Welcome to the second issue of Legion Knots - the magazine about the branches and for the branches of Nottinghamshire Royal British Legion.

What is a hero? This question went through my mind standing in the sunshine at the funeral of Lance Corporal Kieron Hill in Clifton. Although I applaud our local and national athletes for their achievements I do not see them as heroes, although they are often described as such in the media. My heroes are those like Kieron, an ordinary bloke serving his country and making the ultimate sacrifice.

All our thanks should also go to the Standard Bearers who attend such events, often in poor weather, to represent us. Thank you.

No one offered to name the places in the photographs on page 1 of Issue 1. They were Newstead Abbey, Clumber Park Bridge and Trent Bridge. Where are this month’s delights?

In this issue we have part two of the war-time story of Denis Holmes

THE TORPEDO THAT STRUCK. Part 2

It was my turn to go down the rope ladder into the sea. Slowly I went forward and climbed onto the rungs of the rope ladder. My mouth and throat were dry, how pleased I was to have remembered my water bottle. I had a sip as I went down the ladder. Down the rungs I went, each rung nearer the sea and what? My whole life passed before my eyes. I could see my parents, sisters and relatives. I could see my girlfriend (bless her, she is my wife now). Memories of events passed through my mind, I could see it all, it was frightening. I prayed to God for help, I even cried out for Him to save me. I was now at the bottom of the ladder, I kicked my boots off and into the water I went. Several men were already in the water hanging onto rafts that had been thrown or lowered into the sea. I managed to grab one of the loose rafts, it was a struggle as I could not swim and I had all my faith pinned to my life-jacket.
I paddled away from the ship as I did not want to be near the ship if it went down as I was afraid of the suction that might cause me to be sucked under. I drifted away, about 100 yards from the boat, but during that time I must have swallowed a large amount of water. I then found myself in a bed of oil that had been pumped from the engine room of the ship.

Looking back at the ship I could now see that no more troops were leaving the decks and coming into the water. They were just standing about. However I had myself to worry about and I was feeling sick from swallowing seawater and diesel oil.

I was now in possession of two rafts and it was my intention to climb onto one of them with the aid of the other. There I was still struggling to climb onto the raft, but I found that they were too buoyant and I never did get on top.

The next thing I remember was waking up in bed, I was not wearing an article of clothing, but had numerous blankets covering me. The first thing I asked was where I was and what time it was. I was told I was back on the 'Strathallan' and that the time was just after 10am. I had been unconscious nearly 8 hours. I thanked God for answering my prayers. I was saved.

My mates at the bedside then related to me what had happened. The officer in charge of our Muster Station had given orders for us to abandon ship without the Captain’s authority. I do not blame him for what he did for he must have had in his own mind good reason for giving that order. I was then informed of the detail of my rescue. When the Captain realised what had happened he gave orders for men in the sea to be brought back on the ship. Ropes were lowered and men in the sea were hauled back onto the deck. Some unknown person struggled with me in the water for a long time trying to get a rope round my waist so the men on the deck could hoist me up. I remembered none of that. I was a dead weight and covered in diesel oil, it would be no easy job to tie that rope round my body. The man could have left me there and have had the rope for himself. The hoisting of the rope was done from the upper deck whilst the men on the lower deck caught hold of the man and drew him onto the deck. When I was hoisted up as far as the lower deck I was caught hold of by one of my own mates, 'Taffy' Thomas who held on to me for at least 15 minutes before I was able to be landed. This fellow had a broken finger but he still held onto me, though in great pain. As yet I was a stranger to him. Two other members of our unit were with 'Taffy'; 'Blondie' Hudson and 'Doc' Egan and together they carried me and put me to bed. It was not until they stripped and wiped me down that they discovered that the person they were dealing with was me.

It was just four hours later when I jumped from the lower deck of the "Strathallan" onto the destroyer "Pathfinder" one of the many ships that
came to our rescue. The trooper was on fire now and nothing could save her and within a few hours she sank. By nightfall I landed along with a mixed assortment of H.M. Forces at Casablanca, North Africa. All I was wearing was a set of denim overalls and a pair of gym shoes too small for my feet. It was at this port that I rejoined my unit the following morning.

