



Editorial

Last January the MoD admitted that any tax which had been paid on Disabled Service Pensions should never have been paid.

This month the *Daily Telegraph* revealed that investigations showed that in some cases pensioners who had been deducted tax had not been receiving the full pensions due. The MoD admitted that the original error would cost in the region of £6 million to rectify, but now it was likely to be nearer £30 million.

More than 1,000 people had been found to be affected by this error, but it would take another year before all files on current pensioners could be checked—they were not looking at any cases where the pensioner had died unless families contacted them directly. Major John Perry, who was responsible for showing that the tax was wrongly deducted in the first place, said that many widows would now miss out on any reimbursement. Then a day or so later, the same newspaper published an article entitled “MoD ‘Fob Off’ Claims for Tax refund on Pensions”.

Following the original case, the Veterans’ Minister, Lewis Moonie, admitted that thousands of ex-servicemen were owed millions of pounds; and the Prime Minister himself apologised and stated that all those affected would be re-paid.

The MoD received many inquiries from ex-servicemen, but unfortunately they no longer had the paper work to support their claims and they had to accept the MoD’s assertions that either they did not qualify or that tax had never



A Day at the Races

As reported by Marney Cook

On the 30th June, twenty-eight members and friends turned race-goers boarded a coach at the Conservative Club on a pleasant morning, although it seemed an each-way bet as far as the impending weather went.

A raffle was held on the **outward** journey due to the inclusion of a mystery prize relevant to the race meeting (*and, I feel sure, John Cox did not want the bookies to get at members’ money first! – Ed.*). This innovative idea of Tom’s turned out to be a full £5 bet on the horses, and was won by Mrs Hudson. This and the other generously donated prizes realised £34.

On distributing tickets and information for the day, it was noted that for those going to the Members’ Enclosure there was an enforceable dress code, and no picnics were allowed within the course gates. This caused no problems for the ladies who, as always, were the epitome of elegance; but a little bit of concern about the gentleman who, though quite dashing in informal, lacked the obligatory tie and wore sensible but not prescribed footwear. After some discussion, and even more banter, Stan Snow kindly parted with his “this will get you in anywhere” tie (no less than the 50th Anniversary D-Day tie) and the shoe problem was solved by advice to use the old “Scused boots” ploy.

Early picnics were taken on the coach to conform to the other requirement, mainly, it must be said, by eager consumers. In the event, it seemed that few others took any notice of the requirements and the whole atmosphere was most relaxed and friendly as indeed one would hope on this very special occasion. No problems even for our enclosure members. Was it the

tie? We will never know.

The weather remained overcast but fine. Indoor events at this very good venue included a silent auction and various competitions, but no outdoor displays – probably due to the big-screen presentation of the World Cup final, which preceded the racing.

The parade of the standards was most impressive in this lovely setting. George, as usual, did us proud and it was pleasing to also have with us the Desborough Branch standard bearer and his wife.

The racing was good and there were rumours of considerable fortunes being carried on the return coach. However, those of us who rely heavily on choosing their horses by jockey colours, horses’ names or just plain faith, returned lighter in pocket but joyful in heart.

The rain dutifully held off until the last race and did nothing to dampen the spirits on the return journey in a quiet though far from sombre trip.

Thanks are due to all those who organised the outing and to all the members and friends who participated in a very memorable day. Ω

Exam Questions

Anne Bashore, our member in the USA, sent a list from tests given in Springdale, Arkansas to 16 year old students. Here are a few of them.

Q. Name the four seasons.

A. Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q. How is dew formed?

A. The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q. How can you delay milk going sour?

A. Keep it in the cow.

Anne, were marks being given for humour? Ed.



Dakota FZ2162

Following last month's article about the Dakota that was inaugurated as Gate Guardian at RAF Lyneham, here is the story of the aircraft that originally bore that number.

FZ626 had developed a trimming fault so it was not used for the first two glider drops on the first two days of Market Garden (Sept. 17/18, 1944) but on the 19th, the first resupply operation, it was necessary to get as many Dakotas into the air as possible, so Pilot Officer Len Wilson agreed to take FZ262. His crew were Flt. Sgt. Bert Osborne, second pilot; Flt. Sgt. Les Graydon, navigator; Flt. Sgt. Reg French, wireless operator. The four despatchers were L/Cpl. Grace and drivers Jenkinson, Newth and Dilworth.

