

What's Going On?

The Social & Fund-Raising Team Reports

DIARY OF EVENTS

The date of the next Branch meeting is

Wednesday 13th January

5 Jan Christmas Lunch, with RNA and RAFA

19 Mar Branch Anniversary Dinner - **REVISED DATE**

The Branch Anniversary Dinner is oversubscribed, so if you have booked and find you are unable to attend, please notify Frank Thurgood on 01858 433857 as soon as possible. Your place will be offered to the next in line on the waiting list.

SUPPORT YOUR BRANCH - GET INVOLVED

Postal Scam

The Trading Standards Office is making people aware of the following scam:

A card is posted through your door from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) suggesting that they were unable to deliver a parcel and that you need to contact them on 0906 6611911 (a Premium rate number).

DO NOT call this number, as this is a mail scam originating from Belize.

If you call the number and you hear a recorded message you will already have been billed £15.

If you do receive a card with these details, then please contact Royal Mail Fraud on 02072 396655 or ICSTIS (the Premium rate service regulator) at www.icstis.org.uk

The Royal British Legion Market Harborough Branch

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Meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the Function Room at the Conservative Club, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough. The Committee meets in the same room on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.00 pm.

In Touch

www.in-touch.ukvet.net

THE MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER OF THE
MARKET

HARBOROUGH
BRANCH OF THE
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
Founded 1996

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The Royal British Legion

Market Harborough Branch

In Touch

Issue 135

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Merry Christmas



THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION





During 1942, whilst awaiting a further aircrew training course, I was posted to RAF Staverton, Gloucestershire, performing temporary ground duties. As the airfield was situated next to the Rotal Airscrew (propeller) Works, various military aircraft would visit Staverton for new airscrew designs to be fitted. I was provided with a Ford V8 saloon car with a FOLLOW ME sign displayed at the rear of the boot. It was my duty to wait for an incoming aircraft to land, shoot ahead of it along the runway and direct the pilot to a dispersal point, then take the pilot and any passengers to the officers' mess. A doddle of a job, although short-lived before my next posting.

One evening, in quite misty weather, an American Bell P39 Airacobra fighter aircraft circled the airfield a couple of times before coming in for a textbook three-point landing. I directed it to a dispersal point and waited. The canopy slid back and the pilot climbed out onto the wing. Next the helmet was taken off and a shock of blond hair was shaken and settled shoulder-length on a beautiful woman. For those who remember the film star Veronica Lake, she was an excellent lookalike. I fell in love with her on the spot, but the last I saw of her she was entering the officers' mess. However, I did indulge in the aroma of her perfume that pervaded the car for as long as I could. She was one of the civilian women pilots who delivered all types of aircraft to military airfields during World War Two. Flying transport aircraft, bombers and fighters was all in the days work for the Air Transport Auxiliary.

good night.

Pvt Johns is still floating over Thetford training area. He is just starting to get a little ****ed off. Suddenly he hits the ground hard, knocks the wind out of him, the chute drags and bumps him over and through the long grass, then proceeds to drag him through a stream, a bog and various cowpats in various states of maturity. He finally releases the chute buckle and comes to a halt looking up at the stars. He is now soaking wet, covered in mud and worse and has no idea where he is. First out, move in the direction the aircraft came from. Last out, move in the direction the aircraft is going. Simple para rules for finding your mates in the dark. Trouble was he has no idea what direction the aircraft had come from, or gone to, and he certainly couldn't hear the bloody thing. Probably back in Brize by now, with some lucky crab cleaning up para puke. He stands up and starts to gather in his chute. Couldn't get much bloody worse.

Exactly 2300 Hrs. 'Fire' screams Capt Isaacs. Eight jimpy SFs do their thing.

Pvt Tim Johns realises in an instant that things can get a whole lot bloody worse, as a couple of thousand rounds of mixed ball and tracer all appear to be aimed exactly at him. He hits the dirt quicker than anything he has ever hit before and proceeds to dig himself a slit trench, like a demented gopher, with his hands, knees and chin. The noise is unbelievable. Nothing can live through this amount of firepower.

For the next four hours 42 Commando put the jimpy SFs through their full repertoire. Firing on fixed lines, beaten zones, converging fires, flank firing and all guns letting rip just for the hell of it, (and sheer sexiness).

Pvt Johns is now down about six inches. Never has one man been subjected to such firepower for so long. The noise is unending and terrifying. The rounds fly all

around him and it just goes on and on.

At 0325 Hrs a message arrives at the ranges to cease firing. A para is missing from last night's jump which had been well scattered. One para still missing, firing would have to cease until he was located. Capt Isaacs is not too disappointed. Almost all the 40000 rounds had been



fired, a most impressive and sexy night. 42 Commando stand and give a round of applause. It had been a long and loud night, but well worth it, awe inspiring, very sexy they all agreed.

