

New Responsibilities

Social Activities & Fund-raising (except Poppy Appeal)

Tom Jeacock Phone MH 466829

These duties are in addition to those of Vice Chairman

Outings

John Cox Phone MH 434983

This duty is a specific Social Activity requiring liaison with Tom Jeacock

Meetings Steward

Jim O'Brien

For your Diary

27th April . Please support a team of Charity walkers passing through the district on its way from Bristol to Stamford. It is in aid of the Poppy Appeal. Further details will be given in the local papers.

16th May A Dinner organised by Husbands Bosworth Branch to which you are invited.

8th June The Dedication of the new Branch Standard.

18th July. Royal Tournament, Royal British Legion night. Tickets £5 to £25.

20th July. A concert by the Central Band of the Royal British Legion, presented by Quorn Branch.

25th October. Our County Festival of Remembrance at the De Montfort Hall.

8th November Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall

Ring the Secretary on M H 431515 for details of any of the above.

Nudge, Nudge.....

It was very gratifying to see such a good turnout for our February meeting - quite the best for some considerable time. Whilst it is encouraging to see some "fresh" or "fresher" faces, nevertheless the fact remains that less than half the membership attend. Why?

Stairs a problem?---- Meetings are now on the Ground Floor

No transport?---- We'll try to fix a lift-Ring MH 431515

Meetings dull? Come or write to suggest changes

Lack of comradeship? Say how it should be encouraged

Unsuitable dates? What should they be?

This is your Branch. Help us improve it.

See you soon? You will be very WELCOME

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 **10th April**. We hope that you will be able to attend and stay for "sandwiches & chat"



Regd. Charity No. 219279

In Touch

The Newsletter
for
Members
of

Market Harborough Branch
The Royal British Legion

Issue No.6

March, 1997

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Editorial

We are delighted to have received a further "Letter to the Editor" and two interesting articles on Service life. Please continue to send in your contributions. Also in this issue we give you another glimpse of the history of the Branch, the story of a WW1 VC with local connections, and why the Branch is becoming known in the USA. In our next issue we hope to have something from "down under". Welcome home Betty & Tom Jeacock! Sharpen your pencils and tell us some of your experiences in Australia & New Zealand.

Someone Else

The following appeared as an Obituary in the County Circular for May/June 1993.

We were saddened to learn of the death of one of the Committee's most valuable members - "Someone Else". Someone Else had been with the Committee from the beginning, and did far more than the normal person's share of work.

Whenever there was a job to do, a helping hand needed, or just an ear required, these words were on everybody's lips, "Let Someone Else do it". Whenever there was need for a volunteer everyone just assumed that Someone Else would do it.

Someone Else was a wonderful person, sometimes appearing Superhuman. But a person can only do so much. Were the truth known, everyone expected too much from **SOMEONE ELSE.**



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Benevolence Pre-war

The following is taken from an article by Paul Robinson called "The Market Harborough British Legion Club". It appeared in the proceedings of the Market Harborough Historical Society to whom we are grateful for permission to reproduce it here.

The economic slump of 1921 had rendered an estimated 250,000 ex-servicemen unemployed. To deal with the cases of distress this produced, the British Legion established the United Relief fund and the Unity Relief Fund. In Market Harborough the Legion branch formed a Relief Committee, under the early chairmanship of Mr Archer and Mr Smith, to assist Legion members and local ex-servicemen who found themselves in financial difficulties. The Relief Committee of 11 members, plus two nominations from the Women's Section, the Old Contemptibles and the Foxton sub-branch, would meet on the first Monday of each month to discuss eligible cases for help. Like the General Committee, they met at the various locations of the Adult School, the Ambulance Hall, the Old Grammar School, 67 High Street, the Coventry Road Infants School and Anholme House (Abbey Street).

