

## Diary

**16th August** The R N A Bric a Brac Sale on the Charity Stall in the Market.

**12th September** Dance at the Market Harborough Conservative Club from 8 pm to midnight. Tickets £2.50. Kindly organised by David Hawke in aid of our Branch Funds. Ring David on MH 431426

**21st September** Battle of Britain Sunday. Lots of people needed to shake boxes on the 19th & 20th. Ring R.A.F.A. Secretary, Jim Lloyd, on MH 463174 if you can help. There will be coffee in the Settling Rooms on those two days.

**27th September** R.A.F.A. Coffee Mornings

**25th October** ) Harborough Theatre 9.30 to 12

**25th October** County Festival of Remembrance at the de Montfort Hall, Leicester.

**25th October** Northants. Festival of Remembrance with the Black Dyke Mills Band at the Derngate Theatre, Northampton.

**25th October** Centenary Concert by the Harborough Band at St. Dionysius Church, M H.

**8th November** Festival of Remembrance, Royal Albert Hall at 2.30 p.m., and 7 p.m.

**9th November** Remembrance Sunday at Market Harborough.

**11th November** Observing Two Minutes Silence at the War Memorial 11 a.m.

Further details of all the above events are available from the Secretary on M H 431515

Ken Purdy has drawn our attention to Page 682 of the Channel 4 Teletext Service. It gives details of Service Re-unions and names, addresses and telephone numbers of Veterans seeking lost Comrades.

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### Meetings

Regular meetings are held on the **Second Thursday** of each month at 8 pm in the downstairs Function Room in the Conservative Club Building, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.

The next meeting will be on **14th August**. It will be followed by a showing of the video film of the 8th June Ceremonies.

Mr & Mrs F T Ashmore  
9 The Pastures  
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LE16 9EA



Regd. Charity No. 219279

## In Touch

### The Newsletter

for  
Members  
of

**Market Harborough Branch  
The Royal British Legion**

Issue No 8

July, 1997

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## Editor's Page

Welcome to Issue No 8 which contains one or two unusual items which we hope you will find readable. Many thanks to those who have contributed this time. Can we please have more? Unusual is Bill Cotton's article on the Zulu War. "In Touch" does not go out of it's way to educate, but few people would have known that the Royal Navy and Royal Marine Light Infantry were involved in 1879.

A lighted account of a day in a more recent war and two bits of nonsense, for which both Editors guilty, have been included to raise a few smiles, we hope.

The main contribution, however, is from our Chairman who has produced two excellent reports on our June 8th proceedings. It was a great day for our Branch and for members unable to be there, Tom's articles are of great benefit. He has given us a bonus by including photographs of the events. Tom has also produced two copies of a Pictorial Record of the day's ceremonies and one is available on loan if requested. The second copy has been sent to our "Sister Unit" of the American Legion in Toledo.

Finally, our apologies for the late arrival of this issue, we hope you will think it was worth waiting for!

### Obituary

*Sadly we have to report the death  
of two of our fellow members*

*Ron March  
and  
George Spence*

*We will remember them*



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## The Royal Navy's Involvement in the Zulu War

Researched by Bill Cotton

Little is known of the Zulu War, even less is known of the Royal Navy's involvement. After the battle of "Isadhlwana" in January 1879 the news was flashed to London that the Zulu's armed with spears, had defeated the British. HMS Shah was at St Helena where the Captain promptly embarked a company of the 88th and a section 8/7 Battery R.A. from the garrison and set course for Durban (over 3000 miles away), arriving on the 6th March 1879. At the same time HMS Boadicea disembarked a Naval landing party of 228, which, added to the soldiers from the Shah swelled the Naval Brigade to almost 900 men ready to march to the relief of Eshowe, a distance of about 90 miles.

Eshowe is about 40 miles north of Stanger where Shaka, founder of the Zulu nation had been assassinated in 1828 and laid to rest. (I visited this place in 1941).

