



# **The Royal British Legion**

THE ROYAL BRITISH  
LEGION



## **Market Harborough Branch**

Reg Charity 219279

# ***In Touch***

*Issue 158*

*November 2011*

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

**‘Shoulder to Shoulder  
With All Who Serve’**

**Next Monthly Branch Meeting  
Thursday  
15 December**

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

## **Local Remembrance Events**

A full week of activities took place culminating in the Remembrance Service at the War Memorial on Sunday.

Mark Hudson led a team of volunteers on Monday to set out the Remembrance garden. This looked a treat with the crosses and Cenotaphs having been re-furbished by the inmates and staff at Gartree Prison using materials donated by local firms.

On the 11th the wreath was laid at the Welland Park Memorial at 1015 and the maroons were fired at 11 in the Square and wreaths placed on the WW2 Gate. A large crowd watched the ceremony. At 11 minutes past 11 I understand that Robert Smyth School observed a two minutes silence and sprays of poppies were placed at the Memorial Boards in the entrance hall.

The Sunset Ceremony on Saturday featured a reading of the winning poem by the writer followed by the Last Post played by Jack Hughes. Remembrance Sunday attracted a large crowd both in the church and at the Memorial.

The parade led by the ATC band included a large contingent of ACF cadets and for the first time a group of Sea Cadets who are striving to build a unit in the town.

The Garden was put away by another team of volunteers and returned to Gartree until next year's Remembrance time.

The Remembrance Concert once again proved a great success with

the Harborough Band entertaining a sizeable audience.

The picture is reproduced courtesy of the Harborough Mail



### **The Poppy**

This is the winning poem written by Mr Paul Palmer

Upon the fields of Flanders  
the poppy brightly stands  
a vivid splash of scarlet  
on a quiet piece of land.

So many red poppies  
now sway in their fields of corn,  
bowing to a lost generation,  
now yet, another one is born

Let them not forget the fallen,  
history should be well read,  
for without its knowledge,  
ignorance will count the dead.

## **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 Ramsay**  
01858 434923

So for the fading khaki  
and also for the grey,  
stand for two minutes silence,  
and for peace let us pray.

On the eleventh hour  
of the eleventh day,  
in the cold chill of November,  
An echo gun does bray.

The armistice was signed  
on that bitter winter day,  
for the first time the guns lay silent,  
bayonets broken in the clay

The sounding of the last post  
I hear the bugle blow,  
for those mothers sons now lie,  
where the poppies freely grow.

One frail old soldier  
recalls his comrades last stand,  
and contemplates so many white  
crosses,  
that saturate the land.

Once in that far flung corner  
the flower of youth did brightly stand  
their splash of blood remembered,  
upon that quiet piece of land.

## **Branch AGM**

The following were elected at the  
AGM

Chairman - John Standish

Vice Chairman - John Morley

Treasurer - Myra Grewcock

Secretary - Betty Ramsay

Committee - Bob England, Brian  
Thomas, John Cox, John Fulks,  
Dave Pryor, and Fred Brown.

John Liddell stood down from the  
Committee and as Poppy Wreaths

organiser, thank you John for all you  
have done in the past

The Branch Annual Report was  
adopted as was the Branch Plan for  
the forthcoming year. The plan in-  
cludes appointments to some key  
positions, In Touch editor, social  
team leader and re-establishing the  
social team, a member responsible  
for PR and one to take on responsi-  
bility for recruiting new members. Of  
course these posts need not all be  
different people.

The Chairman felt the branch had  
achieved a lot during the year, we  
had appointed a new Standard  
Bearer, membership numbers had  
been maintained, some branch  
meetings had been followed by talks  
or social activities, two Gold Awards  
had been presented, several high  
profile events had featured the  
branch and meetings had been set  
up with the Youth group. The poetry  
competition had attracted a number  
of excellent entries and generated  
good publicity for the branch  
Unfortunately the President, Brian  
Marshall resigned from his post due  
to ill health but the Committee are in  
the process of appointing a new  
President and hope to announce  
more details next month.

The Poppy Appeal Organiser re-  
ported that this year may not match  
up to last years record appeal. The  
launch had been a great success  
but the number of collection days  
had been reduced as had the num-  
ber of collectors available.

During the year a Deputy Poppy  
Appeal organiser, namely Mark  
Hudson was appointed.

## **Last Post**

We have all heard the haunting song, 'The Last Post.' It's the song that gives us the lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes. But, do you know the story behind the song?

If not, I think you will be interested to find out one story about its humble beginnings.

Reportedly, in 1862 during the American Civil War, Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of a narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to bring the man back for medical attention. Crawling through the gunfire, the Captain reached the soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment. On reaching his lines, he discovered it was a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead. The Captain lit a lantern and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when war broke out and without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning the father asked permission to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. He asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was turned down

since the soldier was a Confederate, but, out of respect for the father, they said they could give him one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler and asked him to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of his son's uniform. This wish was granted and the melody, we now know as 'The Last Post' used at military funerals was born. The words are:

Day is done.  
Gone the sun.  
From the lakes  
From the hills.  
From the sky.  
All is well.  
Safely rest.  
God is nigh.

Fading light.  
Dims the sight.  
And a star.  
Gems the sky.  
Gleaming bright.  
From afar.  
Drawing nigh.  
Falls the night.

Thanks and praise.  
For our days.  
Neath the sun  
Neath the stars.  
Neath the sky  
As we go.  
This we know.  
God is nigh

This was passed onto me by George Seward but see the next column for an alternative explanation of which there are many.



The Last Post is one of a number of bugle calls in military tradition which mark the phases of the day.

