



Belgie-Belgique

P.P-P.B

2000 Antwerpen 1

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THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION ANTWERP BRANCH

Tweemaandelijkse newsletter januari-februari 2014

Verantwoordelijk uitgever:

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Afgiftekantoor 2000 Antwerpen 1

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~ ~ ~ Dates for your diary ~ ~ ~

 THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION, ANTWERP. DIARY DATES 2014 				
DATE	TIME	ITEM	LOCATION	COMMENTS
12/01/2014	11:30	ABCA: New Year brunch at d'Aa Toert		
20/01/2014		RBL New Year Reception		
25-27/01/2014		BATS Panto - Babes In The Wood	ARENBERG THEATRE	www.batsantwerp.be for details
29/01/2014	19:30	ABCA New Year drinks at the open evening	Highlander	
20/02/2014		ABCA : visit to Elixir d'Anvers		
16/03/2014		ABCA : visit to the Kazerne Dossin in Mechelen		
22/03/2014	15:00	SNORRENCLUB: Het Snorrenbal	Kantine Centraal Station Antwerpen	Tickets (10€): steveandsuzy@skynet.be
6/09/2014		Stad Antwerp Liberation Festivities		www.antwerpen.be
7/09/2014	9:30	RBL - TANK CEREMONY	JAN VAN RIJSWIJCKLAAN ANTWERPEN	
12/10/2014		RBL Poppy Appeal Lunch		
7/12/2014		RBL Christmas Lunch		

RBL Royal British Legion Antwerp Branch

For entertainment, call Martin Southam on 03/295 00 76 (evenings)

or Raf Kloeck on 0473/297 623

For payments, call Frank Van Nunen on 03/321 28 84 (evenings)

For membership matters, call Phil Shaw on 0486/189 734 (evenings)

ABCA Antwerp British Community Association: contact Mary Ann Marinus on 0486/646 941 (evenings only)

St. Boniface St. Boniface Anglican Church: contact Father Andrew Wagstaff SSC on 03/239 33 39

BATS British American Theatrical Society: contact Jill Franks on 03/236 23 19

ABIW Antwerp British & International Women: contact Valerie Carroll on 03/254 03 73

MtS Missions to Seafarers: contact on 03/605 41 88

KMLPA Koninklijke Muziekkapel Lokale Politie Antwerpen: contact 0478/997 091 of info@muziekkapel.be

🌸🌸🌸 Welcome! 🌸🌸🌸

Dear members, dear readers of this newsletter,

First of all: a very happy New Year. I hope it's going to be an amazing and healthy 2014 for you all.

Looking back at 2013, it was a good year for the RBL Antwerp Branch, especially for the Poppy Appeal. The Poppy Appeal on the Meir raised well over 2000 €, overall the total was just under 4500 €. We can't thank you enough for all your help!

With the Christmas Lunch, we went out with a bang, so to say. It was good to see that everyone was enjoying themselves, and singing along with Anita 'Vera Lynn'. Even the dancefloor got used!

2014 promises to become an exciting year, with the return of the Cromwell Tank. Keep an eye on our 'new' diary. We'd like to inform you as good as possible about interesting events. And you are always welcome to share an event. Just let us know.

Personally I'd like to thank everybody who helped with the making of the newsletter with articles or ideas!

Well, let's raise a glass to this year (hopefully in person at the New Year reception on January 20th) and say CHEERS!

Suzanne

🌸🌸🌸 Important: Antwerp Branch Help Line! 🌸🌸🌸

We can only help people if we **know** they are not feeling well, so please, please, please: contact the RBL Antwerp Branch Help Line if you are ill, or if you need a visit. Or if you know someone who does...

RBL Antwerp Branch HELP LINE

03/685 34 20

(The Reverend Ann Babb)

