

## Editorial

Phew, what a scorcher!

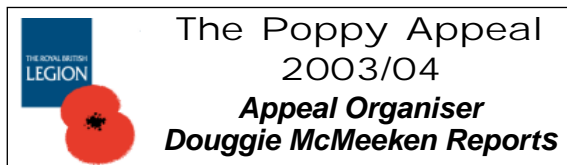
Use of the classic tabloid newspaper headline would have been quite justified in recent weeks as we all sought relief from the oppressive heat. If you were on holiday at the seaside, with a cooling on-shore breeze, you will have been delighted, of course. Less fortunate mortals back home felt a trifle too warm for comfort.

There has been the usual spate of weather stories in the papers, including tales of workers having to endure unaccustomed heat in factories, shops and offices, many without the benefit of air conditioning. It made me think of the extremes of weather which servicemen and women were (and in Iraq still are) subjected to in the foreign parts to which they were sent in the defence of our freedom. No choice in the matter for them – and most certainly nothing remotely resembling air conditioning.

I expect there are a few wry smiles when these old campaigners read of the ‘appalling conditions’ in which people have to work for just a few days a year when our normally friendly and moderate climate gets a bit out of hand!

The fascinating article by ‘Jerboa’ in this issue reminds me of an event I witnessed at Bridlington back in 1979 linked to the American War of Independence. The local tourist department decided to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of an encounter off nearby Flamborough Head when the daring American Captain John Paul Jones defeated and captured the British warship Serapis. Jones’s own ship, Bonhomme Richard, was badly damaged in the battle.

The event was advertised quite extensively and, by a sheer fluke, an American radio station in Boston



The House-to-House collections will start on 26 October, my campaign plans are well advanced and I am now assembling a team of Collectors. If you would like to undertake collections from an area near you, kindly get in touch now on MH 463203. Please leave your name, address and phone number along with the streets you could cover.

It is important to remember that Collectors do not have to be Legion members, so please recruit friends and family to assist in this worthy cause.

The Poppy Appeal will be launched at 11am on 11 October at the Working Men’s Club. Collectors will be invited to the event and I shall set the scene for the 2003 Appeal.

Awards will be made to past, long-serving helpers who have given their services for ten years or more. I should be obliged if you can notify me of anyone you feel should be recognised. Please keep this date clear and watch out for further details in the September *In Touch*.

## Poppywalk

Your generous donations will give heart to the Ramsey Ramblers, our own valiant ladies’ team, who will once again be doing their energetic bit to raise money for the Poppy Appeal. On 21st September, Betty, Helen and Hilary will be walking the streets of London on the ten-mile, 2003 Poppywalk.

Please give your full support to our ladies and a wonderful cause and let Betty know on MH 434923 if you wish to sponsor them. All the money raised will be credited to our own Branch Appeal fund.



Our thoughts are with **Gary Farnsworth** and **Jock Stewart**, who are not too well at the present time. On a happier note, **Ken Stimpson** is out of hospital and feeling a little better.

Congratulations to **Bert Thorold**, who is eighty years young. Bert was recently honoured to have been invited to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party representing the Not Forgotten Association.

More congrats to another young octogenarian, our Vice-Chairman, **Tom Ashmore**, who marked the auspicious occasion with afternoon and evening (non-Royal!) garden parties .



## The Welfare Support Team

There is now a team of volunteers willing to carry out various small, but nonetheless essential, good works for our friends in need. The services include house and hospital visits, shopping, providing lifts to and from hospital, and generally ‘looking out’ for those unable to manage quite as well as they once could.

If you know of know of an ex-service person (or widow /er) who needs this help or if you feel able to join the team of volunteers, please contact Duggie McMeeken or John Cox, whose phone numbers will now appear regularly on the cover of *In Touch*.

It is requested that for record purposes you let the team know about any house or hospital visits that you make .

Caseworking: John Liddell reports that he is currently dealing with three cases, two of which had been referred by the CFO.



**Ideas, please**

Your suggestions for guest speakers and places for Branch outings will be gratefully received by Mary and Joan of the Social Team.

Grateful thanks are due once again to the ladies for an excellent buffet at the August meeting.

**Drink to MacMillan Nurses**

Once again Betty Jeacock will be hosting her contribution towards The World's Biggest Coffee Morning at 10 am on Friday 26 September. Join Betty and, hopefully, many more guests, at 21 Gardner Street for the annual MacMillan Nurses fund-raising event.

