



"SANDBAG"
WINCANTON AND DISTRICT
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER
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NEWS FROM THE BRANCH

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**February/
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2019**

Next is Coffee Morning 16th March at the Memorial Hall 10 a.m. until noon

Branch member wins national competition

It is not often that we here of winners of large competitions that we know but we have just heard that our members Mike and Anne Rowlands have won the autumn competition featured in the national Legion magazine.

Mike & Anne plus 2 invited guests of their choice have won a tour around the Emma Bridgewater pottery factory in Stoke on Trent - in the heart of the Potteries area. They will be treated to a tour of the pottery factory including demonstrations of pottery making and painting, they will also get an opportunity to paint their own pottery. The group of four will be treated to lunch and afternoon tea, with Danish and scones. The Emma Bridgewater factory is famous for their cream coloured earthenware pottery and is situated in a restored Victorian building on the banks of the Caldon Canal at Stoke on Trent.

Mike and Anne hope to take their prize in the Spring and promise to update us about their visit, we do hope they have a wonderful day out.

Sorry we had to cancel the Quiz

Well it was fate that we chose the very evening when the only significant snow occurred in Wincanton this year. It was obvious we had to cancel but we have set another date now which is **5th April and is in the stables at the Dolphin Inn starting at 7 p.m.** The format is the same as previously suggested and cost £3 each person with teams of four people but a maximum up to six if necessary.

Please come along the last two quizzes have been great fun. It is in order to turn up and pay at the door but it would be helpful if you could let me know if you can come to enable planning.

Wincanton gets own Army Cadet unit

We are very pleased to hear that Wincanton has got an Army Cadet unit, which is based at King Arthur's School. As members know, we are very keen to be associated with youth organisations and we have made contact with the new unit. We do hope we can arrange a formal affiliation with the cadets and work together as we do with our other cadet unit, the Sea Cadets of TS Mantle VC based at Yeovilton.

If you have know of young people wishing to join the unit, they meet on Wednesday evenings at King Arthur's School from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. and they can just turn up on the evening.

There are details on the internet at armycadets.com/somersetacf

Days out from Wincanton

Some years ago I registered Wincanton RBL branch as a group member in the South Somerset Community Transport scheme (CAT Bus) and over the years we have used membership as an opportunity to provide transport not only on some of our regular days out but also we have used the scheme to get members to other branch events. Members may also be members of the CAT bus scheme but if not perhaps you should consider it. As well as providing economical transport to hospitals, dentists and doctors surgeries the scheme also provides regular transport for shopping trips to Morrison's and Lidl. Recently introduced on a CAT bus are weekly trips to other local towns every Wednesday which certainly sound interesting include Frome (£6) Gillingham & Shaftesbury (£5) and Dorchester (£7) and there is a new bi- monthly trip to Warmister - all prices are quoted at the Council bus pass rate and if you do not have a Council bus pass the price is double. For information and booking telephone 01963-33864 if you are not a member lifetime membership is £10.

Lt. Col Ian Feild MC

I mentioned recently in Sandbag what a privilege it has been to meet such fine people whilst performing roles at Wincanton RBL. One person whom I cannot forget was Ian Feild a member who died 10 years ago. The word “gentleman” sums up Ian perfectly, a man one looks up to in life and respects - brave, smart and every bit a “soldier”.

Five generations of his mother’s family served as soldiers and from an early age he made it his ambition to follow his forebears into the army. He was commissioned into the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry, the first regular officer since the Second World War. In 1953 Ian was posted to a staff appointment at HQ East Africa. With no details of his work one might assume that he sat in some pleasant office, a fan gently revolving overhead waiting to cross over to the mess for a protracted lunch. The fact was however, that he was engaged in intelligence work of the most dangerous sort which was to win him the Military Cross. The following is his Military Cross citation which sums every up precisely :-

