The County Plan 2006 - 2007

The Legion's mission is to be the leading Charity safeguarding the welfare interests of all those that have served in the Armed Forces and their dependants. Our plans are to be aligned with the National objectives laid down in the 'Corporate Plan'

1. to define and deliver a caring and sympathetic response to changing welfare needs.
2. to increase the level of support among our membership and volunteers.
3. to increase if possible our 'Poppy Appeal'
4. to strengthen our county structure (Executive) and in so doing offer strong and clear leadership to our Branch officials and members.
5. to build a strong relationship with other service related Charities and Ex-Service Associations.
6. to recruit and retain a strong and active membership.
7. to create and expand public awareness of legion work and the care of the ex-service.
8. to offer training to those that hold specific responsibilities and make these opportunities available to all interested in furthering their knowledge of the Legion's work.

The Poppy Appeal 2005/2006

As the current Appeal year draws to a close, the total stands at around £20,799. Because last year’s figure has been exceeded, no donation from the Branch will be requested.

House-to-house collections for the next Appeal will commence on 28 October and street collections from 4 November.

The Date of the next meeting is June 14th

Branch meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the downstairs Function Room at the Conservative Club, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.

The Committee meets in the same room on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.00 pm.

The Poppy Appeal 2005/2006

Douggie McMeeken, Appeal Organiser
01858 463203

The Royal British Legion
Leicestershire and Rutland

Market Harborough Branch
Reg. Charity 219279

www.mktharborbrl.ukvet.net

In Touch

Issue 92 May 2006

Editor
George Seward: 01858 433873
18 Charles Street, Market Harborough, LE16 9AB
e-mail: g.seward@btinternet.com

Branch Contact Numbers

Welfare
Vida Edwards: 0116 279 3729
Hon. Secretary
Betty Ramsay: 01858 434923
PREPARATIONS FOR SLAUGHTER ON THE MAGINOT LINE

Yesterday I tried to describe the queer, confused night fighting which goes on nowadays round our outposts in front of the Maginot Line. It seems all the queerer in its setting of country almost uns spoilt by war.

The woods are in the full glory of the new leaf, except where it has been stripped away in places by bursts of shrapnel. The fields, across which the attackers move stealthily at night, are seen by day to be brilliant with cowslips and dandelions, and in "no-man's-land" there are apple trees in blossom in the orchards of deserted villages.

Behind the front line, the countryside shows even fewer signs of war. The local villagers were evacuated long ago, and British soldiers in rest and off duty wander, through streets unharmed but deserted.

One of my colleagues was walking through such a village the other day when he heard the sound of organ music coming from the church. He went in and found two British privates taking turns at the organ, one blowing while the other played for 10 minutes, strictly timed.

They were transport drivers from Northumberland, off duty for an hour or two and busy satisfying the good North Country craving for music. In another deserted church, British and French soldiers have attended together services conducted by a priest in the uniform of a French private.

There are plenty of French troops about, since our force in the Maginot Line is an integral part of a larger French formation. Such posts, held by mixed troops of both countries under a single command, are used on each of our flanks to weld up smoothly and firmly to the French forces on either side and to avoid leaving a weak spot.

I do not know whether we have yet used in these combined posts the British unit which appears to be more suitable than any other - the Hampshire Regiment, which draws heavily on the Channel Islands and has plenty of French names.

(Continued at foot of page 2)
In Issue 11 of In Touch, January 1998, the following short piece appeared. “In Far away Places.....”

There are Legion Branches in many parts of the world and some are occasionally mentioned in Legion Magazine. Did you know that there is one in Cork, in the Irish Republic? Berlin has a branch, one of 18 in Germany. In Spain, sun-loving ex-service ex-pats. are catered for in a number of places, including Tenerife in the Canary Islands. There is a branch and club in Malta and San Francisco branch, one of three in the United States, played host to a visiting Royal Naval ship a few months ago. Nearer home, Jersey Branch celebrated its 75th anniversary last year and set a target of increasing the number of members from 875 to 1000!

Reading it again recently, I decided to set off on my travels, making use of the Internet, and visit as many as possible of the 100 or so RBL branches, both in the UK and overseas, that are listed on the Legion website. My first stop was Alfriston, a small branch with 73 members, which meet quarterly in this Sussex village. A report of their April meeting was headed Newsletter No. 38. Does this suggest that No.1 appeared over nine years ago, soon after the first issue of our In Touch?

On to Alrewas in Staffordshire, where I found a photograph of the attractive ex-Road Chef clubhouse, where no doubt many of their 330 members meet. You would be welcome to join them, for example, after a visit to the nearby National Memorial Arboretum.

The Tenerife Branch site looks very enticing, with many colourful photographs of Remembrance and social activities. It is informative, too, and even includes street maps of the main towns.