I prayed and thanked God for my rescue, but I regret to say that 149 lives were lost in this episode. I must have been the luckiest person on board among the 3,000 troops.

No medals were given to the persons who took part in my rescue, just the thanks I could give them myself and the assurance that I would never forget them.

955358 - Sergeant D. HOLMES.
2788 Squadron - R.A.F. Regiment.

**KNOTTY WORD 1**

**E**
**DTE**
**NSEBH**

How many words can you make from these 9 letters? Each word must have 4 or more letters and contain the first letter (E); all 9 letters make a word too!

20 good; 24 very good; 28 top knot

**Answer to Knotty Word 1**

sheet bend sheared sheared read teen tend tense nested seed seen sent shed sheet best besed dean dene dont ends need nest beat been beest behind best bent bendent

**THE ELIZABETH CROSS**

‘This seems to me a right and proper way of showing our enduring debt to those who are killed while actively protecting what is most dear to us all’.

H.M Queen Elizabeth II

The Elizabeth Cross together with a memorial scroll signed by the Queen, is to be given to more than 8,000 families of armed forces killed in operations or as a result of terrorism since 1948 and includes the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Northern Ireland, Falklands and Korea. Families of armed forces who had been killed in WW1 received a scroll and memorial plaque. A scroll was also given to each bereaved family after WW2 and Korean Wars.

(Article courtesy of Mansfield Bellamy Branch)

Photo of members of 2 Mercian Regiment visiting Redlands School, Worksop to collect Shoe-boxes.
Lisa Lewis organised the shoeboxes.
County Annual Service of Rededication at Southwell Minster.
This year’s event was again blessed by good weather. A good number of Standards marched through Southwell, aided by the band of The Royal Engineers. Local dignitaries were in attendance and the salute was taken by Sir Andrew Buchan, Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire.

A Prayer for our soldiers
Thank you to all our armed forces for protecting us and those people in Afghanistan.
Thank you to the men and women who left their families, homes and country.
Thank you to all those soldiers who lost their lives to save others.
Thank you to all those soldiers who have been injured; we want you to recover and our country to supply all your needs.
Thank you for giving us the opportunity to send something to entertain you, make you more comfortable and nice things to eat.

We hope that we all learn from your sacrifices and others will respect one another in honour to you who have given so much.
Please God, protect our soldiers and look after their families. AMEN

Connor Harpham
Mansfield Armed Forces Day  (Article Courtesy of Joe Martin, Mansfield Branch)

Along with other members of the branch I attended the Civic Centre on Monday 22nd June at the invitation of the Mayor, Tony Egginton to witness the unfurling of the Armed Forces Flag. I was also very honoured to be asked to sign the charter on behalf of the Royal British Legion. Basically the charter is a pledge to offer assistance to ex-servicemen and also to better understand the needs of servicemen returning from conflicts overseas. It was signed by representatives of various agencies in the area such as MDC, Police, R.B.L., Combat Stress, CVS etc.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

by Rev. David Addison - Mansfield Bellamy Branch

Something new is happening to brighten up our lives – a new Legion newsletter! And how we need something to cheer us up in these times when the word ‘crisis’ confronts us everywhere! How quickly things can change these days and how quickly time seems to fly by! We "oldies" tend to say things like, "It wasn't like that when I was young", and, of course, it's true. Many things have changed, some for the better, some for the worse. The hymn-writer of a by-gone age might have been observing life today when he wrote, "Change and decay in all around I see". In a world that is subject to such rapid change, we need something to cling on to, a horizon by which to maintain our balance, a solid rock on which we can confidently stand, an anchor to hold us steady against the storms (and perhaps a riot of metaphors to help us keep our sense of humour!). The hymn-writer went on to say, "O Thou who changest not, abide with me". I suggest that there are two things which never change: one is human nature which has a natural tendency towards evil and has to be consciously controlled and educated in order to do anything good. If our society today is morally worse than in previous generations it is not because human nature is worse but because it is not subject to such strict controls as it was. The other unchangeable is God. What is perfect can only change for the worse; God cannot do that. He alone can provide that horizon, that solid rock, that anchor, which can sustain us in times of change and in times of crisis, give us right values by which to live and offer real hope for the future.