The criterion for gaining benefits was being a local ex-servicemen or his widow or child. There was no necessity to be an actual Legion member to receive help. So, by 1932, at least 90 per cent of those receiving assistance from the Market Harborough branch were not members of the Legion. Direct assistance from the branch was given through several different schemes. These included varying amounts of

cash relief given over a set number of weeks, as goods vouchers and food tickets redeemable at local stores, fuel supplies (such as coal) and Christmas gift parcels. Fuel and gift parcels were given especially to widows and children of ex-servicemen. By 1933 the Relief Secretary was empowered to use benevolent funds to help any ex-servicemen passing through the town. In addition the Relief Secretary acted as an intermediary between local ex-servicemen and the Council's Public Assistance Board over problems of state assistance. Funds were also used by the Women's Section to organise outings and parties for the children of local ex-servicemen.

This local benevolent work was partly financed by the national Poppy Day appeals, for men who had served in the 1914-18 war and the United Service Fund for other ex-servicemen. But the majority of the Market Harborough relief finances came from a general fund that placed moneys into the branch's benevolent fund. Contributions to this were produced by the club's social fund-raising events such as annual dinners, dances, shooting or darts competitions like the Lady Zia Werhner Cup and cricket matches. Other fund raisers used were concerts, raffles and whist drives. Added to these finances was the charity work done on behalf of the town's ex-serviceman and their families by the likes of Legion Chairman Captain Charles R Knighton before his death in 1937.

□

From Meetings you may have Missed

Advance arrangements are already well in hand for the Dedication of the New Standard on 8th June. Twenty five invitations have been sent to County and Local Dignitaries and so far we are pleased to have had acceptances from the Deputy Lieutenant (Colonel Wilkes), the County President (Lt. Col. Roffey), the County President of the RBL Women's Section (Lady Martin) and the County Chairman (Mr A. Griffith). A sub-committee of four has been formed to plan the Ceremony.

John Cox has taken on the responsibility of organising coach trips in 1997. His proposed outings are to Cosford Museum, Gloucester Docks, Middle Wallop Museum and Duxford Air Show. For more information or to make suggestions for other venues, ring John on M H 434983.

At the February meeting we welcomed a new member, Mr Cooper. Two members did not renew their subscriptions, (compared with 11 last year) so the total membership now stands at 86. This is encouraging but we do need more younger people.

When the Lutterworth Branch visited Belgium recently they were supported by the Market Harborough ACF Band. They took part in the moving ceremony at the Menin Gate where they kindly laid a wreath on behalf of our branch. A letter of thanks and congratulation has been sent to the Squadron's commanding officer.

More news on page 8.

An American Connection

by Tom Ashmore

A few weeks ago I received an e-mail message from someone in the USA who was trying to trace a cousin in Leicestershire. He had come across my name amongst the comparatively few from this county who subscribe to the same network that he does. He saw in the network Directory that I had listed woodwork amongst my interests and as that was a hobby of his, he wrote to me on that subject.



Curiosity made me look in the Directory for his details and there I found that he was a member of the American Legion, an ex-Service organisation with very similar ideals to those of the Royal British Legion. Subsequent exchanges of messages have shown that involvement in our respective Legions has superceded woodwork! He is Vice Commander of his Post (I think we would equate that to Branch vice chairman) and holds positions at County, State and National levels. His 15 years of military service was with the US Air Force with which he did two tours in this country. His mother's sister happens to live in Gumley!

He is very keen that our Branch should have some official link with his Post and talks about us being "sister units". They already have a sister Post in the Canadian Legion. My own view is that a such an arrangement would be highly beneficial to us. At the very least, we

The Modern Soldier

I'm 24726540 PTE Marriott A.W. to you old sweats, one of the Branch's younger members. I started service life as a boy soldier at Chepstow as an apprentice in the Royal Engineers. Now I'm a foot slogger in Recci Platoon, HQ Company, 7 Royal Anglian Territorial Army.

The humour in the Army is no different from what it was 50 years ago (or 80 years ago for the benefit of Mr Cramp!).

My story starts on the final exercise as a boy soldier ready to become a trained soldier (whatever that may be!). I'm in the Brecon Beacons, an area used by the SAS, PARA's and sheep. It is always wet and cold, except on Mondays when it is cold and wet. I'm tasked with the job of the "Thunderbox" and as you are all



aware anything can happen with such things. Armed with webbing, tin hat, rifle, shovel and a blueprint of a hole (or as the Sergeant called it "an ole") 2' x 2' x 4', I look around the thousands of acres for a suitable site! Having found a plot to my liking I set to work, taking as long as possible,



because anything is better than digging a 4 man battle trench with 2 sleeping bags, overhead cover, patio & indoor swimming pool! Having dug the "ole" I decide to christen it, having first checked that nobody is about. I carry on but after a while I hear a little cheer; I look about, I see miles >>



An Old War Horse

by Bill Cotton

Having read recently that the Royal Yacht had steamed a million miles in her life of 40 years or so, I reminded myself of a ship in which I served during World War II, HMS Faulknor.



