



**The  
Royal  
British  
Legion**



**Market Harborough  
Branch**

Reg Charity 219279

***In Touch***

*Issue 139*

*April 2010*

The monthly newsletter (founded 1996) of the Market Harborough  
Branch of the Royal British Legion.

**Next  
Monthly Branch  
Meeting  
Wednesday  
May 12th**

Function Room,  
Conservative Club,  
Fairfield Rd,  
Market Harborough  
7-30pm

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## News from the ATC

Thirty two cadets and five staff made the journey from Harborough to the battlefields of Flanders over the weekend of 12 to 15 March for the 14th visit. Despite difficulties caused by major road works particularly round Kemmel where the party stayed they managed most of the planned visits. The visit by the band included playing a Sunset Ceremony outside Talbot House in Poperinge on the Friday evening. This is where Tubby Talbot helped set up an 'all ranks' rest house and laid the foundations for the Toc H movement. Later the same evening the band marched from the Cloth Hall to the Menin Gate at Ypres. Here they took part in the Last Post ceremony held every night at 8pm. They were invited to play a WW1 medley before the actual ceremony and two pieces during the wreath laying. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the branch and the Squadron. Two other wreath laying ceremonies took place during the weekend one at Tynecot Cemetery where the trumpeters played Last Post and the second wreath was laid at the Arras Memorial to the Flying. The cadets visited many battlefield sites and cemeteries and learned about the lives and deaths of the WW1 soldiers and airmen. The opportunity was taken to visit Railway Dugouts Cemetery where a cross was placed on the memorial to Gunner Palmer (see page 6). The cadets placed a similar cross on the graves or memorials of all the local soldiers in the cemeteries they visited. It wasn't all serious and the cadets enjoyed playing in the carnival at Poperinge and a disco was held at the hostel.

## POPPY CALLS

safety • repairs • maintenance

Poppy Calls is one of the range of welfare services offered by the Royal British Legion to beneficiaries where there is a proven welfare need. It is a free handyman service available to help with minor repairs around the home and fitting essential devices such as smoke alarms. Poppy Calls employ 12 fitters around the country with 7 more in the process of joining. Administrative support is based in St Neots. By the end of 2012 the number of fitters will increase to 28.



John Fulks from Market Harborough was appointed Poppy Calls

Senior Fitter - Midlands

For more information telephone

01480 478031

or write to

Poppy Calls Centre,  
The Royal British Legion,  
Suite 2,  
Nelson House,  
Alington Rd,  
Little Barford,  
PE19 6YH.

## Welfare

If you are aware of any one who qualifies for, and who may benefit from, the Royal British Legion welfare services please contact

Betty Ramsey  
01858 434923

### ***This Policeman's Lot was a Happy One***

I left school in late 1944 and obtained a position as a junior clerk in the Magistrate Clerk's office at Melton Mowbray. This was a very interesting job and it gave me the idea of making a career as a police officer. In November 1946 I was conscripted into the Army to do National Service and opted to join the Royal Military



Police (RMP). After training and being appointed a Lance Corporal, I was posted to a Provost Company and did foot patrol duties in Colchester and Norwich. After a while I applied for

training in the Special Investigation Branch (SIB) of the RMP which dealt with all the serious crime in the Army. I passed the training course and transferred to the SIB. I was first stationed in a camp in Battersea Park, London, and later in HM Tower of London, the HQ of the SIB. Early in 1948 I was promoted to full Corporal (later Sergeant) and posted to the Western Command Section of the SIB based in Chester. This unit consisted of a Captain (Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal), WOII, 3 Sergeants, and about ten Corporals and L/Cpls. All the men were fully engaged in investigation and it was very busy office. The crimes dealt with included large-scale theft of accommodation

stores (furniture), theft of petrol and tyres, and indecent conduct with young soldiers.

There were, of course, the mundane NAAFI break-ins (often by staff making up shortages in their stock), theft of Post Office Savings Account Books, then very much open to abuse.

Regrettably, many of these offences were committed by commissioned and warrant officers.

A sad case dealt with at this time was that of a Corporal, aged 62, who, on being pressed to finally retire from the Army, shot himself rather than face 'Civvy Street'.

On the other hand, a rather amusing incident involved a young civilian man posing as a Warrant Officer and enjoying all the facilities of the NAAFI Club in Chester. One of our men spotted something wrong with the long rows of medals he wore and arrested him. He later came before magistrates and was fined.

Service in the SIB proved to be a most interesting busy life and my Army time passed by very quickly. My demob was delayed because of the crisis in Berlin due to the Soviet blockade of the city and I finally left in 1949.

I then resumed my police career with the Leicestershire Constabulary in which I completed twenty-five years service.

One of my early colleagues was PC100 P H Wilson and, back in the 1950s, we were both members of the Lutterworth Branch of the Royal British Legion.

Peter, of course, became a prominent and much respected member of this Branch.

Ron Ford

## One Man's Story

by John Standish

We left our story with Willie entering hospital in Glasgow. Here he stayed until recovered, probably with some time home to recuperate. On 19 Aug 1916 he embarked at Folkestone to return once more to the War. One can



only imagine how he must have felt leaving his loved ones once more.