They took off from Down Ampney at 12.35 hrs. Their brief was to fly into the dropping zone at 500 ft. at 120 mph in a straight line for two minutes.

Unfortunately, because radio contact was non-existent, they were not advised that the dropping zone had been captured by the Germans and the whole area was ringed by anti-aircraft guns. So when our unarmed planes came in without a fighter escort they were met with a wall of bursting shrapnel and a hail of small arms fire.

Len Wilson fortunately flew through this without being hit, but as he pulled away an anti-aircraft gun at the edge of a wood shot him down.

An eye witness reported that three parachutes

came out of the Dakota and the pilot tried to crash his craft on the gun site which had shot him down in an effort to protect those behind him. But he must have died at the last minute, slumping over the controls, for he veered off to the left and struck a tree, and crashed into a garden, partly demolishing a house.

Four bodies were taken out of the wreckage and buried in the garden; these were Wilson, Osborne, French and Grace. Driver Newth was seriously injured and taken to hospital where he died.

When the war ended the bodies were re-interred at the Airborne Cemetery at Oosterbeek, where it was noted that in the middle of these graves was a gravestone to "An Unknown Airman". Because the bodies from the garden had all been buried together and because the aircrew and despatchers were all known, it could not possibly be an unknown airman. A letter from HQ of the Air Despatch Regiment assured that all the despatchers were killed in action.

This information conflicted with that of the eye witness who said three people had baled out. After some research, it was proved that Drivers Dilworth and Jenkinson were taken prisoners of war, as was Graydon. It was known that Wilson, Osborne and French had been buried in the garden and Newth had died in hospital. So that left only L/Cpl. James Grace, positively identifying the "Unknown Airman". The stone was replaced with one giving the correct inscription.

The Air Despatch units were an arm of the Royal Army Service Corps, which later became the Royal Corps of Transport, and now is part of the Royal Logistics Corps.

been stopped from their payments.

However, one person was in possession of his deceased father's papers, one of which was a "Certificate of Pension Paid and Tax Deducted" issued from the Paymaster General's office. A photograph of this document clearly shows a payment of £999.95 less income tax of £54.00. On making a claim, this person received a letter from the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Office telling him that no refund was due as his father had never paid tax on his pension(!). It went on to add that the blame for all the confusion was due to the media and "misleading" publicity over the affair.

It does highlight just how the establishment treats its ex-heroes.

Surely this is a natural case for the Royal British Legion to take up. But there was noticeable silence from Pall Mall in January when this problem came to light, and, so far, no word from there seems to have been heard in this latest turn of events.

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Annual General Meeting

13th November may seem a long way off, but now really is the time to think about who you want to run the branch next year. Enclosed with this newsletter are notes about the AGM and a form on which to enter nominations for branch officers and committee members.

You must obtain the approval of anyone you nominate. You may nominate yourself.

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Branch News

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to Messrs. Norman Banting, transferring from Portishead, Somerset, Doug McMeeken, ex-chairman of Weymouth Branch and George Seward who is new to the Legion. We hope they will quickly feel at home in the branch and take a full part in its activities.

BADGES. At the August meeting Mrs. Honor Dugdale and Mrs. Margaret Whitehead were presented with their membership badges. Any other member who has not received his/her badge, please contact Membership Secretary, John Standish (0116 240 4170), and if possible attend the September meeting to receive it.

HAIG CUP DISPLAY. As was well reported and pictured in the local press, the Haig Cup is no longer in Mark's wardrobe but is now on show in the Reception area of the HDC offices. We are most grateful to Chief Executive Officer, Mike Wilson for his interest and to the Leics. Museum Service for the loan of the display cabinet.

GEORGE and the QUEEN at ALREWAS
George Fleming had the honour to be invited to be one of the Standard Bearers when MH the Queen visited the National Memorial Arboretum as part of her Jubilee tour.

BETTY HELPS AT COUNTY. In the August County Circular, Betty Ramsay is publicly thanked for helping to run the latest Branch Secretaries' training course.

AUGUST BUFFET. Thanks to Irene Blisset



A Voice from the Past

By Hotspur

It was 7.40 pm on a June evening this year and we were watching Coronation Street.

Norris was listening to some juicy gossip when the phone rang. I do not answer the phone during Coronation Street, which is probably why I seldom get calls at other times. After a brief exchange, my wife said, handing the phone across to me: "Someone looking for you". With some trepidation I said: "Hello, who is that?"

"This is a voice from your distant past," said the voice, "this is Harry Dent".