She was built in 1936 as a flotilla leader, one of the first ships to be built for that purpose. From the outbreak of war in 1939 until July 1943 she had steamed over 250,000 miles without a major breakdown, thus saying a lot for British shipbuilding. The Faulknor escorted convoys to Russia & Malta, did covering work for the landings in North Africa and other landings in the Med. On D Day she was placed at the disposal of Monty and was called Monty's Taxi. After further duties in the Atlantic she took the initial surrender of the Channel Islands. In 1945 she was laid up in the River Dart. On her last voyage from Plymouth to Dartmouth she made 36 knots; good going for an old War Horse who never let the Navy down. □

Continued from p 10

and miles of training area, sheep and nothing else. The cheers get a little louder but I still see little as before, but the cheers are getting very loud, so I look behind me and about 250 yards away is another trench housing some of my best mates who are cheering and waving their arms at the sight of my white backside!

Ed: *To avoid digging - Andrew Marriott should have joined the Royal Navy where built in "Thunderboxes" are provided. Only the name is different; the Navy calls them Heads".*

Our Branch has been accepted for membership of the South Leicestershire Council for Voluntary Services, whose many clerical & other facilities are now available to us.

The War Graves Pilgrimage Programme for 1997 has been issued and lists some 30 venues to be visited. Note that War widows may be eligible for substantial help towards the cost.

The Royal British Legion Annual Report for 1996 makes very interesting reading and may be borrowed from the Secretary.

RBL Headquarters are anxious to get as many tax paying members as possible to covenant their Annual Subscriptions. All that is involved is the completion of a simple Deed of Covenant (available from the Treasurer- MH 462711). The Legion then gains an extra 20% or more. And it costs you nothing!!

An international organisation has been formed known as "Friends of War Memorials" whose aim is to protect and preserve British War Memorials throughout the world, many of which are not being properly looked after. The founder is Ian Davidson and the Queen Mother, the Prime Minister and Countess Mountbatten of Burma are backing the scheme.

The Secretary (M H 431515) has details of all the above.

Congratulations to the Harborough Band, with which our Branch has always had a close liaison, and which will be 100 years old on 11th May.

The County Conference

Twice a year, a meeting is held of representatives of each Branch in the County. The January meeting is really an AGM at which addresses are given by senior County officials and an invited guest speaker; County Officers and Committee members are elected, and motions put by delegates are discussed and voted on. In July, an "Open Forum" type of meeting is held when topics of interest can be discussed less formally.

Your representatives at the January Conference were Tom Ashmore & John Sutton. They supported motions calling for simplifying the reporting of Branch accounts, deploring the failure of HQ to respond promptly to correspondence, and objecting to HQ organised events which could jeopardise Poppy Appeal fund-raising.

Points of interest from the various speakers included the likely eventual amalgamation of the Women's Section with the main body of the RBA, great concern that many more members are voluntarily leaving the Legion than are joining but satisfaction that more younger people are joining. It was also said that the Charity Commissioners accept that membership recruitment and retention costs are a legitimate expense in running a charity. (The implications of this at Branch level have yet to be established).

Contact was made with the County Recruiting and Youth Officers & the County Field Officer, all of whom would be willing to talk at branch meetings and/or give advice concerning their respective areas of responsibility.

could get good local publicity and so further our efforts to raise the profile of the Branch. It would be most surprising if we could not pick up useful ideas from their experience and it would be nice to think that they could learn something from us.

Your Committee approved the idea of a link and it was supported by the members at the February Branch meeting. At their corresponding meeting, the Americans unanimously approved that our branch in Market Harborough and their Post in Toledo, Ohio become Sister Units. HQ have approved, saying, "...this proposed relationship is an initiative which should be supported." Details are now being worked out with Toledo.