Pictured left is his girlfriend. On the 5 Sept he re-joined his battalion which had moved into

trenches between High Wood and Delville Wood and the following day took part in an attack on an enemy strong point. From 1pm to 5pm the artillery fired a barrage of 4.5 and 9.2 howitzers and at 6-50pm 18 pounders and Stokes Mortars took over. Both attacks however failed as the barrage had not dislodged the enemy machine guns. Casualties 5 ORs (other ranks) killed, 26 wounded and 2 missing.

On 11<sup>th</sup> Sep while in billets at Buire sur L'Ancre Willie was promoted to paid L/Sgt.

On 20 Sept the battalion withdrew to a bivouac area by Pommier Redoubt where they practised for an impending battle and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> moved up towards the front reaching the battle positions in front of Fliers at 7-30pm on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

Willie sent his mother a field post card from the trenches, I often wonder what was going through his mind as he lay huddled in the trench waiting for the order to 'go over the top'.

NOTHING is to be written on this slide except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be absent. If anything other is added the post card will be destroyed.

I am quite well. ✓

I have now admitted into hospital (sick) and am going as well. (wounded) and hope to be discharged soon.

I am being sent down to the base. (letter dated 19th Sept)

have received your letter ✓

Letter follows at first opportunity. ✓

Have replied to letter from you (safely) ✓

Signature } Willie  
only

Date } 2nd 1916

(Postcard must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the sender of this card.)

W. WALL. 49111. 710. U.S.O. BRIDGE WYKE, N.Y.

The war diary tells us at 1235 the Brigade attacked Gird trench and the Sunken Rd between Gueudecourt and Factory Corner. There was no preliminary barrage but the troops advanced over open ground behind a creeping barrage which lifted 50 yards every minute. Heavy guns rained shells down onto the enemy defences. The advance was a success and while the enemy put up resistance they were overcome with many killed or taken prisoner and the position consolidated before nightfall. The war diary records 'there were many instances of great bravery' and the attack resulted in 9 officers wounded, 2 subsequently dying of wounds, 15 OR's killed, 110 wounded and 18 missing.

Among the dead was Lance Sergeant William Laurie Paton aged 22.

On 9 Oct Sgt Roper B Coy 1/6 Batt KLR wrote to Willie's sister Agnes.

.... 'On the dot of 1230 everyman left from his trench with fixed bayonet and

went forward. What a sight: shall I ever forget it, your Laurie was on my left. Soon the Germans spotted us and turned their artillery and machine guns on us. It was a veritable inferno of bursting shells and bullets, men were dropping thick and fast but on and on we pressed. At last we got to our objective. I found myself in charge with only a handful of men. Your brother was one of the handful of men and I am sure it must be a little compensation to you to know he got through the charge and arrived safe in the captured German positions. We soon found out that there were some Germans behind us to our right so we started to drive them out, it was a desperate fight and lasted 50 minutes but we succeeded. I am sorry to say that it was in this fight that your dear brother was killed. The bullet went through the back of his head just below the right ear and death was instantaneous. If God should spare me I should be able to tell you the exact spot where he died and also where he is buried.'

Unfortunately Sgt Roper, who appears to have survived the war, was



W L Paton is one of 72,000 names on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing pictured above.

not able to complete his task of identifying the grave which was later lost in the fighting and

### **Branch Snippets**

The coffee morning held in February raised £149. Thanks you to everyone who supported the event.

The Dinner held at the Golf Club was a great success the raffle raised £120 and everyone enjoyed the evening. Thank you Glenys and team for your hard work.

Congratulations to branch member Flt Lt Valerie Smith, CO of the ATC squadron. She was presented with the Hard Work & Determination trophy in the Pride in Harborough Awards. Nominated by one of the cadets she was praised for 'her hard work and determination which enabled the cadets to do things they otherwise wouldn't be able to do. Flt Lt Smith has always encouraged the cadets to grasp the chances that present themselves and follow them through to the highest standard they can achieve'.

### **Warning**

Tom Jeacock warns members to beware of unusual telephone calls. He has received several calls with pub like background noises but fortunately put the phone down. These calls are from overseas, BT is aware and trying to stop them. They may be an attempted scam so please take care if you receive a call like this.

### **Teachers Report**

Teachers first report to the editor reads 'must do better'. His reply - 'Yes miss I will try harder in future'. So apologies from the Editor to Glenys for the wrong telephone number and to Dave for misspelling his name. The editor says it was spell checker that did him on that one.

### Letters

I would like to pay tribute to George Seward for his splendid editorship especially for producing *In Touch* in large print.

Also my thanks to Tom Ashmore for his personal delivery. With my appreciation.

Marjorie Adcock

John Timms writes

'My daughter Jane has now retired as a Petty Officer after twenty five years service with the Royal Navy. You may recall Joan laid a wreath at the 2008 Remembrance Ceremony. Jane is now Chef in Charge at the National Trust's tea room at Ilam Hall near Ashbourne.

I am sure Jane would make members very welcome should they visit while in the area.