The picture formed immediately in my mind. Calm, resolute, reliable Harry Dent. Staff Sergeant Harry Dent; Hamilcar glider pilot Harry Dent; last seen approaching the Rhine at 4,500 feet, flying into what I later described as "intense flak". Later to be posted as missing.

His tug, Halifax P-T, had received a direct hit and had exploded. Harry's glider had disappeared into the resulting ball of fire, just 100 yards in front. He had been posted as missing.

I did not recognise his voice, which I suppose was understandable. The last time we had spoken was just

and the Social Team for providing such an appetising final e to the meeting on 14th August

A PRESENTATION. At a brief ceremony at the start of the August meeting, two nurses representing the staff of the Cottage Hospital were presented with a set of flower vases in recognition of the wonderful care shown recently to Sam Shutt and previously to other branch members.

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before 7am on the runway at RAF Woodridge. We had all flown there 2 days previously as our own base at Tarrant Rushton, in Dorset, was too far for the trips to return safely. I liked to check with my other glider pilots before take-off.

Harry told me on the phone that he had managed to release and fly through the flames, before landing some distance from the LZ, and being captured as a PoW. Months later he had been released, and on returning to Tarrant Rushton found that all his personal kit was missing and was very distressed. Demob quickly followed and he lost all contact with the regiment.

He had worked in a bank before the war, and less than a year after demob he was sent abroad to work on their behalf. It was only in 1994, on the 50th anniversary of Arnhem, that he rejoined the fold and became a member of the Glider Pilot Association—and through that eventually found me.

Later, having recovered from the initial shock of hearing this unfamiliar voice from the distant past, I looked through some very old papers of events of these times. I found the record of take-offs for 24th March, 1945, marked "Special Mission", from RAF Woodridge.

Tug A-V, pulling glider 248 (which was mine) had taken-off at 0725+25 secs. Tug P-T, pulling glider 249 (which was Dent's) had been the next to take-off at 0725+50 secs. The return time for this trip was marked DNR – did not return.

And suddenly, for me, all this seemed only a few minutes ago.

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“IT REMINDS ME OF . . .”

A fun game & competition. Bring something to the next meeting which, for you,

evokes some special memory e.g. of a place or event. Write on a postcard what the memory is and from what year. The objects will be placed around the room each with a card, but the wrong card. The game is to correctly match objects and cards.

PUB LUNCH

Sign the clipboard at the Branch meeting or ring Tom Ashmore (MH433108) by 13 Sept. Senior citizens’ menu available.

A CHANCE TO VISIT . . .

the fascinating National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford which covers everything from earliest photography to latest hi-tech wizardry including a 5-storey high screen IMAX cinema. MH Photo Society have invited us to join their coach trip, subject to seats still being available. Cost £18.50 (£17.10 for OAPs). Ring Tom Ashmore MH433108, ASAP.

ANNUAL DINNER

An excellent 4-course meal with complimentary welcome drink, music by Dave Hawke and in the pleasant atmosphere of the MH Golf Club all for £15.50 (discounted to £13.50 for branch members). Book early (last year was a sell-out!). Sign the clipboard or ring Tom Ashmore.



Diary

Reminders for September with some other dates to keep free

- 5 Sep Branch Committee meeting
- 11 Sep Branch Meeting
- 15 Sep Battle of Britain Service St Dionysius Church. Please be seated by 10.30 am
- 17 Sep Lunch @ The Bell, Gumley. 12 noon
- 1 Oct Subscriptions (£11) become due
- 13 Oct NPFT Museum, with MH Photo Society
- 18 Oct Annual Dinner—MH Golf Club
- 26 Oct Poppy Appeal House-to-House collections start
- 2 Nov Branch Remembrance Concert
- 2 Nov de Montfort Festival of Remembrance
- 4 Nov Garden of Remembrance opens
- 10 Nov Remembrance Parade and Service
- 13 Nov Branch AGM

Meetings

Branch meetings are held on the **Second Wednesday** of each month at **7.30 pm** in the downstairs Function Room, Conservative Club Building, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.

The next meeting on 11th September, will be followed by a fun competition, “It reminds me of . . .”

The Branch Committee meets on the **Thursday preceding the monthly Branch meeting in the upstairs lounge of the Conservative Club.**



The Royal British Legion



Reg. Charity 219279

Market Harborough Branch



Founded in 1923
Winner of the Haig Cup 2002

In Touch

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