The column was formed into two divisions. The advanced division under Lt Col Law RA comprised of 350 men of the Naval Brigade. The rear division was under the command of Lt Col Leigh Pemberton of the 3/60 and consisted of 190 Naval personnel and a company of Royal Marine Light Infantry. The column artillery was manned entirely by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

By April 1st the relief column was seen from Eshowe forming into a Laager (defensive camp) on the south bank of the Inyezane river,

near the Zulu kraal of Gingindhloue, which had been bombarded some weeks before by No 1 column.

While the Laager was being constructed it was reported that the Zulu's were massing on the far side of Umibi Hill. There were about 12,000 of them; all the regiments which had taken part in their victory at Isandhlwana.

After a night of steady rain the day dawned misty. The entire Zulu charging "Buffalo" formation closed in at the rear on three sides of the Laager. The British defenders under General Garnet J. Wolseley, opened fire between 300 & 400 yards range. The Zulu's made persistent rushes to get within stabbing range but failed. After about 20 minutes the heart went out of the attack and the Impis crumbled away. No group of warriors got nearer than 20 yards from the square, and bodies counted afterwards totalled over 1000 killed.

In a final battle at Ulandi the defeat of the Zulu nation was complete and the war ended. On the battlefield stands a memorial which reads "IN MEMORY OF THE BRAVE WARRIORS WHO FELL HERE IN 1879 IN DEFENCE OF THE OLD ZULU ORDER".

I had a great uncle who was at Ulandi; he served in the Warwickshire Regiment.

*In the early 19th century under Shaka, the Zulu's built up an extensive and militaristic kingdom in Natal, displacing other peoples of southern Africa. Zululand became part of the British colony of Natal 1897.*

## Branch News

### The Dedication Ceremony.

Judging by the letters of congratulation and other very favourable comments received, all those who were involved on 8th June, can take pride in their part of the proceedings. It was an honour for the Branch that the occasion was attended by so many distinguished guests, by the Standards and members of many other Legion branches and by the local RNA and RAFA branches. The ATC Band was magnificent and the smartness of the ACF and ATC Cadets who acted as Escorts to the Colours was exemplary. Special mention must be made of the enthusiastic support and co-operation of the local Police, which contributed so much to the success of the occasion

The dignified church service, led by our Chaplain, Rev. Chris Moody was truly inter-denominational and the sounding of the Last Post and Reveille by members of the Harborough Band, very moving.

A fairly unusual feature of our Ceremony was the Trooping of the New Standard after its Dedication and a Review of the Parade prior to a March Past

### The Twinning Ceremony

At a simple Ceremony during the Reception after the Dedication, a Joint Declaration was signed by which Market Harborough Branch of The Royal British Legion and the Conn Weissenberger Post #587, of the American Legion in Toledo, Ohio, became "Sister Units"

“in honour, respect and comradeship”. It was indeed fortunate that a member of the Toledo Post would be in the UK on 8th June, could attend the Dedication and could be their representative at the Twinning Ceremony.

### Market Harborough Carnival

The result of months of “behind the scenes” activity by George Fleming was revealed on Saturday, 14th June when The Royal British Legion Float joined the Carnival procession. It featured the famous Kitchener “pointing finger” exhorting ex National Service people to join the Legion. To emphasise that we must also attract younger people, the two ACF Cadets who were Escorts to the New Standard on 8th June were on the Float (still very smart).

Getting very wet, the volunteers manning our stalls on the field, managed to persuade members of the public to buy just over £100 worth of Tombola tickets and items for sale. The weather was not conducive to recruiting but one man said he was likely to join the Branch when he leaves the Army late this year.

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Page 3

After eating our sandwiches, we walked along on that sunny afternoon, over the dunes and past the village of Vers-sur-Mer, to a large field where we made bivouacs with our ground sheets. Tea was made on a little gadget obtained from the Army & Navy Stores and heated with a solid fuel tablet. As dusk approached, we stood drinking our home-made brew and we all waved as a plane flew overhead. The plane turned and started to drop presents for us, but unfortunately, some of the boys were hit by the presents and were badly injured. “I bet he’s from Birstall as well”, said George.