Beginning with nothing in August 1953, Captain Feild has built up an intelligence organisation second to none in Kenya. He has achieved this by imagination, organising ability and untiring energy. He has worked for long periods both day and night. Through the information obtained by his organisation and his willingness to spend long hours on patrol, he has been largely responsible for breaking up of the Mau Mau gangs around Fort Hall. In March 1955, this officer led a mixed European and African police patrol deep into Mount Kenya forest. The patrol, including Captain Feild, were disguised as Mau Mau gangsters to the last detail. Superbly led by Captain Feild, thanks to his excellent disguise, the patrol succeeded in entering the Mau Mau camp without detection although the sentries were in full view some 40 yards away. A meeting was being held within the camp and the European part of the patrol was able to advance to within 10 yards of the meeting before opening fire, killing three Mau Mau and severely wounding six others as well as capturing a quantity of arms, ammunition and documents. The hazards of an Operation of this kind in broad daylight are obviously immense and success depended largely upon iron nerve, courage and coolness of the leader. The slightest mistake by his small force would have meant instant death for all concerned. The above is only one example of many hazardous Operations involving impersonation, which Captain Feild has carried out in the past. His example and high sense of duty combined with cool courage both day and night have been an inspiration to security forces and are truly remarkable for an officer of his years”.

It has been wondered how Ian, with his red hair, pale skin and blue eyes, managed to pass himself off as a Mau Mau man. It would appear that Ian achieved his disguise which enabled him to enter the Mau Mau camp by wearing a wig, darkening his skin and putting in eye drops which made his eyes change colour

On his return from Africa Ian was posted as an instructor to Sandhurst and later carried out most of the planning relating to the amalgamation of the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry and the Somerset Light Infantry. He was proud of the DCLI and later the Somerset & Cornwall Light Infantry . He commanded a company of the SCLI in Berlin, the UK and Aden. His last appointment was as Commander Salisbury Plain Training Area.

He was Adjutant with the 1st Battalion DCLI in Osnabruck in 1958 and being a keen horseman was appointed Parade Adjutant for the Queen’s Birthday Parade in Berlin. He also commanded a Company of the SCLI Aden in 1966.

A truly remarkable man.



Poppy Appeal 2019

I received an email from Dawn asking me to put this item in Sandbag, which I am repeating below. "We had a shortage of people volunteering to do shifts at Morrison's during last years Poppy Appeal which left myself and Georgina covering most days. Unfortunately I will not be able to do two weeks at Morrison's this year so I really need more volunteers to cover between Saturday 26th October and Saturday 9th November or else we will have to reduce the times down there". Dawn
If you are able to help please contact Dawn direct.
Tony

National Armed Forces Day Salisbury 29th June 2019



As I mentioned in the last Sandbag we have been aware for some time that the national Armed Forces Day event will be at Salisbury. Having discussed this with various organisations it will definitely outshine anything we could hope to put together in Wincanton and being so close to us it is obvious many local people will choose to go to Salisbury. Therefore we are arranging transport to attend the event. At this moment we do not have specific details of what is happening in Salisbury but we are confident it will be a big event and worth attending. Please make a note of the date and come with us.

Trip to Exeter 27th April

I will be firming up the Exeter trip during March so if you would now please confirm a definite commitment to going I will be able to assess the type of transport.
We will depart from the Memorial Hall at 9 a.m. on 27th April and arrive home around 6 p.m.
Prices are £12 adults and £6 children
If all those who said they were "interested" do firm up their commitment we do have enough people going to enable the trip to happen.

Coffee Morning 16th March

We are having a Coffee Morning on 16th March in the Memorial Hall from 10 a.m. until noon. We do hope we will see you there.
If you have any raffle prizes please bring them along
thanks

Our annual trip to the battlefields is in May so if anyone has a request for us lay a wreath for them, this trip will be to Mons, Cambrai and Arras. It may be possible to accomplish.

Next Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club

A good number of members are regularly attending the Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club at the Dolphin Hotel, the April breakfast meeting is on 27th April (unfortunately the same day as the Exeter trip). It starts at 9.30 a.m. and costs £6.99

Looking back

We have been asked to create a "nostalgia corner" to remind members of some of the great things we have done over the years. In July 2007 we officially "affiliated" with the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) at RNAS Yeovilton after the then Commander Cdr. Ric Fox RN had been attending many of our branch events.

We asked Cdr. Fox how we could support our adoption of the unit, who at the time were on active service in Afghanistan and he told us "send them some sweets". As we could not do this under RBL charity rules we formed a sister group called "Wincanton Supports Our Troops". Whilst in Afghanistan our regular shipments of sweets went down well and we received many letters of thanks. We fund raised in town and sent shipments of around £1000 each time. This photo shows a shipment in 2008.