The Editor is always asking for contributions for In Touch, so I've kept an eye open for anything which he might use. There are odd snippets of Branch information, aspects of their history or things they do and articles and stories that they have published.

To return to the tour, I must mention those visits which have resulted in replies. Many provided email addresses and from them I produced a list of 125 branches, including 71 overseas. I sent emails to all the branches on my contact list telling them about In Touch, which, of course, is available for the world to read on the Internet. I invited them also to make contributions to our newsletter.

Sadly, nineteen were “returned to sender”, probably because the published addresses were out of date. I was disappointed not to have heard from Florida, Berlin, Cork, Hong Kong, Tokyo and a few others. Replies from those contacts who did reply included greetings to our branch members and invitations to visit. There were messages commending either the idea of contacting other branches or on the quality of the In Touch website – all good for the ego!

What will please George is that we have already been given permission to use material that some branches have published, so look out for some fascinating stories. It will be very interesting to see if any branches use material from our site as they have been told they may.

In the peaceful country farther back there are discreet preparations for the slaughter which has not yet happened. The first British military cemetery of this war - our earliest casualties, in December, were buried in a neighbouring French civilian cemetery - has six brown wooden crosses. A hundred yards or so away is the first German cemetery in the Allied area, with seven crosses in it, only one of the crosses on the German graves has a name on it, the other six dead men could not be identified.

The Germans do not give away many points in the game of war.

This report by Evelyn Montague appeared in the Manchester Guardian on May 8 1940 and was republished this month.
Dear Mabel,

I will now try to tell you something of the next day’s adventures (Thursday). First we were called at 5.30am and after the necessary preparations we had breakfast at 6.15, got our lunch and are ready for a long day. But we missed the first train to the Pyramids so have to take a gharry through the city and meet the train on the other side then go to Giza Pyramids by train where the guide had ordered camels and donkeys to be waiting for us. These we mount, the first time I have been on a camel. It was rather fascinating but not too comfortable.

They take us through a Bedouin village and up the hill which is very steep and I was rather afraid the camels would not get up. However, we arrive in time at the top alongside the largest Pyramid where we dismount and climb up to the entrance. At the doorway we have to take off our boots then a guide goes with each of us into the darkness. Each guide takes a candle. It is rather a nervy job for it is a very steep climb and no steps except for small notches cut in the smooth granite and these have been cut since the Pyramid was opened just for the benefit of visitors. It was 30 years building and is 475ft high. The date of it is 2872BC. We get the guide to take a photograph of us here on the camels. This Sphinx was the God of the Sun. Then we go into the Temple of the Sphinx. This is down below the surface of the ground and built up of great columns of granite, 16 of them each 16 feet high. Here, too, are three tombs, the tombs of the Holy Priests and the walls of the centre one are of alabaster. Then in an outside wall is a huge piece of granite 17’ x 4’ x 4’. Here, too, we bought some Roman coins dated 400BC. We also had a glass of lemonade, the last drink before entering on our journey across the desert of Sahara about 9 miles but there is a rest house about half way where we have our lunch.

After lunch we go to see the Tombs of the Sacred Bulls. There are 24 of them, all built of black granite with inscriptions in old Egyptian writing all over them. We looked into one of these which, of course, like all the rest is empty except for a little rat running about it. We could see nothing for him to live on nor anywhere for him to get out. The mummies have all been taken away and some placed in the museums. These Bulls, too, were Gods of the Sun. There are no choice stones in these tombs as they are cut out of the limestone rocks. It is like a long archway with the tombs on either side. From here we went to another tomb, the Tomb of Teh or Tea, the engineer who built the pyramids. This is a wonderfully interesting place. It is quite light there as skylights have been fitted. There are several rooms to it but none of the tombs are left now. The walls here are of limestone and are full of carvings representing the times and customs etc. There are women milking the sacred cow, others worshipping the gods bringing pigeons and other offerings, and the Egyptians fighting the Jews and driving bands of Jewish slaves along and boats being built, others being rowed by sailors, and many other things of this kind.

Now we have seen all [there is] to be seen inside this Pyramid and we go round to the large Sphinx – a huge thing cut from one solid piece of limestone. The date of it is 3133BC. There are 24 of them, all built of black granite with inscriptions in old Egyptian writing all over them. We looked into one of these which, of course, like all the rest is empty except for a little rat running about it. We could see nothing for him to live on nor anywhere for him to get out. The mummies have all been taken away and some placed in the museums. These Bulls, too, were Gods of the Sun. There are no choice stones in these tombs as they are cut out of the limestone rocks. It is like a long archway with the tombs on either side. From here we went to another tomb, the Tomb of Teh or Tea, the engineer who built the pyramids. This is a wonderfully interesting place. It is quite light there as skylights have been fitted. There are several rooms to it but none of the tombs are left now. The walls here are of limestone and are full of carvings representing the times and customs etc. There are women