It had been a long, tiring, but exciting day. We hadn’t built any sand castles or dug holes in the sand, there just hadn’t been time. We weren’t sure just when or how we would get home, so we crawled into our makeshift bivouacs and tried to get some sleep.



When was this?”, you may ask.

It was Sunday, 18th June, 1944

*Editor.*

*We are grateful to Kenneth West, a well known local author, for this light-hearted recollection of his Normandy landing on D-Day +12.*

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## Memories

by Hotspur

In June 1940 I became a member of a “Flying Column”. This consisted of around 30 soldiers “Standing To” one hour either side of dusk and again an hour either side of dawn, with a “charabanc” alongside. This vehicle was the “flying part” of the set-up. We “stood to” on our own parade ground, ready to embus and drive off to meet the invading Germans. Most of us had a Lee Enfield rifle and 5 rounds of ammo. This was how England was defended in those days.

After about 3 weeks of this routine and no sign of the enemy, we were moved to the nearest coast, to a small town called Frinton. All the inhabitants had been evacuated so it was like a ghost town.

We were billeted in the local Primary School, which was about 300 yards from the beach, and no doubt our presence at the Front deterred Hitler from his evil intent. Everything in the school was very small to suit the small pupils - small chairs, small tables, and of course small toilets. Imagine the thoughts of an 18 year old Virgin Soldier who having safely negotiated the difficulty of settling on the small seat saw in large letters on the door facing him

**IF YOU NEED A MISTRESS  
RING THE BELL**

No wonder Hitler did not invade!

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## Free Trip to France

by Kenneth J West

On the 20th Twinning visit to Offranville, I was sitting in the luxury lounge of the Brittany Ferries Duc de Normandie and lulled into a sense of contemplation by the gentle dip and sway of the boat as she made her way steadily to OUISTREHAM, my thoughts turned to my first trip to France in the days of my youth.

I was camping with my pal George on the outskirts of Southampton, when we were invited to go on a trip to France with all expenses paid. Though warned by our parents never to accept gifts from strangers, we felt that this was an invitation which we could not refuse. So with sandwiches in our knap-sacks and our spades carefully tucked into our belts, we climbed up the gang-way.



At the top, we were met by a man in a very smart uniform and blue peaked cap, whereupon my pal George proffered a half-crown coin and asked politely for "One return please". Somewhat taken aback, the man in the peaked cap replied, "I'm sorry sonny, but there aren't any return tickets today" or words to that effect!!

In the Cafeteria we each received a metal tray with indentations, into which were served Soup, Meat, potato, Vegetables and pudding.

With the rolling motion of the ship, I remarked that the contents might stray. "Don't worry Bud", said an American voice, "Get it down you - it will all get mixed up inside, anyway".

By the time we got up on deck again, we could see the coastline of France and all around us could be seen boats and ships of all shapes and sizes. There seemed to be some sort of celebration going on, with rockets and fireworks going off in profusion.



Around some of the ships we could see large splashes. "Looks like someone over there is 'Yakking duckies in the cut'", said George, using Thurmaston slang for 'throwing stones in the water'.

This was before the days of Roll-on-Roll-off Ferries, so with childhood memories of building sand castles and digging in the sand at Skeggy and Mablethorpe, we clambered over the side and down the nets dangling from the rails, into a small boat and set off for the shore. As we neared the water's edge we were encouraged to paddle ashore and wait at the sand dunes. Surprisingly, the water was quite warm as we paddled our way up to the dunes. But still the people on the other side of the dunes were 'Yakking duckies', some landing in the sand beside us. "That lot must come from Birstall", said George rather disgustedly.

## New Members

We welcome three new members who joined us in early July, Mr A Adams, Mr R England and Mr A Taylor. We look forward to seeing them at future meetings and hope that they will take a full part in the activities of the Branch.

## 8th June Video

The film referred to on Page 5 makes quite a good record of the Ceremonies and captures much of the atmosphere of the occasion. It runs for about 35 minutes. Copies can be supplied at £4 each + P&P. Contact the Editor.