**If someone is ill, or needs a visit,
please DO call.**

~~~~~ Reminder / Herinnering ~~~~~

Mogen wij blijven vragen dat alle leden hun RBL lidgeld 2014 betalen voor eind december 2013.

Dit om administratieve problemen in verband met lidkaarten te vermijden met het hoofdkwartier van The Royal British Legion.

Subscription / Lidgeld 2014: €26 op 220-0020212-72

May we continue to request that all RBL members pay their 2014 subscriptions before end December 2013.

This is to avoid any administrative problems in connection with membership cards with the headquarters, The Royal British Legion

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For information: The IBAN number may be necessary from early 2014 to enable you to make bank transfers from one Belgian bank account to another. The IBAN number for the RBL Antwerp branch General account is:

Ter info : Het kan zijn dat de IBAN nummer nodig zal zijn vanaf begin 2014 om overschrijvingen te maken tussen bankrekeningen binnen België. Het IBAN nummer van de algemene rekening van de afdeling Antwerpen RBL is:

BE38 2200 0202 1272

The old number is (het oude nummer is) 220-0020212-72

If you need the IBAN number for another manual payment and have the use of a computer: Via a search engine (like Google), you type in "iban converter" to get the conversion programme. Then with the **old number**, it will give you the four letter IBAN code BE_ _ for the bank account you need.

Als u een andere overschrijving zou moeten maken en u kan een computer gebruiken: Als u via Google of een ander gelijkaardig programma "iban converter" intikt, komt u in een programma waarmee u het volledig IBAN nummer kan bekomen. Als u het oude banknummer intikt, bekomt u automatisch de gewenste IBAN code.

❧❧❧ DOVO members still busy clearing the 'iron harvest' of World War I ❧❧❧

Their unit (based near Poelkapelle) has the motto 'I Do Not Fear Dangers'.

Belgian DOVO army team collects and destroys mines and shells, some still active after nearly 100 years. Some contain explosives, others chemicals. They are still working hard to clear as many as possible in time for events marking 100th anniversary of World War I in 2014. In 2012, 160 tonnes of munitions were dug from under the ground in Flanders, including bullets, stick grenades, and naval shells the size of a man.



Corporal Nico Sierens examining a collection of shells found that need "attention or dismantling".

The Daily Mail was one of the last newspapers, to be allowed to accompany members of DOVO due to the pressure of work on them in preparing for 2014. (This article by Allan Hall, was adapted by George & Anne Bell from the Daily Mail website, 10/11/13)

'You're the last,' said Dirk Gunst, a 2nd Lieutenant with the DOVO squad charged with collecting and destroying these lethal relics.

'We just don't have the time. We are expecting thousands of people next year and we have to gather up as much as we can before then and request tourists to leave anything they see in the ground.'

Dirk Gunst is not exaggerating. The iron harvest continues to kill and maim. Over 20 of his comrades have died since the unit was formed in 1919, four of those in 1986 when a massive German mortar blew up after it was transported to the unit's depot in fields near the sleepy hamlet of Poelkapelle.

Ten years ago, two teenagers took a blowtorch to a British 6lb high explosive shell to try to cut off the brass driving band. This was fitted to make the shell spin through the air, and was traditionally collected as scrap by people who made it into trinkets and jewellery. The teenagers were both blown to smithereens.



Belgium army bomb disposal team Onderluitenant Dirk Gunst holds two shell cases that held chemical agents, mustard gas and chlorine.

There is at least one fatality a year, and many more injuries, when shells - fired nearly a century ago - suddenly decide to end their long hibernation and detonate.

Even Dirk's men, who work in teams of three, have suffered burns from mustard and phosgene gas shells that were split open and leaking their caustic contents.

'We fear no danger but we don't go in for heroics,' said Dirk, whose HQ is testament to the numerous fiendish ways the warring parties of the 'Great War' developed to kill one another.

'Look at this one,' he says, holding up a shell cut away to reveal a dark green glass vessel inside the colour of an old beer bottle.

'This was a German shell, not gas, but it contains an agent that causes vomiting the instant you smell it. 'The Germans would fire these at the British front line; then men would hurriedly put their gas masks on. But many would have to remove them as they began to vomit - and then the Germans would lob over the real gas shells to catch the troops without their respirators.'

The shells, fuses, grenades, mines, mortars, bullets and blocks of ammonal explosive and TNT left behind by the massed armies which fought around Ypres become more unstable with each passing day.

Some 70 men of the DOVO unit hold the line against these rotting weapons of total war. This, as firmly as the men who fired them long ago, held their own ground at places whose names made so many people in the world hold their breath.

The Last Post Association Seeks the Help of Legion Members

The Last Post Association is the organisation responsible for the playing of the Last Post at 8 o'clock each evening under the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres (now Ieper). In July 2015 this daily ceremony will be held for the 30,000th time. To commemorate this landmark, the Association intends to publish a photographic book that charts the history and development of the ceremony from its foundation in 1928 to the present day.

The Last Post Association is seeking any material from before 1980, particularly photographs, but also other visual items such as invitations, programmes and letters of thanks.

If you have any material that you would like to contribute, please email info@lastpost.be.

This request arrived via internet and the Membership Newsletter no. 3 from RBL HQ London.

Who's who?

Hon. President:

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RLB Website:

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- RBL Bank Account number is 220-0020212-72
(BIC: GEBABEBB, IBAN: BE38 2200 0202 1272)
- Annual subscription: € 26, Donations towards our benevolent work are welcome.
- Please feel free to submit items for inclusion in the newsletter, such as poems you particularly like, anecdotes, stories about RBL Antwerp, hints, suggestions.
- Advertising rates:
1/8 page: € 6.50 per issue 1/4 page: € 11 per issue
1/2 page: € 16.50 per issue 1 page: € 30 per issue

Contact the Newsletter Editor for more information or to place an ad.