News of the proposal has been circulated through an Internet based communications network of about 150 American Legion members and has aroused great interest. From messages on the network I found that the Poppy is also of great significance to them, so I have sent two articles which appeared in the September issue of *In Touch*: "The Poppy Factory" and Peter Wilson's "The Poppy Appeal Organiser".

Internet enthusiasts in a number of RBL Branches including some overseas, are also in touch with one another, with the American Legion and the Royal Canadian Legion. This international connection is all very interesting and intriguing, but I firmly believe that through greater knowledge and mutual understanding, there are far more valuable benefits to be gained than that of just keeping your Chairman entertained!

For Valour
by Hon . Sec.

Nevill Holt, a part of Medbourne, is within our Branch's area. When visiting the school there recently I noticed among names of Old Boys who served in the First World War that of T.H.B. MAUFE V.C. Further research led me to the school's Second World War Memorial Gates and the same name appeared among those who were killed 1939 -1945.

Having contacted a previous Headmaster I was given further information as follows:

"Thomas Harold Broadbent MAUFE was at school from January 1907 until 1912 when he went to Uppingham & then joined the Royal Garrison Artillery when 18 years of age. I have no details of how he won the V.C. but I know he went to Clare College, Cambridge after the war, and graduated. He was accidentally killed on Home Guard exercises in March 1942." (at the age of 43.)

As I was curious about how he won this coveted award, I investigated further and the following was eventually sent me from the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association:-

"MAUFE, Thomas Harold Broadbent, Second Lieut (later Captain) served in the European War and was awarded the Victoria Cross when just 19 years of age. The London Gazette dated 2nd August 1917 announced

"T.H.B. Maufe, Second Lieut., R.G.A. For most conspicuous bravery and initiative on 4 June 1917 at Feuchy, France. Under intense artillery fire this officer on his own initiative repaired, unaided, the telephone line between the forward and rear positions, thereby enabling his battery to immediately open fire on the enemy. Second Lieut. Maufe further saved what might have proved a most disastrous occurrence by extinguishing a fire in an advanced ammunition dump, caused by a heavy explosion, regardless of the risk he ran from the effects of gas shells which he knew were in the dump. By this great promptitude, resource and entire disregard of his own personal safety, he set an exceptionally fine example to all ranks."

His memorial is in Ilkley Cemetery, Yorkshire, his home town.



The Victoria Cross is the highest British decoration for valour and is awarded for conspicuous bravery in wartime. It was instituted on Jan. 29, 1856, by Queen Victoria and made retroactive to 1854, the period of the Crimean War. The first Victoria Crosses were presented on June 26, 1857. The earliest ones were cast from Russian guns captured in the Crimean War. The award was from the beginning open to all ranks of all armed services. The right to receive the Victoria Cross was extended to Indian soldiers in 1911. It has also been won by citizens of other Commonwealth nations.

The medal is bronze, 4cm across and has a crimson ribbon.

Page 6
Memories.
By Hotspur.

Robbie looked over the side of the ship and thought of home. He had been at sea for two days, part of an escort to 150 German Officers captured in the desert and being taken from Alexandria to Algeria to be handed over to the American Army.

The ship's previous load had been coal so it was in a very poor state when the parties went on board. However, the Germans were highly disciplined even in captivity and in return for being allowed up on the starboard deck during daylight hours they had hosed down the entire ship until it was as clean as a new pin.

It was about 1600 hrs on the second day at sea when a colleague joined Robbie to check that all was in order on that quarter of the deck, and after a few minutes discussion he moved on. It was then that a young German Officer who had been standing a few feet away approached Robbie, saluted and asked "Excuse me did that soldier call you Robbie?" Puzzled, Robbie nodded. "Is your name Robson?", the German asked, and Robbie, now very alert and interested, again nodded. "Do you come from Altringham near Manchester?", had Robbie holding on to the side rail. "Yes, I do" he answered quickly but the German had not finished. "Arkwright Street" he asked in a confident tone, adding "57?". Before Robbie could recover the young German Officer held out his hand. "I am Helmut-your Pen Pal in Germany since 1937."