## Service Retirement Pensions

New information is available on, (1) the possible effect on ones Service pension when reaching National retirement age and (2) "Family Pension" paid to ones spouse after your death. Contact Peter Wilson on MH 464585 for details.

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## A Day to Remember

For those who took part in the two historic Ceremonies, Sunday, 8th June was truly memorable. That concerned with the Dedication of the New Standard was colourful, dignified, sometimes moving and with a touch of "Pomp & Circumstance". The signing Ceremony to mark the "twinning" with our "Sister Unit" of the American Legion in Ohio was unique so creating a feeling that the Branch had achieved a "First".

Some of the many amateur and professional photographs taken that afternoon, have been mounted and annotated to provide, in book form, a permanent record of the events. Also, a video film was made showing excerpts of the two Ceremonies. We are indebted to amateur cameraman, Mr. Frank Pridmore for shooting, editing and making copies of the film.

The following pictorial account of the occasion is produced from small monochrome versions of some of the original colour photographs.



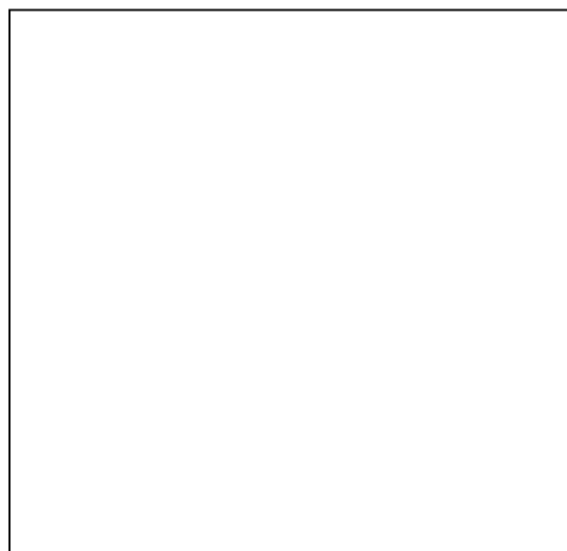
Marching to the Church

## The Twinning.

### Signing the Joint Declaration



Mr. Barry Bashore signs on behalf of  
Toledo Post #587



Secretary, Dick Fulford & Chairman, Tom  
Ashmore  
sign for Market Harborough Branch

## Page 12 Coming of Age

### By Hon Sec

I don't think it is generally known  
That when one reaches that crucial milestone  
Of four score years since date of birth  
(That's 80 years upon this earth)  
That a grateful Government Ministry  
Increases ones pensh by 25p.

25P

So when I went to collect my new book  
I was very surprised to see that wry look  
Of Michael, my favourite Pension man  
Who said, "Your new book records a span  
Of 80 years: which gives qualification  
For gratitude from a thoughtful Nation.  
So here's your gift of 25p.  
Do be careful and spend it wisely."

25P

Off I went, deep in thought  
How shall I spend it? So I sought  
Advice from the Legion's money man.  
"George" I said, "Will you agree  
To accept my rise of 25p  
For the Welfare fund of your organisation?  
It's a gift I've received from a grateful Nation."

25P

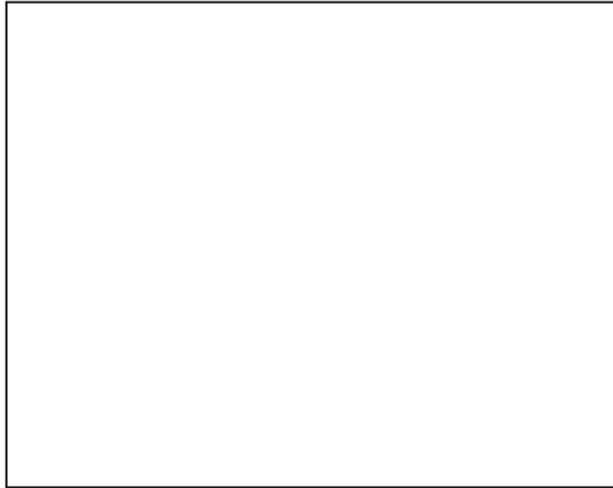
But George our Treas is not always kindlee  
For he hath served in the Queen's armee  
He said, "That sum is derisory,  
It doesn't amount to 25p,  
'Cos the tax man will need to have his share  
So all you will have is 20p spare.  
With a sum of that nature, may I suggest  
That you stick it somewhere under your vest!"

