

A record of Two Historic Ceremonies on Sunday 8th June 1997.

The Dedication of a New Standard and The Joint Signing of a Document declaring Market Harborough Branch of the Royal British Legion and Conn Weissenberger Post of the American Legion in Toledo, Ohio to be Sister Units.

This was a first for Market Harborough through the Internet.

At a unique Ceremony on Sunday 8th June, the Market Harborough Branch of the Royal British Legion was twinned with a branch of the American Legion, the first known occasion when individual units of these two great ex-service organizations have been linked in this way.

A joint Declaration named the Conn Weissenberger Post of the American Legion in Toledo, Ohio and the Market Harborough Branch of the Royal British Legion, Sister Units "in mutual honour, respect and comradeship". It was signed by Mr. Barry Bashore and his wife Anne who had travelled from the USA, and by Mr. Tom Ashmore and Mr. Dick Fulford as Chairman and Secretary of Market Harborough Branch. Mr. Bashore presented the Branch with a beautiful framed Proclamation and Mr. Ashmore reciprocated with framed copies of the Declaration and Articles of Objectives.

The twinning is the result of a suggestion from Mr. John Marshall, a Vice Commander of the Toledo Post who had made a chance contact with Tom Ashmore through the internet. By a remarkable coincidence John has relatives living in Gumley and near Lutterworth.

The signing ceremony came at the end of an afternoon of ceremonial in which all the senior R.B.L. Officers of the County and Civic and other representatives took part.

There was a parade of visiting Royal British Legion Standards and members of our and other branches followed by a Service in the

Parish Church to lay-up the old Standard and dedicate a new one. The new Colour was Trooped through the ranks of Standards and Members and the Parade was Reviewed by a Deputy Lieutenant of Leicestershire, who later took the salute in a March Past. Finally, a wreath was laid on the town's 1914-1918 War Memorial by our oldest member and sole survivor of that War. As a tribute from the American Legion, a second wreath was laid by the Toledo Post representative.



The Dedication of the New Standard.



Branch Vice President, Mr. Ken Stimpson greets 98 years old Mr. Robert Cramp, the Branch's sole survivor of World War 1, entering the church assisted by Branch Secretary, Mr. Dick Fulford.



The placing of the Standards outside the church is unusual. Normally, two parallel ranks line the approach to the door but because the Market Harborough Parish Church has no church yard and stands close to the road, the formation of two curved ranks flanking the entrance was adopted. Branch Standard Bearer and current Branch Membership Sec , Mr. George Fleming with the furled new standard stands at the nearest point to the viewer.



Branch Standard Bearer, Mr. George Fleming, Slow Marches between the dipped Standards as the ATC Band plays the tune "Amazing Grace".