



The Royal British Legion



Market Harborough Branch

Reg Charity 219279

In Touch

Issue 146

November 2010

The monthly newsletter (founded 1996) of the Market Harborough Branch (BR0106) of the Royal British Legion.

**We
Will
Remember
Them**

**Next
Monthly Branch
Meeting
Thursday
9 December**

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



March on the Band

The sound and spectacle of the Massed Bands of the Household Division on the concert platform is something quite special - and what a treat it was last weekend when a small group from the Royal Naval Association visited the Royal Albert Hall. The bands of the Coldstream Guards, the Life Guards, The Blues and Royals, the Grenadier Guards, the Scots, Irish and Welsh Guards, produced music that kept the audience enthralled. The programme was a well judged mixture of military music, music from the shows and Big Band numbers all backed up by the world famous Corps of Drums. The Pipe Band of the Manchester branch of the Scots Guards Association were resplendent in their kilts, but my favourite piece was

The Gael, which is the theme from the 1992 film, The Last of the Mohicans, which is so atmospheric and was played magnificently.

The two vocalists were Haley Westenra who will be remembered for launching the 2009 Poppy Appeal with Dame Vera Lynn and Sergeant John Hooper of the Irish Guards.

The programme was presented by Hannah Gordon of television fame. The performance was rounded off with the Regimental marches of each guards regiment - I can tell you - not a dry eye in the house! A wonderful evening.

Submitted by Pat and Mike Middleton

In Memoriam

Roger Williamson

Passed away suddenly but peacefully at home in Leicester aged 74.

Betty Jeacock

Passed away suddenly after a long illness 9 Nov aged 83



ANGEL the
HOTEL & RESTAURANT
37 High St, Market Harborough
LE16 7AF. Tel 01858 462702

* A family owned hotel with 28 en-suite rooms.

*Function room for private parties

*Family restaurant serving evening meals and traditional Sunday lunch

* afternoon teas (Apr to Sept)

* Lounge bar - a great place to enjoy a drink with friends

Waiting to Welcome You

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

Market Harborough Home Guard.

I am grateful to Brian Thomas for this information taken from the Market Harborough Home Guard Company Roll.

The information seems to cover the period from summer 1940 to summer 1941. The Commanding Officer is recorded as Major E G Gillilan DSO JP with a later pencil entry of C T Lea. The second in command was Wilfred Chapman Gandy.

The Company was divided into 7 Platoons and as one might expect the ages ranged from 17 to 65. Allowing for some transfers between Platoons the number of men who are recorded were as follows. No 1 Platoon – 95 men, No 2 Platoon – 90 men, No 3 Platoon, - 93 men, No 4 Platoon (known as Symington's Factory Platoon) – 107 men, No 5 Platoon (known as Gt Bowden Platoon), - 52 men, No 6 Platoon (known as Railway Platoon) – 51 men, No 7 Platoon (known as Harborough Aircraft Platoon) 103 men. A grand total of nearly 600 men.

It is interesting to note that there was originally a Telephone Unit but the members were transferred to the General PO strength.

Also interesting is the recording of two members as 'Bell ringers' no doubt charged with ringing the bells in the event of invasion, and two recorded as Roof Spotters in the Harborough Aircraft Factory Platoon.

From the notes it is possible to see when men left to join HM Forces. There are a few entries showing

some men were dismissed under Company orders, one can only conjecture at the reason as it is not stated in the record, but in one case the reason is given – 'found to be under age'. Another man is noted as transferring to the ATC on 6 June 1941. There is a small insight into the training in the period June/July 1941. On 7 June 24 men undertook guard duty with the Lewis gun and bayonet training was undertaken on 10 June by 24 men. The golf course was put into use on 13 June when 19 men used it for 'judging distance'.

A fascinating glimpse into the Home Guard, I am sure there is much more information around, who knows perhaps our members can add to the story?

More Church Humour

More from the Parish magazine

Don't let worry kill you off- let the Church help

For those who have children and don't know it we have a nursery downstairs.

Weightwatchers will meet at the church at 7pm, please use the large double doors at the side.