The silence was truly deafening. He couldn't hear a bloody thing. Just getting light and a glance at his watch 0305 Hrs. He could not believe how long he had been there trapped under an unbelievable weight of firepower. Pvt Johns staggered to his feet and waved his arms.

On the firing line 42 Commando had just started to shovel up the brass, when somebody spotted the tiny dark figure down range. All who had them grabbed their binos. Unbelievable there was somebody out there!

There was of course an enquiry, nobody to blame, and thank god nobody injured. Pvt John did recover his hearing and his sanity eventually. He never ever recovered from the humiliation of 42 Commando's reception as he staggered up to the firing line, and the Commando realised that they had had a little para trapped down range all night.

And of course the incident did absolutely nothing for Para 1 Commando relations. The Para's accused the Commando's of knowing he was there all the time. The Commando's replied that if they knew he was there they certainly would not have missed him.

And Pvt Johns? He, of course, hates the Commando's more than most of his mates. And every time he jumps, he now carries the jimpy. The extra weight helps him to get to the ground a little quicker, but more importantly, next time he insists on having the chance to have a go back at the ****ards

The Finest Army in the World

An article in the series written exclusively for *In Touch*.

By Lt Col Mike Morgan

Sex on Legs

As anybody will tell you the General Purpose Machine Gun is one helluva sexy weapon. It is known as the 'Jimpy' and is only surpassed in sexiness by its big sister - the 50 cal.

But this is a story about the Jimpy, and the Jimpy in its sexiest guise - the GPMG SF. SF stands for 'Sustained Fire', and is a mod kit for the GPMG which puts it on a tripod, adds long range sights and a firing button. In this configuration the Jimpy is known as 'Sex on Legs'.

Paras come in most shapes and sizes, although it is a very rare sight to see an overweight para. But they do come in a thin and wiry variety. Private Tim Johns was just such a variety. Short, tough and about eight stone in his Boots Combat High and helmet. He had been in 2 Para for long enough to know his way around, long enough to know what was 'Aly', and long enough not to have to take crap from anybody — except those few that he had to take crap from — like his platoon sergeant and the RSM — in fact anybody that outranked him by at least two grades — except rupert's of course. Tonight A Company, 2 Para is to make a night jump over Thetford training area.

42 Commando is also in the Thetford training area, setting up for a night shoot. This is to be a firepower demonstration and Captain John Issacs is the Range Officer. He has eight Jimpy SF kits set up on the firing line and 5000 rounds of mixed tracer and ball for each gun. Now a single Jimpy SF and 5000 rounds guarantees a couple of very sexy hours and will give a very impressive light and sound show. Eight Jimpy SEs is indeed a rare sight, and together they will certainly deliver an awesome display of sound and fury, as well as delivering one hell of a lot of rounds down range. The entire commando will be present to see this display. First rounds down range 2300 Hrs. Captain John Issacs is happy in his work this night.

Pvt Tim John's C130 circles the training area, it is a bumpy ride. The wind is picking up, the drop may still be cancelled. Tim, like all the other Paras on board, just wished they would make their ****ing minds up. Let's just get off this thing one way or another, a couple of Paras have already puked and the atmosphere on board is becoming decidedly 'interesting'. Inevitably more Paras will start to throw up in sympathy before much longer, and then the atmosphere will become 'very interesting'.

Somebody, somewhere in the chain of command makes a decision, and the signal to 'go' is given. Thank god. Stand up, check kit, hook up, shuffle to the door. Final checks, door open, green light and out into the freezing night wind.

Now the para drop zone at Thetford is many miles from the Machine Gun ranges. Range use and deconfliction is one of the things the Army gets right nearly all of the time, and tonight they had got it right once again. The Paras would drop well clear of the ranges. However what they, ('they' being the range deconfliction staff), had not taken into account, was the law of aerodynamics, and how these laws would apply to a skinny para on a windy night.

Pvt Johns left the aircraft and was immediately aware that his chute had deployed — as his fall through space was violently halted. He looked up and checked his canopy. So far so good. The drop had been from 500 feet. Pitch black all around, but he would hit the ground in the next second or two. He braced for the landing. After several seconds had passed Tim had his first inkling that tonight could be a long one. The wind had certainly picked up, and his travel was definitely more sideways than downwards, and there was absolutely sweet **** all that he could do about it. All aircraft sounds had now died away. Several more seconds passed. Still no rendezvous with terra firma.