**South East Group**

Please let the Chairman know if there is an item you would like raised or an event publicised in the County at the meeting to be held on 1st September.

**Standard Bearers**

A wreath costing £25 has been donated by the Branch to be laid during the Pilgrimage to Holland.

**Fashion Show**

Friday, 3 October, is the date, 7.30 pm the time, and the Edinburgh Woolen Mill shop in the Square is the venue. The show has been arranged by Husbands Bosworth Branch of the Legion to raise money for the renovation of the village War Memorial. Tickets, £5 from the shop, include a glass of wine and nibbles. Your support is requested for a worthy cause.

**Branch Coffee Morning**

Our next Branch coffee morning is at the Harborough Theatre on 25 October. A popular fund-raiser is the Tombola table and Joan and Mary request your donations of suitable prizes.

**Wear them with Pride**

If you have medals that were awarded to a blood relative, Duggie McMeeken reminds you that these may be worn on the right side of the chest on occasions such as Remembrance Sunday.



**Diary**

**Reminders for August  
& some other dates to keep free**  
Details of all Social Events are available from Joan McMillin on MH 462143

- 16 Sep Branch Lunch - 12 for 12.30 Angel Hotel.,MH
- 18 Sep Band of Life Guards at De Montfort Hall
- 19 Sep Branch Autumn Dinner - Bull's Head Clipston
- 21 Sep Rededication & Service of Blessing, Oadby RBL
- 26 Sep MacMillan Nurses Coffee Morning
- 3 Oct Fashion Show Edinburgh Woolen Mills
- 11 Oct Poppy Appeal Launch and Awards (see page 2)
- 17 Oct RNA Trafalgar Day Dinner
- 25 Oct Branch Coffee Morning - Harborough Theatre
- 26 Oct Poppy Appeal - House-to-house collections begin
- 1 Nov De Montfort Hall - Festival of Remembrance
- 8 Nov Branch Remembrance Concert, Baptist Church
- 9 Nov Remembrance Sunday Parade & Service

<p><b>MEETINGS</b> The next meeting is on <b>11th September.</b></p> <p>Branch meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the <u>downstairs</u> Function Room, Conservative Club Building, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.</p> <p>The Branch Committee meets on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.30 pm in the upstairs Committee Room at the Conservative Club.</p>	
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**The Royal British Legion**

Reg. Charity 219279

**Market Harborough Branch**

Founded in 1923

Branch Web site [www.mktharborbl.ukvet.net](http://www.mktharborbl.ukvet.net)



**In Touch**

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**Branch Contact Numbers**

**Welfare**

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**Hon. Secretary**

Betty Ramsay 01858 434923

## Lieutenant-Colonel Derrick Hignett

*Lieut-Col Hignett is seen here inspecting troops with the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and several high-ranking officers.*

*A copy of this historic photograph has been obtained for the Branch from the Royal Hussars Museum in Winchester.*

*During a very full and active life, Lieut-Col Hignett was wartime leader of the elite Phantom Force, joint master of the Fernie Hunt and President of the Market Harborough Branch of the RBL.*

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the death, at the age of 93, of Lieut-Col Hignett. It is also sixty-one years since the disastrous raid on the French coast at Dieppe in August 1942. Following his leadership of a successful undercover operation in Dieppe some two months earlier, Lieut-Col Hignett foresaw, and warned about, the problems that were to seriously blight the raid. Unfortunately, his advice was not heeded and the ill-conceived operation went ahead with the result that over 4,000 lives, mostly Canadian, were lost out of a force of around 6,000 men.

The undercover operation led by Lieut-Col Hignett was planned and undertaken in the utmost secrecy by an elite group of multi-skilled commandos known as the Phantom Force. The Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, explained to Lieut-Col Hignett and his team that, in order to preserve the secrecy, no decorations would be awarded. Their task, to be achieved in a three-day operation, was to gather details of the German military installations in the area. The successful mission included the capture of radar equipment, daringly stolen from under the noses of the German troops.