25P

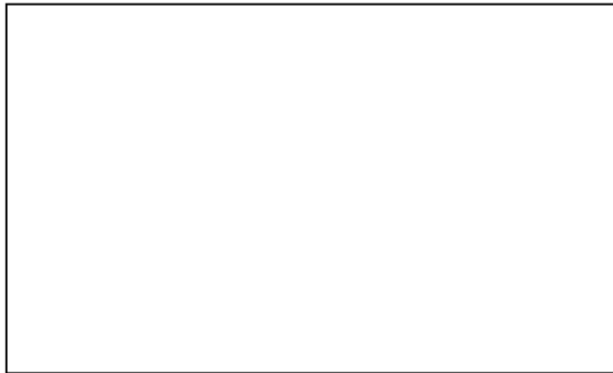
So back I went to my Pension bloke,  
To ask his advice; and with a croak,  
He said, "I agree it's now just 20p  
So may I suggest you spend it wisely  
on a 2nd class stamp which I can sell thee  
To send a Thank You card to the Ministry!"

25P

## The Review

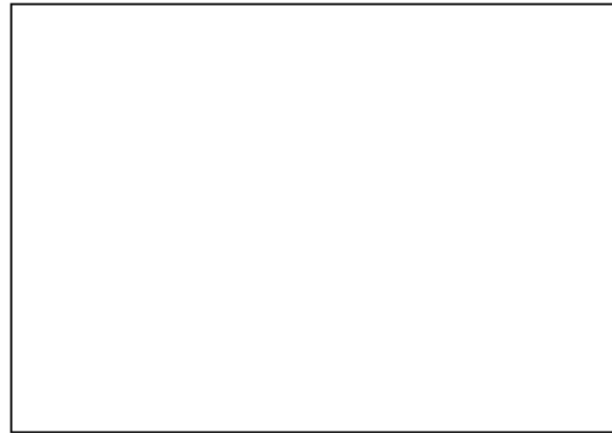


Deputy Lieutenant, Col. R G Wilkes, accompanied by the Branch Chairman, "Reviews" the assembled company by walking through the ranks and "having a few words" with a few individuals.



The Salute is taken by Deputy Lieutenant Col. R G Wilkes, with Cllr. Ken Day, the Chairman of the Harborough District Council, & Senior County RBL Officers

## Page 10 Homage - The Wreath Laying

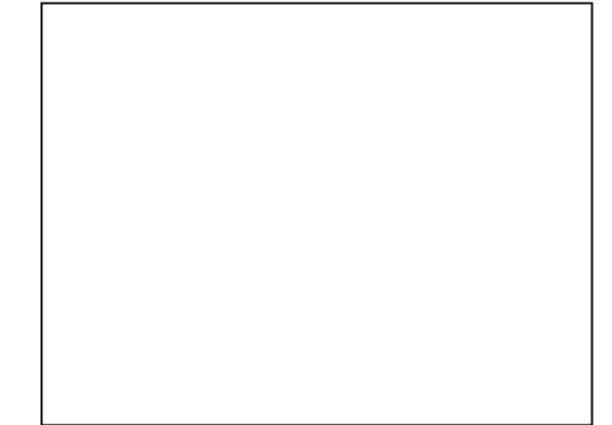


To conclude a Ceremony primarily concerned with those who served in the Forces of the Crown and who survived, the Branch pays homage to all those who did not return.

Our Wreath is laid on the 1914 - 1918 War Memorial by Mr. Robert Cramp, a veteran of that War.

As a mark of respect by our Sister Unit of the American Legion, the Conn Weissenberger Post, in Toledo, Ohio, their member Mr. Barry Bashore, also lays a wreath.