2255 Hrs. All is ready on the SF range. Ammo boxes open and on Captain Isaac's orders, belts are laid into trays and top covers closed. 'Ready!', and each gun is cocked. The whole of 42 Commando is sitting in rows behind the gun line, they all lean forward. Should be a

Eight years ago I attended an ex-RAF Prisoner of War Association reunion at RAF Henlow in Bedfordshire. During the dinner I was introduced to a Mrs Moore, who a colleague had talked into buying my book, "Escape to Freedom". It transpired that, by sheer coincidence, Mrs Moore taught at a school next to my son's home in Lincolnshire. We were joined by her husband, Squadron Leader Moore who, during the latter stages of the first Gulf War was shot down whilst flying as navigator in a Tornado fighter/bomber. Later we were joined by an attractive young lady wearing the uniform of a RAF Flight Lieutenant and sporting a pilot's brevet. She rejoined in the name of Kirsty, and is the daughter of Squadron Leader and Mrs Moore.



The after-dinner speech was given by Kirsty, one of the few women to fly Tornados from RAF Cottesmore and who, at that time, was a flying instructor at RAF Valley, Anglesea. She was 22 years of age. It has come as no surprise to me, therefore, that as has recently been reported in the media, Kirsty has joined the Red Arrows display team. Only the most competent pilots are selected for the team which, I understand from my son who served in the RAF for thirty years, is now referred to as the Pink Arrows!

Well done, Kirsty.

(Tony adds: In my opinion women should invariably make good pilots — aircraft are not fitted with reverse gear! Sorry girls, just a bit of fun, as our editor would say.)

JUST A BIT OF FUN AT CHRISTMAS



The day before Christmas, an elderly man in Bristol calls his son in Edinburgh and says, "I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing; forty-five years of misery is enough." "Dad, what are you talking about?" the son screams. "We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," the old man says. "We're sick and tired of each other, and I'm sick of talking about this, so you call your sister in Norwich and tell her." And he hangs up. Frantic, the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone. "Like hell they're getting a divorce," she shouts. "I'll take care of this." She calls Bristol immediately, and screams at the old man, "You are NOT getting divorced! Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother back and we'll both be there tomorrow. Until then don't do a thing, DO YOU HEAR ME?" And she hangs up.

The old man hangs up his phone and turns to his wife. "Okay, the kids will be here for Christmas Day."

What's the difference between Basil Brush and a terrorist with a rucksack?

The terrorist with a rucksack only goes "Boom" once. A mate of mine has just told me he's sleeping with his girlfriend and her twin. I said "How can you tell them apart?" He said "Her brother's got a moustache!"

How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?

A biker goes to the doctor with hearing problems. "Can you describe the symptoms to me?"

"Yes. Homer is a fat, yellow, lazy bloke and Marge is a skinny bird with big, blue hair."

An elderly, white-haired man walked into a jewellery store one Friday evening with a beautiful young blonde at his side. He told the jeweller he was looking for a special ring for his girlfriend.

The jeweller looked through his stock and brought out a £5,000 ring. The old man said, "No, I'd like to see something more special." The jeweller then went to his special stock and brought out another ring. "Here's a superb ring at only £40,000," he said.

The young lady's eyes sparkled and her whole body trembled with excitement. The old man seeing this said, "We'll take it."

The jeweller asked how payment would be made and the old man stated, "By cheque. I know you need to make sure my cheque clears so I'll write it now, and you can call the bank on Monday morning to verify the funds and I'll pick the ring up on Monday afternoon," he said.

On Monday morning, the jeweller 'phoned the old man and said "Sir, there's no money in that account." "I know," said the old man, "but let me tell you about my weekend!"

Why, oh why?

If work is so wonderful, why do they have to pay us to do it?
If all the world is a stage, where do the audience sit?
If love is blind, why is lingerie so popular?
If you are cross-eyed and have dyslexia, can you read all right?
Why is bra singular and panties plural?
Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are flat?
Why do we put suits in a garment bag and garments in a suitcase?
How come abbreviated is such a long word?
Why do we wash bath towels, aren't they clean after our bath?
Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?
Why do they call it a TV set when you only have one?
And finally, about Christmas: What's the attraction of sitting around a dead tree and eating sweets out of an old stocking?

Big Blind Erik was a Viking warrior who made regular raids on the English coastal areas. Together with his band of Norsemen, they attacked and plundered many villages, taking home lots of gold and treasures. One day, Erik's wife said she was bored with all the gold and asked Erik if he could get her a new kitchen sink on his next trip.

So, on landing in England, Big Blind Erik asked for directions to the nearest builders' yard. Once there, he waved his sword and demanded a kitchen sink.

However, the builders' merchant didn't have one in stock. So out of fear, he gave Erik a bricklayer's hod and told him it was a kitchen sink. Off went Erik feeling very happy.

Which all goes to show that a hod's as good as a sink to a blind Norse!