell Van which carried the remains of three national heroes on their return from Dover to London over 100 years ago. Northern, meanwhile, did likewise, with its services following Poppy Appeal events held at Manchester Victoria; during which they had some help from singer Martin Ward and a choir.

To get people to such services on Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday, help was offered by rail operators to those affiliated with the armed forces. Among many offering free travel for Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday include Northern and Stagecoach.

Remembrance Day services

Also known as Armistice Day, 11 November marks the day World War I came to an end.

As part of proceedings, Barbara McGregor joined Great Western Railway's second Poppies to Paddington operation.

Barbara holds the Guinness World Record as the longest-serving female in the Royal Navy. She travelled by train from her home in Bridgend to lay a wreath at London Paddington's iconic war memorial on Platform 1, where she read the Act of Remembrance.



Barbara McGregor

At 11am, all of us took time to remember. We stopped as one to think of the brave sacrifices made by those who lost their lives – who found courage during moments of unthinkable danger.

Stations across the country fell completely silent, as public and staff took time for those who had given their lives to protect ours in times of conflict.

This morning we fell silent to remember them [#LestWeForget](#)

We were joined by our partners for a memorial service led by Mike Roberts – railway mission chaplain – where staff laid wreaths on platform 10 [#WeWillRememberThem](#)
pic.twitter.com/WV0LF1fjiO

— ManchesterPiccadilly (@NetworkRailMAN) November 11, 2021



Colleagues and customers marking the two minute silence at 11am on 11 November on the main concourse at Newcastle Central Station

Picture Credit Owen Humphreys/ PA, provided by LNER

On the Routes of Remembrance, organised by the Veterans Charity, many staff from regional Rail Operating Companies joined others remembering the brave soldiers who have protected our country.

They included Greater Anglia:

A very moving morning at London Liverpool Street [#LestWeForget](#) [#RoutesofRemembrance](#)
[#WeWillRememberThem](#) pic.twitter.com/JzyH48RvQx

— Greater Anglia News (@GreaterAngliaPR) November 11, 2021

And East Midlands Railway

Thanks to @weareEMR team #Sheffield for starting the @EastMidRailway 'mainline' wreath #routesofremembrance heading for @StPancrasInt #Remembrance service @VETERANSHARITY @RemembeRoutes pic.twitter.com/a6lJ2tLGnI

— EMR Community Rail (@EMCommunityRail) November 11, 2021

Alex Hynes, the managing director of Scotland's Railway, was one of many representing the industry as the country fell silent.

It was an honour to lay a wreath this morning at @NetworkRailGLC in memory of those who served the railways and sacrificed their lives in conflicts across the globe. From everyone across Scotland's Railway, we will remember them. @ScotRail @NetworkRailSCOT #RemembranceDay2021 pic.twitter.com/y08YdeOmvL

— Alex Hynes (@AlexHynes) November 11, 2021

And all businesses across the sector, serving both passenger and freight, stopped to pay their respects.

On Armistice Day, we remember and honour all those killed or injured in the defence of their country.

#Lestweforget #Armisticeday #Remembrance #Thankyou pic.twitter.com/66KlZCYXn3

— Freightliner (@RailFreight) November 11, 2021

Click [here](#) to support the Royal British Legion.