It was characteristic of Lieut-Col Hignett that he did

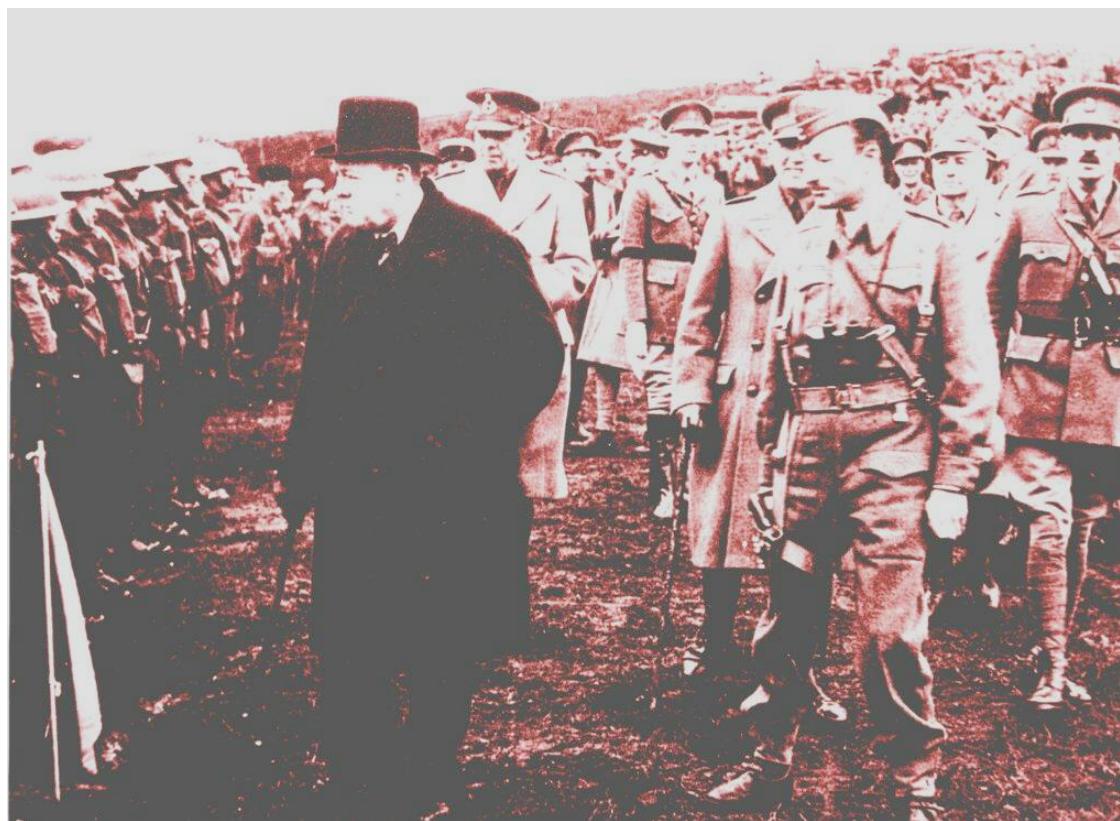
not leave the scene of the operation until all his men were on their way to the ship waiting to take them back to Britain. By a truly amazing coincidence his passage home was aboard a Hunt class destroyer named 'Fernie'!

Born in Staffordshire, Lieut-Col Hignett was educated at Rugby and Sandhurst. He served in Egypt and India after being commissioned in the 10th Hussars in 1920, and, during the thirties, was seconded as adjutant to the Leicestershire Yeomanry.

Promotion to the rank of lieutenant-colonel came in 1940.

His sporting interests were many and varied. He was a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron, and joint master of the Fernie Hunt, with Sir Harold Wernher from 1935-37, and after the war with Colonel 'Pen' Lloyd. He was renowned as a fishing and stalking expert on his Scottish estate, and a supporter of local cricket. A motorist since 1917, he was keenly interested in old cars and owned a Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud.

Lieut-Col Hignett, whose wife Alys Gwendoline died in 1966, was a well-known, and much-loved, figure in and around Market Harborough. He was prominent in Leicestershire public affairs, as a JP, deputy lieutenant and then, in 1951/52, as High Sheriff. During the 1980s and early 1990s, he was a popular



President of the RBL Market Harborough Branch.

In the next issue of *In Touch*, it is hoped to include some memories of Lieut-Col Hignett as a soldier, sportsman, local citizen and, of course, member of the Royal British Legion.

## The Founding of A Regiment

By Jerboa

The current television series about the American War of Independence caused me to look through my notes on the military in North America about this time and came on the following about how a regiment was founded.