Did you hear about the minister who dreamed he was preaching a sermon and woke up to find that he was?
Farnsfield Branch Launches Shoebox Appeal

Samworth Church Academy in Mansfield was the venue for the official handover of a Large number of Shoe Box Parcels, prepared by local schoolchildren, destined for delivery to Service personnel serving in Afghanistan particularly members of our local Regiment, 2 Mercian. Children from the Academy and from St Michael’s School in Farnsfield prepared the parcels. Some of the children were able to attend the handover ceremony during which pupils and staff read a poem and a prayer specially written for the occasion. Copies of these will be sent with the parcels.

The parcels have been prepared in response to an appeal started by Karl and Kaysi Shaw, of Farnsfield & District Branch of the Royal British Legion, after they watched a TV documentary about the conditions British Service Personnel are having to contend with whilst serving thousands of miles from home. The parcels contain a range of non perishable goods and treats not readily available to troops serving in a war zone as well as personal messages from the children themselves. Captain Nick Onslow, who has served in Iraq, said ‘Parcels like these give a real morale boost to our soldiers who really appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who send them’.

The parcels were handed over to Karl and Kaysi Shaw, and other members of the RBL, and are now on their way to our troops in Afghanistan.
Hello Dad its Joe here.
Oh my son I have been missing you dear.
The war is now over and I can come home
No more battlefields for me to roam

That is great news and what a delight
Your mum'll be pleased, no longer you'll fight
We'll tell all the neighbours what a party it will be
With banners and bunting and great jollity

I've got a friend here can I bring him to stay
Yes Joe that will be OK
He's lost both his legs and his face is a mess
To come would bring him such happiness

I'm sorry son but what would the neighbours say
If he came round he would ruin the day
Folks would be embarrassed and wouldn't come round
Really a special home is where he should be bound.

OK bye dad
See you soon

The very next day he received a call
From a man in the army his spirit did fall
You see that friend was really his son
And by a grenade the damage was done

And because of the attitude his father had
By not accepting the crippled lad
He committed suicide and put his life to an end.
How his father regretted not accepting that friend

A poem written by a 13yr old after hearing about this true story.
Future Events

11th September
Dedication of the Fleet Air Arm Memorial at the National Arboretum

26th September
The Band of the Royal Air Force College, May Hall, Trent College. 7.30pm £10

10th October
RTTW2, National Memorial Arboretum. This is an event which ran last year for the first time, simply as the ‘Ride To The Wall’ and was an idea to get a few bikers to ride across the country and meet at the Armed Forces Memorial paying a small fee to do so. The organisers expected around 300 bikes but in excess of 2,500 turned up and having seen the images it was something to behold. Over £10,000 was raised for the Royal British Legion/Help for Heroes/NMA. This year there will also be a flypast by a Spitfire. Full info can be found on the website http://www.rttw.org/

18th October
County Standard Bearers Competition, Bulwell TA Centre, 1.30pm

25th October
Mansfield & Mansfield Bellamy Festival of Remembrance at the Palace Theatre, Leeming Street, Mansfield. The event is always a good afternoon’s entertainment at a very cheap price. Tickets remain at £5, in the hope that all who wish can attend. (Poppy tins available in the foyer if you wish to pay more!) Tickets from the Theatre box office from 1st September. (01623 633133)

5th December
2 Mercian Regiment return from Afghanistan and march through Nottingham

Grandparents

(Courtesy of Joe Martin - Mansfield Branch)

She was in the bathroom, putting on her makeup, under the watchful eyes of her young granddaughter, as she’d done many times before. After she applied her lipstick and started to leave, the little one said, "But Gramma, you forgot to kiss the toilet paper good-bye!" I will probably never put lipstick on again without thinking about kissing the toilet paper good-bye...

My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?" I mentally polished my halo and I said, "No, how are we alike?" "You're both old," he replied.

I didn't know if my granddaughter had learned her colours yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what colour it was. She would tell me and was always correct. It was fun for me, so I continued. At last, she headed for the door, saying, "Grandma, I think you should try to figure out some of these, yourself!"

Children's Logic: "Give me a sentence about a public servant," said a teacher. The small boy wrote: "The fireman came down the ladder pregnant." The teacher took the lad aside to correct him. "Don't you know what pregnant means?" she asked. "Sure," said the young boy confidently. 'It means carrying a child.'