Potluck Supper, Sunday at 5pm. Prayer and medication to follow.

The Rector will preach his farewell sermon after which the choir will sing 'Break Forth Into Joy'

The sermon this morning 'Jesus Walks on Water' The sermon tonight 'Searching for Jesus'

Branch AGM

The following were unanimously elected

President Mr Brian Marshall

Vice Presidents Mrs Con Halsall and Mr Mark Hudson

Chairman Mr John Standish

Vice Chairman Rev John Morley

Secretary Miss Betty Ramsay

Treasurer Mrs Myra Grewcock

Committee re-elected en bloc

Presentations Badges were presented to new members Peter Johnson and Ray Powell.

Chairman's Report Mark Hudson thanked the Committee, in particular the secretary and treasurer for their support during the year. He commented that 2009/10 had been another successful year and that membership numbers were still holding up.

Treasurers Report Myra Grewcock reported the accounts were with the auditors. General fund balance was £2140 and welfare fund £1797. She appealed for the 82 members who still pay by cash to consider switching to direct debit, this saves her a lot of work.

Welfare Report Betty Ramsay paid tribute to the work of Vida Edwards on the welfare front. Vida sadly passed away earlier this year. The branch now has 3 trained case workers. Last year County spent £254,000 on welfare activities.

Poppy Appeal Dave Pryor reported that the branch had raised £22,800 last year. This was slightly down on the previous period it was an unfair comparison as the previous period covered 16 months.

Social Team Glenys Hocking Davies reported on the many activities organised by the social team, of particular success were the monthly branch lunches.

Incoming Chairman's Report

Mr Standish reported as follows.

Firstly let me pay my tribute to Mark, our outgoing Chairman. The branch owes a lot to Mark for his leadership over the recent years, he is, along with all the Chairmen before him, a very hard act to follow.

It is with some trepidation that I take on this role and I hope I can be as successful as my predecessors.

Obviously I cannot guarantee that but I will ensure that I give all I can to the post, and to the Branch, for the time I am in office.

The Branch has a three year plan which is aligned with the County and National plans. To support this plan I feel that the branch should address 4 things in particular. It is for the branch members to decide and if the majority do not want to do any of these things then so be it. So what are the 4 areas?

To actively canvas for new members, particularly those with local connections who are still serving or recently left the services. There is resurgence in interest in the Legion and support for our service men and women at a national level and we should take advantage of this to increase our membership.

To engage more with young people and find ways where they can take a more active part in branch activities. We must be more proactive, the youth is the future of the Legion

and we neglect them at our peril. To increase the awareness of the branch in the local area. We have a lot to be proud of in this branch; it has thrived where others have done less well. It is important to support any recruiting drive, increased engagement with the youth or getting support of the local population that we shout louder and longer through the media.

Finally to support the above we may need to broaden the scope of our meetings and outside events, and this is no criticism of the Social Committee who have done a sterling job in the past. Attendance at meetings is good but if we are to recruit and maintain members with an active interest and engagement in the branch we may have to broaden our social activities. So several ideas but if you agree with any of them they will not come to fruition without your active help and support. I know we are always reluctant to volunteer, service life taught many of you not to volunteer and most people are shy of putting their names forward as it seems 'pushy' and not the done thing. Please don't leave it to others or say to your self 'I can't do it'. If you have the enthusiasm you can achieve so much.

I would like particularly to appoint a Branch Media Communications Officer and a Branch Recruiting Officer to help progress things. If you would like to help with these ideas or other branch activities please let me know, we can discuss them in more detail.

Stubborn as a mule

Although I was trained with motorised transport in North Africa, I found myself fighting jungle warfare against the Japanese.

Fighting in the dense jungle was nerve-racking and movement was mainly by compass. Officers took to removing rank insignia as the Japanese clearly recognised the ranks and targeted them at every opportunity. Stealth was essential but a familiar shout from the depths of the jungle was 'Tommy where are you', needless to say no reply was given. My grandfather was a sheppard and my first experience of mules was when I was officer in Burma and given the responsibility of re-supplying ammunition. The hand grenade was the preferred ammunition as the jungle fighting was often at close quarters.

