



# PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

January 2017

## Hot Cross stunned!



D-day veteran Ron Cross MBE was left speechless when Provincial Grand Master Michael Wilks gave him a surprise field promotion on an official visit to Clarence Lodge No.8167 in Gosport.

The 96-year-old, who last year received the Legion d'Honneur from the French for his wartime heroism, was promoted to Past Provincial Grand Standard Bearer.

Overcome with emotion, Brother Ron said he had no words, but afterwards he said: "I am absolutely shocked, I did not suspect a thing and I'm quite emotional."



It was the start of a busy year for Brother Ron whose lodge celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and his marriage to Hazel its 70<sup>th</sup>.

The great grandfather joined Clarence Lodge in 1977 and in 1993 he was promoted to Past Provincial Assistant Grand Standard Bearer.

Six years ago it was suggested to Ron that he give a talk in the lodge on his wartime work,



and since then he has informed and entertained many people with his personal story – and raised a lot of money, too.

The Gosport-raised nonagenarian joined the Royal Engineers in August 1940 as part of the 79th Armoured Division.

He left his home town on D-Day in June 1944 and landed at H-Hour on Juno beach. Riding in an AVRE (Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers) Churchill tank, his job was to ensure that gaps could be made with explosives for tanks to come ashore and support the infantry.

He also played a vital role in the opening up of Antwerp, thrice landing in the Netherlands. After the war he worked as an occupational therapist at Royal Hospital Haslar for 37 years and developed the department, for which he received his MBE.

Provincial Grand Master Michael Wilks, said: “It gave me great pleasure to meet Ron and promote him.

“He is a modest man but completely deserves the honours that have been bestowed on him.

“The visit to Clarence Lodge included their fourth initiation of the year and I wish them all the best in their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.”



*(l-r) WBro David Perkis (APGM), WBro James Callaghan (WM), RWBro Mike Wilks (ProvGM), Bro Ron Cross (PPGStB), Bro Graham Lloyd (Initiate), WBro David Foot (Lodge VO)*