Jane has joined the local branch of the Royal British Legion'

### Cat Lovers Corner

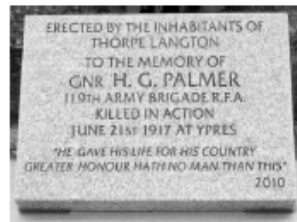
A couple were going out to the theatre and because their cat was a bit destructive if left alone in the house they went to put it outside when the taxi arrived.

Unfortunately the cat dashed back into the house and the husband was ordered back in to find the cat while the wife sat in the cab. Being a warm summers evening she became a bit concerned by a group of youths gathered nearby and loudly said for all to hear 'My husbands just gone to say goodbye to my mother'.

The husband came out a short while later 'sorry it took so long the stupid thing was hiding under the bed and I had to poke her with a coat hanger to get her to come out'

### Gunner H G Palmer

At the last branch meeting members will recall the personal appeal put out by John Cox to support the fundraising for the new replacement memorial plaque at Thorpe Langton pictured below.



Gnr Palmer is buried in Railway Dug-outs Cemetery, Ypres. The actual location of his body in the cemetery is not known and the headstone states 'known to be buried in this cemetery'. His memorial stone is situated about half way along the back row of headstones pictured below.



### Puzzle Corner

a bit of brain training for you

What is the next letter in the sequence

Q W E R T Y

Answer on back page

### **St Dunstan's**

St Dunstan's charity helps blind and visually impaired ex service personnel to live independently in the community. Respite care is also available. Founded in 1915 by Sir Arthur Pearson who was shocked by the attitude towards WW1 blind soldiers.

Marjorie Adcock tells us about her Introductory Course at Ovingdean (Brighton) which was built in 1938. I heard of St Dunstan's after being registered as partially sighted. After assessment at London HQ I was accepted as a 'St Dunstoner'.

Arriving at Ovingdean I was met by Martin an ex Royal Marine. He showed me round and it wasn't until I saw him feeling for a light switch that I realised he was totally blind. Martin turned out to be a wonderfully cheerful character who made sure we were in the right place at the right time. The week covered advice on communication, reading difficulties, use of IT, mobility and visual aids. Physical activities were to the fore and I tried archery, bowls and rifle shooting as well as daily visits to the gym.

It was amazing to see visually impaired persons being assisted in the craft shop to do painting, pottery and woodwork to a high standard. Rooms were comfortable and food excellent but it was the good humour and fellowship between the residents that proved most enjoyable. Not all were old, one young soldier blinded in Afghanistan being helped to adjust to his new life. I bring away Martins words "when faced with a catastrophe such as blindness remember the three A's"

**Accept - Adjust - Achieve**  
tel 020 7723 5021  
for information on St Dunstan's



**Tuesday May 4**

Contact

Glenys Hocking-Davies

01858 467835

**before 27 April**

to reserve your place.

Meals cancelled after 11am on  
27 April will be charged for.

### **Menu**

*Tempura battered Hake, mashed  
potato with marrowfat peas*

*Roast supreme of chicken with  
stuffing, bacon roll, roast pota-  
toes, gravy and vegetables*

*Pork and leek sausages, mashed  
potatoes with onion gravy*

*Bakewell Tart with creamy cus-  
tard*

*Fresh fruit salad with clotted  
cream ice cream*

*Sticky Toffee pudding with  
creamy custard*

*coffee & mints*

**Meet in the bar at noon.**

**Only £7**

## What's Going On?

- 24 Apr** Guards Museum trip  
**12 May** Branch meeting  
Clive Langley—'Long Term Care'  
**12 Jun** Harborough Carnival.  
Helpers needed for branch display.  
Names to Betty or Mark please  
**19 Jun** RNA Cheese & Wine  
7 to 9-30pm  
36 Lubenham Hill,  
£5 includes two glasses of wine  
**4 Jul** Armed Services Day.  
Welland Park 10am to 4pm. Helpers needed to set up and run branch displays and generally assist.  
Names to Betty or Mark please.

**Reminder**—if you want your e-mail address included in the branch directory or you don't want your name in the directory let the editor know before 1 May.

### **Puzzle Corner—Answer** **U**

The letters are the first ones on the top row of the standard computer keyboard

## **Branch Contacts**

### **Secretary**

Betty Ramsay  
01858 434923

### **Treasurer & Membership**

#### **Secretary**

Myra Grewcock  
01858

### **Poppy Appeal**

Dave Pryor  
01858 431999

### **Wreaths**

John Liddell  
01858 465003

### **Standard Bearer**

George Fleming  
01858 462711

### **Social & Fund Raising**

Glenys Hocking-Davies  
01858 467835

### **Editor - *In Touch***

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Next Committee Meeting - May 6

## **And Finally**

### **Celebrity sayings**

'I owe a lot to my parents, especially my mother and father' - Greg Norman

'My parents have been there for me, ever since I was about seven'  
- David Beckham

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*An online version of the newsletter edited by Tom Ashmore is at [www.in-touch.ukvet.net](http://www.in-touch.ukvet.net)*