Most British regiments were formed by the local belted earl or lord of the manor and were often funded by them as well. This was often to meet imminent danger or threat from foreign forces from invasion. However, the 60th Foot was formed, albeit by the Earl of Loudon, in different circumstances. The Seven Years War between Britain and France (1756-63) had been preceded by a year or two in our colonies with a series of skirmishes between the French aided by their Red Indian allies and our forces in the Thirteen States. There had been sporadic fighting in the region of the Great Lakes where the French had built several forts to protect their expeditions hunting for furs.

So, in June 1755, a British force numbering some 2000 was tasked with the capture of Fort Duquesne, a French post on the Ohio River. Most of the troops were British regulars, but there was also a strong contingent of colonial militia under the command of a Virginian gentleman named George Washington. They advanced towards the Fort in the usual style of the day with drums beating, colours flying and conspicuous in their red jackets. They were sitting targets as they marched along the narrow track and were ambushed by the opposition who had concealed themselves in the dense forest. The column broke and fled for there was nothing in the Infantry Training Manual, or in their experience, to deal with these circumstances. And so it was that 1000 men, 500 horses together with all the guns and stores were lost. All in all it was a devastating blow to British morale and confirmed to the native Indians they were supporting the best side.

It was this debacle that resulted in the formation of the

60th Regiment of Foot, 'The Royal Americans'. The Earl was determined to change the traditional methods and tactics of battle and to fight like with like. The 60th would abandon the traditional redcoats with lace and gold trimmings and wear backwoods dress and use backwoods methods and would be chiefly employed in bush warfare. To do this there had to be a radical change in outlook and thinking. They broke with tradition and abandoned the premise that troops were just unreasoning cannon fodder and slavishly obedient. The officers cultivated the intelligence of each individual member of the regiment, for they often had to break into small squads or units and it was imperative that NCOs and riflemen used their initiative and resourcefulness.

From the first this special ethos characterized the regimental community of the 60th and this never changed. Their first battle honour, and their revenge, came in November 1758 when the 1st Battalion took a leading role in the capture of Fort Duquesne, the seizure of which opened up the interior of Canada to British expansion. Quebec was taken in 1759 when General Wolfe gave them their regimental motto 'Celer et Audax' (Swift and Bold). The motto has stayed although the name of the Regiment changed several times until 1831 when William IV promulgated the title '60 Foot, The Kings Royal Rifle Corps', and, although since having two queens on the throne, this title has stayed. One interesting point - because of the very nature of their fighting, they never had a Regimental Colour throughout their history.

### No Comment

*Letter to the Times 28/6/98:*

Sir, I have just spent almost an hour putting new castors on my piano so that I can easily move it anywhere. I then discover that by far the best place for it is where it was to start with. However, I have justified my efforts by putting it somewhere less satisfactory.

picked it up and mentioned it on air. The broadcast was heard by an ex-US Army Air Force sergeant who had been stationed over here. Without further ado, he arranged a long weekend visit and arrived in Bridlington on the special train from Kings Cross.

I was working in the town and stayed at the Spa Hotel, an establishment that had enjoyed far better days. I dined in the usual utter silence, relieved only by the muffled clatter of steel on china. The refined peace was shattered by the entry of the ex-sergeant, whose larger-than-life bluntness rather put the wind up several old lady residents. . I remember him asking if the plaice was fresh, it being a fishing port, after all, only to be told by the timid waitress that it was freshly frozen!

After dinner, I joined several thousand people along the seafront. We were all staring out to sea in the gathering gloom anticipating the advertised re-enactment of the sea battle. Suddenly lights appeared in the blackness and revealed the outline of a sailing ship. A similar set of lights appeared nearby and the vessels approached each other. A few rockets were fired from ship to ship until one set of lights disappeared and the other, presumably the victor, sailed away. So ended the evening's entertainment.

Back at the hotel, I was preparing to leave for the next part of the celebrations - a dance at the Spa Pavilion with Glen Miller-type music - when I met the American visitor. Discussing the 'spectacular', he was obviously disappointed, but politely uncritical. However, the night was young and, from my observations during the evening, he seemed to have made the most of his trip, having retained the wartime ability of the Yanks to attract our womenfolk!

I was a guest for the evening of the tourist department and an embarrassed young man from the local authority admitted that he was responsible for the 'sea battle'. The poor chap said it was the best he could do with a typically 'generous' town council budget of just ten pounds. After he had bought the electric light bulbs there wasn't much left for rockets!