Where "Reveille" signalled the start of a soldier's day, the "Last Post" signalled its end.

It is believed originally to have been part of a more elaborate routine, known in the British Army as "tattoo", that had its origins in the 17th century.

During the evening, a duty officer had to do the rounds of his unit's position, checking that the sentry posts were manned and rounding up the off-duty soldiers and packing them off to their beds or billets. He would be accompanied by one or more musicians.

The "first post" was sounded when the duty officer started his rounds and, as the party proceeded from post to post, a drum was played. The drum beats told off-duty soldiers it was time to rest - if the soldiers were billeted in a town, the beats told them it was time to quit the pubs.

"Tattoo" is a derivation of doe den tap toe, Dutch for "turn off the taps", a call which is said to have followed the drum beats in many a Dutch pub while English armies were campaigning through Holland and Flanders in the 1690s. (It is also from this routine that American practice of "taps" or "drum taps" originated.) Another bugle call was sounded when the party completed their rounds, when they reached the "last post": this signalled the night sentries were alert at their posts and gave one last warning to any soldiers still at large that it was time

to retire for the evening.

"Last Post" was incorporated into funeral and memorial services as a final farewell and symbolises that the duty of the dead is over and that they can rest in peace.

The picture shows the ATC trumpeters playing Last Post at Talbot House, Poperinge during one of their visits to Belgium.



## **Poppy Display Waterstones Book Shop**



## **Army Cadets celebrate Legion 90th Anniversary**

Leicestershire Northamptonshire and Rutland Army Cadets from D Company celebrations took part on "Frog Hill" the Westofts Training Area. This location was where the end credits for the show "Blackadder" were filmed.

The cadets had been on an exercise weekend but this did not stop them from taking some time off in order to commemorate the Legion's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

British Legion Youth Member Cadet Sgt Alex Rowley spoke about how the cadets were pleased to take a break during their tactical exercise and discuss issues about the Legion. The cadets met at 'Frog Hill' and donated money to the Legion in a relaxed and sociable atmosphere. An auction was held for a Royal British Legion Frisbee. This got the cadets to discuss the work the Le-

gion does, and what relevance, and impact it makes to us in everyday lives. Some of the younger cadets described the whole afternoon as an "Educational experience". Other cadets took this as an opportunity to make new friends and discuss the weekend.

One cadet described the Poppy Party as a "worthwhile time" where she met "lovely people" and improved her "social skills". Another saw the Poppy Party as a well deserved opportunity to rest and use the NAAFI facilities provided. The Poppy Party helped individualise every cadet's feelings just as the Legion works hard to individualise every injured or fallen personnel.

The party ended with group photos of the platoons, and the whole company and left each one of the cadets feeling as one united body and "Shoulder to Shoulder" with each other. The cadets then resumed their training exercise and ambushing one another!





**The MOD reported the following soldiers killed in Afghanistan.**

Private Thomas Lake, aged 29 from Watford. 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, was killed Sunday, 20 November 2011.

Lieutenant David Boyce, aged 25 from Welwyn Garden City, Herts and L. Corporal Richard Scanlon, aged 31 from Rhymney, Gwent from 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, were killed on Thursday, 17 November 2011.

L. Corporal Peter Eustace aged 25 from Liverpool of 2nd Battalion The Rifles, was killed on Wednesday, 16 November 2011.

Private Matthew Thornton, aged 28 from Barnsley of 4th Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment was killed Wednesday, 9 November 2011.

Private Matthew Haseldin, aged 21 from Settle 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment, was killed on Thursday, 3 November 2011.

Rifleman Vijay Rai, aged 21 from East Nepal 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, was killed on Saturday, 15 October 2011.

This brings the total of those who have been killed as a result of hostile action in Afghanistan to 345



**Tuesday 10 January  
Late Christmas Lunch**

Reservation to  
**Pat Middleton 01858 445827**  
with menu choice

**Menu**

**Starter**

*Ham Hock Terrine with potato salad*

*Smoked haddock fishcake on mixed leaves with chive dip*

**Main**

*Turkey with trimmings  
Baked white fillet of fish, Mediterranean vegetables in tomato sauce*

*Roast leg of lamb, roast potatoes, vegetables*

*Vegetable risotto, vegetable spring rolls sweet chilli*

**Sweet**

*Christmas pudding, bandy custard*

*Lemon tart, ice cream wine infused berries*

*Fresh fruit salad with cream  
Coffee and mints*

**£12-50 - pay on the day**  
**Meet in the bar at noon**

## What's Going On?

### Subscription Renewals.

Hope you have all renewed your subscriptions - if not please do so as soon as possible, we wouldn't want your membership to lapse.

You will recall that this was going to be the 1st of the slimmed down editions of the newsletter. I received enough contributions to fill the newsletter. You will notice that some of the previous features are no longer included.

#### Events

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| 8 Dec  | Branch Committee Meeting                            |
| 15 Dec | Note change of date Branch meeting with mince pies. |
| 7 Jan  | County conference Astley Village Hall               |
| 10 Jan | Late Christmas Lunch. The Angel                     |
| 9 Mar  | Annual Dinner                                       |

### Stop Press

The Air Cadet Band won the ATC National Marching Band Championships at RAF Halton.

## Branch Contacts

### Secretary

Betty Ramsay  
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### Treasurer & Membership Secretary

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8 Holdenby Close, MH  
LE16 8JE  
01858 419517

### Poppy Appeal

Dave Pryor  
01858 540431

### Wreaths

Post Vacant

### Standard Bearer

Hilary Brazil  
c/o 01858 434923

### Monthly Lunches

Les Moore  
01858 463112

### Editor - *In Touch*

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