The mules could carry quite heavy loads but perhaps the best thing about them was they acted as protector to the troops. They seemed to know when the enemy was near and stood stock still. This was the signal for us to send a reconnaissance patrol and only when they had checked the route was clear would we move on.

I was disappointed when the mule was returned to base and we were ordered to proceed by river in a native boat called a sampan. However when we reached the river we found that all the boats had been holed by the Japanese and we had to resort to a more traditional animal, 'shank's pony', but that is another story.

Submitted by Kenneth Harrison

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington Cemetery

For a soldier to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30.

They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform or the tomb in anyway.

After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on the lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.

The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt.

Puzzle Corner

Un-scramble the following sets of letters to find words which have something in common. What is it?

AAEILNNPSVY (12)
AACHILNNOORRT (5,8)
AEIMNOST (9)
CIINNOSSW (9)
AAEEHIMNPRSW (3, 9)
AAIILNOSU (9)

Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard. There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.

For the first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone nor watch TV. All of duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorise who they are and where they are interred.

The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24 hours a day 7 days a week, since 1930. In 2003 as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington, DC, the US Senate/ House took 2 days off in anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment. They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!"

Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honour that can be afforded to a service person.

Guards are changed every thirty minutes and each Guard takes 21 steps to walk across the Tomb and pauses for 21 seconds after each about turn. This alludes to the twenty-one gun salute which is the highest honour given any military or foreign dignitary.

**Christmas Lunch
Menu
January 4th**

Starter

Salad of Atlantic Prawn with dill & lemon mayonnaise dressing

Chilled melon with mandarins and passion fruit coulis

Chicken liver pate with chutney served with rustic bread

Main

Oven roasted turkey with traditional festive trimmings

Baked salmon on crushed new potatoes with dill and white wine sauce

Roast loin of British pork with sage, apple and onion stuffing, gravy and roast potatoes

All served with a medley of fresh seasoned vegetables

Caramelised onion and goats cheese tarts with spicy tomato sauce and roast potatoes (V)

Sweet

Christmas pudding with brandy custard

Meringue roulade with compote of fruit

Fresh fruit salad

Coffee and mints



The Christmas lunch will take place on 4th January see adjacent column for the menu

Places for this meal are restricted to 60 and should be reserved in the first instance by contacting your own association ie if ex RAF contact Margaret Cator (RAFA), ex RN contact Pat Middleton (RNA) or Glenys (RBL) **before 9 December**

Cancellations on the day to Glenys Hocking-Davies 01858 467835 **before 11 am.**

If Glenys is not available phone the Angel 01858 462702 before 11am or the meal will be charged

The cost for this sumptuous traditional Christmas Lunch will be £12-50

Meet in the bar at noon

Please note there is no branch lunch in December.

What's Going On?

- 20 Nov** Branch Remembrance Concert with Harborough Band. Baptist Church Coventry Rd 7-30pm.
- 24 Nov** St John's Ambulance invite RBL members to a talk by the 'medal man'. Ambulance Hall, Abbey St, 2pm for 2-30. Refreshments available for a small donation.
- 9 Dec** Branch meeting -
Jan 8 County Conference

Next meeting
Please note next meeting is
on Thursday 9 December

Puzzle Corner—Answer

They are all American States ie
Pennsylvania
North Carolina
Minnesota
Wisconsin
New Hampshire
Louisiana

Branch Contacts

Secretary

Betty Ramsay
01858 434923

Treasurer & Membership

Secretary

Myra Grewcock
7 Gapstile Close,
Desborough, NN14 2TZ
01536 762228

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*

John Standish
5 Manor Rd
Fleckney, LE8 8TN
Tel - 0116 2404170

in-toucheditor@hotmail.co.uk
Next Committee Meeting 2 Dec

And Finally

More of the London underground is open than is in a tunnel.
The most popular tourist route is Leicester Sq to Covent Gdn - it is quicker to walk than travel by tube

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the editor or the Market Harborough Branch.

*The editor reserves the right to decide what is to be published and to edit material and no part of *In Touch* may be reproduced without his prior permission.*

The newsletter is online at www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough.