

## What's Going On?

The Social & Fund-Raising Team Reports

### DIARY OF EVENTS

The date of the next Branch meeting is

**Wednesday February 10**

**Branch Anniversary Dinner - 19 Mar (Revised date)**

*The editor apologises for a senior moment which led to a statement in the last issue that the Anniversary Dinner is oversubscribed. This is not true, and there are many places available. Please make your reservation on the enclosed booking form.*

- 2 Feb Lunch at the Angel - Menu overleaf
- 27 Feb Branch Coffee Morning, Harboro' Theatre.
- 19 Mar Branch Anniversary Dinner
- 14 Apr Outing to Guards Museum & St Clement Danes -  
See Page 2

### SUPPORT YOUR BRANCH - GET INVOLVED

#### Branch Coffee Morning 27 February

Les Moore is organising this event and he is in need of bric-a-brac, tombola and raffle prizes, cakes, jam and pickles. He will need help setting up and manning the stalls.

**Please contact Les on 01858 463112 and offer your assistance in any way you can. This event raises money for your branch.**

#### **Tommy Cooper Gems.**

**1** LINE A cowboy walks in to a German car showroom and greets the salesman, 'Audi!'  
R A lorry full of tortoises collided  
S with a van full of terrapins. It was a turtle disaster.

### The Royal British Legion Market Harborough Branch

Reg. Charity 219279

#### Secretary :

Betty Ramsay 01858 434923

#### Treasurer & Membership Secretary :

Myra Grewcock 7 Gapstile Close, Desborough, NN14 2TZ.  
01536 762228

#### Welfare :

Betty Ramsay 01858 434923

#### Poppy Appeal :

**Organiser:** Dave Pryor 01858 545612

**Wreaths :** John Liddell 01858 465003

#### Standard Bearer:

George Fleming 01858 462711

#### Social & Fund Raising Team :

Glenys Hocking-Davies 01858 467835

Les Moore 01858 463112 Freda Carnell 07890 579556

Sara Whitley-Kinzett 01858 434476

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  
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Editor:  
George Seward  
01858 433873  
18 Charles Street,  
Mkt. Harborough, LE16 9AB  
g.seward@uwclub.net

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# The Royal British Legion

Market Harborough Branch

## In Touch

Issue 136

January 2010

Your Officers  
and Committee  
wish you and  
yours  
Good Health  
and Happiness in  
2010

THE ROYAL BRITISH  
LEGION





## Lunch at The Angel

Tuesday  
February 2

We meet in the bar at Noon

Reserve your place now with Glenys on 01858 467835

### MENU

#### Roast Leg of Lamb

with Roast Potatoes and Mint Sauce

#### Beef & Stilton Casserole

with Herb Scone and Mashed Potato

#### Vegetable & Mascarpone

#### Lasagne

with Savoury Wedges & Garlic Bread



#### Bread & Butter Pudding

Served with Custard

#### Vanilla Cheesecake

with Winter Berries and Thick Cream

#### Fresh Fruit Salad

Served with Ice Cream

**Only £7**

Join us and enjoy good food in congenial company.

### BRANCH MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

We welcome four new members:

Mr Anthony Capell, 1 Gerrard Gardens  
Mkt Harborough 01858 410916

Mr Andre de BRUIN, 56 Nieuwstraat,  
Kemmel, Belguim 8956 0032(0)57424320

Mr Gerald Gamble, 18 Glebe Road  
Mkt Harborough LE16 8AH 01858 434426

Mr Kenneth Hook & Mrs Patricia Hook  
10 Gerrard Gardens, Mkt Harborough  
LE16 9JG 01858 467570

#### Please note:

Because of ill-health, Vida Edwards is living with her daughter and no longer resides at Morrison Court, Kibworth.

## Russian Tank rescued after 66 years under water

A WW II Russian tank with German markings has been uncovered after lying submerged for 66 years. Even after all that time, with a little tinkering, they were able to fire up the diesel engine!

A Komatsu D375A-2 bulldozer pulled the abandoned tank from its tomb under the boggy bank of a lake near Johvi, Estonia. The Soviet-built T34/76A tank had been resting at the bottom of the lake for 66 years. According to its specifications, it's a 27-ton machine with a top speed of 53km/hr.

From February to September 1944, heavy battles were fought in the narrow, 50 km-wide, Narva front in the northeastern part of Estonia. Over 100,000 men were killed and 300,000 men were wounded there. During battles in the summer of 1944, the tank was captured from the Soviet army and used by the German army. (This is the reason that there are German markings painted on the tank's exterior.) On 19th September, 1944, German troops began an organized retreat along the Narva front. It is suspected that the tank was then purposefully driven into the lake to conceal it when its captors left the area.

At that time, a local boy walking by the lake, Kurtna Matasjarv, noticed tank tracks leading into the lake but not coming out anywhere. For two months he saw air bubbles emerging from the lake. This gave him reason to believe that there must be an armoured vehicle at the lake's bottom.

A few years ago, he told the story to the leader of the local war history club 'Otsing'. Together with other club members, Mr Igor Shedunov initiated diving expeditions to the bottom of the lake about a year ago. At the depth of 7 metres they discovered the tank resting under a 3 metre layer of peat.

Enthusiasts from the club, under Mr Shedunov's leadership, decided to pull the tank out. In September of 2000 they turned to Mr. Aleksander Borovkovthe,

manager of the Narva open pit company AS Eesti Polevkivi, to rent the company's Komatsu D375A-2 bulldozer. (Currently used at the pit, the Komatsu dozer was manufactured in 1995, and has recorded 19,000 operating hours without major repairs.)

The pulling operation began at 09:00 and was concluded at 15:00, with several technical breaks. The weight of the tank, combined with the travel incline, made for a pulling operation that required significant muscle. The D375A-2 handled the operation with power and style. The weight of the fully-armed tank



was around 30 tons, so the active force required to retrieve it was similar. A main requirement for the 68-ton bulldozer was to have enough weight to prevent slippage while moving up the hill.

After the tank surfaced, it turned out to be a 'trophy tank' that had been captured by the German army in the course of the battle at Sinimaed (Blue Hills) about six weeks before it was sunk in the lake. Altogether, 116 shells were found on board. Remarkably, the tank was in good condition, amazingly with no rust, and all systems (except the engine) in working condition. This is a very rare machine, especially considering that it fought both on the Russian and the German sides. Plans are underway to fully restore the tank. It will be displayed at a war history museum in the Gorodenko village.

**Could this Aussie  
be a match for  
Jeremy Paxman?**

General Cosgrove, who was about to sponsor a Boy Scout Troop visiting his military Headquarters, was interviewed by a lady on Australian radio recently concerning guns and children.



Regardless of how you feel about gun laws, you have to admit his response is one of the best comeback lines ever.

Interviewer : So, General, what things are you going to teach these young boys when they visit your base?

The General : We're going to teach them climbing, canoeing, archery and shooting.

Interviewer : Shooting! A bit irresponsible, isn't it?

The General : I don't see why, they'll be properly supervised on the rifle range.

Interviewer : Don't you admit that this is a terribly dangerous activity to be teaching children?

The General : I don't see how. We will teach them rifle discipline before they even touch a firearm.

Interviewer : But you're equipping them to become violent killers.

And here is General Cosgrove's comeback:

Well, Ma'am, you're equipped to be a prostitute, but you're not one - are you?

The radio went silent for 46 seconds and when it returned, the interview was over.

**Just a Bit  
of Fun**

EU Directive No. 456179  
In order to meet the conditions  
for joining the Single European  
currency, all citizens of the United

Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland must be made aware that the phrase 'Spending a Penny' is not to be used after 31st December 2009 .

From this date, the correct terminology will be: 'Euronating'.

**360th Anniversary March  
will visit Harborough**

*On 1 January 1660, at Parliament's invitation, General Monck marched south from Coldstream on the Scottish border with a force of 5,000 foot and 2,000 horse.*

In an exercise known as Enduring Guardsman, one hundred members of Number 7 Company, Coldstream Guards, will commemorate General Monck's epic 425-mile march.

They will march through Market Harborough on Saturday, 23rd January, at about 9am and Members

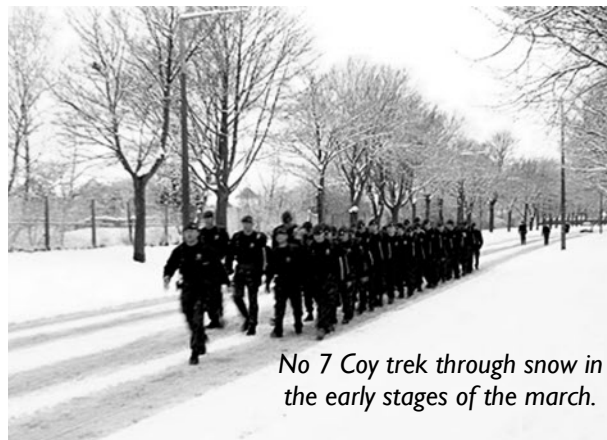


*Coldstream Guards in Afghanistan.*

and friends are urged to turn out and give their support.

The aim of the march is to raise £250,000 to be donated to

The Army Benevolent Fund and The Coldstream Guards Charitable Funds.



*No 7 Coy trek through snow in the early stages of the march.*

**A  
Grand  
Day  
Out**



Members are invited to enjoy an outing to London being organised by Rev'd John Morley on Saturday, 24th April.



An interesting itinerary has been arranged to include visits to The Guards Museum, at Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk, and St Clement Danes, the Central Church of the RAF in the Strand.

Assuming there will be a full 35-seater coach, the cost will be £20 each.

For further details of this fascinating trip, please contact John on 01858 419714.

**Please complete and return as soon as possible to:  
Rev'd J Morley, 31 Walcot Road,  
Market Harborough, LE16 9DL.**

Please reserve ..... seats on the 24.4.10 outing for:

Name(s).....

Contact Address.....

Telephone number.....

I enclose deposit of £10 per person named above.

# True Warriors

*The painting to the right was done by an artist from the description of both pilots many years later.*

*Look carefully at the B-17 and note how shot up it is - one engine dead, tail, horizontal stabilizer and nose shot up.*

*It was ready to fall out of the sky.*

*Then notice that there is a German ME-109 fighter flying next to it.*

*Now read the story.*

*I think you'll be surprised.*



Charlie Brown, who served with the 379th Bomber Group based at Kimbolton, England, was the pilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress called 'Ye Old Pub'

Returning to base after a bombing mission, the B-17 was in a terrible state, having been hit by flak and fighters. The compass was damaged and instead of heading home to Kimbolton, they were flying deeper over enemy territory.

After the B-17 flew over an enemy airfield, a German pilot named Franz Steigler was ordered to take off and shoot it down. When he got near the B-17, the German pilot could not believe his eyes. In his words, he 'had never seen a plane in such a bad state'.

The tail and rear section was severely damaged, and the tail gunner wounded. The top gunner was all over the top of the fuselage. The nose was smashed and there were holes everywhere.

Despite having ammunition, Franz flew to the side of the B-17 and looked at Charlie Brown. The pilot was struggling to control his damaged and blood-stained plane.

Aware that the pilot had no idea where he was going, Franz waved at Charlie to turn 180 degrees. He escorted and guided the stricken plane to, and slightly

over, the North Sea towards England.

He then saluted Charlie Brown and turned away, back to Europe.

When Franz landed he told the CO that the plane had been shot down over the sea, and never told the truth to anybody.

Charlie Brown and the remains of his crew told all at their briefing, but were ordered never to talk about it.

More than 40 years later, Charlie Brown wanted to find the Luftwaffe pilot who saved the crew. After years of research, Franz was found. He had never talked about the incident, even at post-war reunions.

They met in the USA at a 379th Bomber Group reunion, together with 25 people who are alive now - all because Franz never fired his guns that day.

When asked why he didn't shoot them down, Stigler later said, "I didn't have the heart to finish



those brave men. I flew beside them for a long time. They were trying desperately to get home and I was going to let them do that. I could not have shot at that man. It would have been the same as shooting at a man in a parachute."

Both men died in 2008.



(L-R) German Ace Franz Stigler, artist Ernie Boyett, and B-17 pilot Charlie Brown.

Contributed by Careen Wild.