## Page 11 At the Church

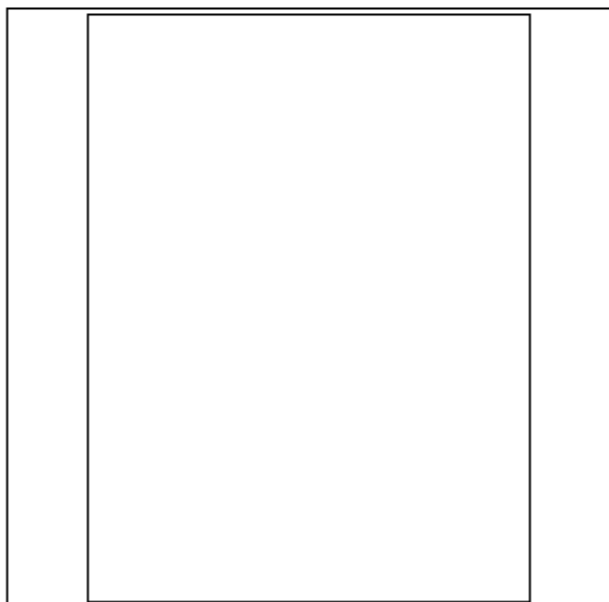


Because Market Harborough Parish Church has no church yard and stands close to the road, the standards formed two curved ranks flanking the entrance instead of the usual two parallel ranks. Branch Standard Bearer, George Fleming with the furred new standard, is seen at the extreme left.

The Parade members, led by the wheel chairs, pass between the standards into the church.

## The Church Service

The Choir and the Clergy move down the aisle as the Processional hymn is sung. They are followed by the standards. The Queens Colour and the County Standard take their places by the pulpit and the Women's Section County standard stands opposite. The other standards occupy aisle-side seats in pews behind the first four rows which were reserved for named guests.



During the second hymn, the old standard is slow marched to the Chancel where the Rector, Rev. Chris Moody, who is also the Branch Chaplain, accepts it for safe keeping. Next, the new standard, escorted by two ACF Cadets, is slow marched to the Chancel where the Chaplain unfurls and dedicates it and lays it on the altar. It remains there until the Standard Bearer returns to receive it after the Act of Remembrance and another hymn. After the National Anthem and the Blessing, the service ends with the singing of the Recessional hymn as Choir, Clergy and

standards move in procession to the back of the church.

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## Preparing to Troop the Colour



Having left the Church, those taking part in the Parade, formed up in Church Square and led by the band, marched up Church Street, turned left and left again into the High Street. The Deputy Lieutenant, Council Chairman and Senior Legion officers, seen on the right of the picture, assembled to witness the proceedings.

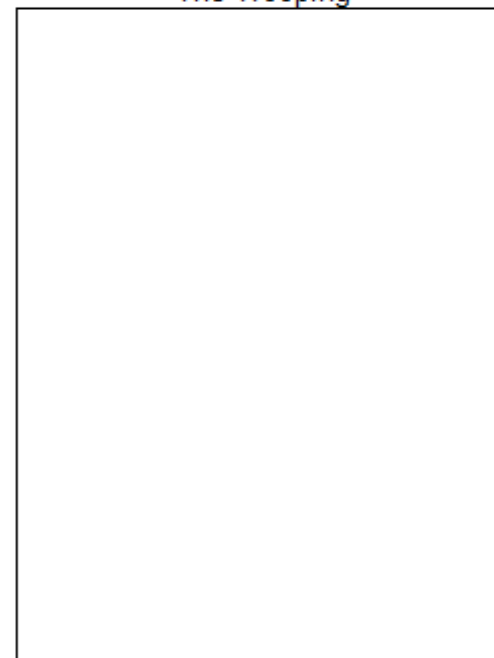


Mr. George Fleming, stands with the New Standard as the visiting Standards dip in salute.

Branch members and other ex-service guests continue the two ranks between which the New Standard will be carried in the traditional "Trooping of the Colour" before all those whose Standard it is.

Page 8

## The Trooping



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