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For your Diary

**6th December.** RAFA Coffee Morning 9.30 to 12 at the Harbourough Theatre.

**7th December.** Free Trip by car for the Disabled for Shopping in Wellingborough, organised by the LIONS. You would be picked up at home at about 1pm. Ring Ken Stimpson (MH 545820) for details.

**10th December.** Branch AGM - see below.

**21st March, 1998.** Concert given by the Harbourough Band to Celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the formation of our Branch.

Other functions during the Anniversary Year -

**Watch this Space**

**Meetings**

Regular meetings are held on the **Second Wednesday** of each month at 8 pm in the downstairs Function Room, Conservative Club Building, Fairfield Road, Mkt. Harboro'.

The **AGM** is on **10th December** and is your chance to influence how the Branch is run. Don't miss it! There will be a Buffet after the meeting.

Regd. Charity No. 219279

**In Touch**

**The Newsletter**  
 for  
**Members**  
 of  
**Market Harbourough Branch**  
**The Royal British Legion**

Issue No.10 November, 1997

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## Editorial

October and November are obviously the busiest months in the Legion calendar with the Poppy Appeal and Remembrance but in addition the Subscriptions have to be collected, Year end accounts prepared, Agenda and nomination papers for the AGM produced and another issue of *In Touch* written, published and circulated. It is a time of year when the few "willing horses" feel the strain and wonder, "Why is everything left to me?" The point of this introduction is that if you want the Branch to flourish, you should be willing to lend a hand, and those who feel overworked should be willing to ask for help.

In this issue we report on the success of the hard work of our Poppy Appeal Team and give some of the reactions to this year's National launch. In our News pages we describe the Parade and Service on Remembrance Sunday, the observance of the Two Minutes Silence on 11th November and pass on thanks from the County Chairman and an apology from the Minister of Defence.

On our centre pages, as a follow up to the "I was there" story in the September Issue, we reproduce an article on what could be called the "National Servicemen's Jungle War".

As light relief read our Chief Cook's Christmas Cake recipe but try it with caution!!

  
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## Poppy Appeal 1997

Our 1996 result for House-to-House, Street and Static Point Collections in Market Harborough & the Bowdens, was the highest ever, but this year we have exceeded it. We have collected £7082.91 compared to last year's £6479.19, an increase of 9½%.

Our "Counting House" records show that the collecting boxes between them contained 4356 1p and 5245 2p coins. No wonder the boxes felt so heavy! To compensate, there were 48 "fivers", 15 @ £10, one £20 note and one £25 cheque. Judging by the 4064 £1 coins collected (nearly 60% of the total value of the collection), that was the most usual donation. £2435.45 (34%) was in silver the breakdown between denominations being available to anyone who wants to add up the figures on the 20 large sheets on which they are tabulated!!

The results from the villages have not yet been finalised but a guess suggests they are also well up on last year. Added to these will be money for wreaths, donations and church collections and so by the end of the "Poppy Year" in May, we should be well ahead of the unstated target of £10,000.

Of course this result would never have been achieved without the splendid help of all our distributors and collectors, most of whom are non-Members, and the various shops, pubs, clubs, churches, hospitals, schools, hotels, restaurants, banks, building societies, factories, offices and garages, all of which contributed by allowing us to sell poppies, etc. within their premises. We are most grateful to everyone concerned.

## Christmas Cake Recipe.

### From the Chief Cook

#### Ingredients:

1 cup of butter	1 cup caster sugar
4 lge eggs	1 cup dried fruit
1 tbs nuts	1 tps Baking Powder
1 cup Caster Brn Sugar	1 tbs Lemon Juice
	1 Bottle Whisky

#### Method

Sample whisky to check for quality. Take a large bowl. Check whisky again to be sure that it is of the highest quality. Pour one level cup and drink. Repeat. Turn on electric mixer. Beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add a spoon tea of sugar and beat again. Make sure whisky is still OK. Cry another cup. Turn off mixer. Break two leggs and add to bowl and chuck in a cup of dried fruit. Mix on turner. If the fruit gets stuck in the beater pry loose with a drew scriber. Sample the whisky again to check the transisticity. Next sift two cups of salt, or something, who cares? Check the whisky. Now sift the lemon juice and strain the nuts. Add a ballspoon of brown sugar or whatever colour you can find. Wax mell. Grease the oven. Turn the cake pan to 350 gredees. Don't forget to beat off the turner. Throw the bowl out of the window. check the whisky again and bo to ged.

## Branch & Other News

**New Members.** We are pleased to welcome John Liddell, ex- RE "and Arab Legion" (there should be an In Touch story there!) and John Chamberlain ex - Royal Marines and Korean veteran, as Ordinary Members and hope that they will take a full and active part in the Branch.

**Out of Hospital.** It is good to be able to report that Albert Adams is now home after several weeks first in Kettering and then in Market Harborough Cottage Hospitals. Still having to take things easily, and being on his own, he would be pleased if any fellow member could drop in at 4 Balfour Gardens.

**Subscriptions.** The Membership Secretary has received subs. from most members but a few are still outstanding. If you have not yet paid your £6, please do so quickly, at the latest by 10th December. So, if you will not be at the AGM on that day, either take it or post it to George Fleming, 11 Watson Avenue, Market Harborough, LE16 9NA.

**Donation Received.** Each year the Market Harborough Carnival Committee invite charitable causes in the district to apply for donations from the money they have raised. Our Branch applied for a grant towards the cost of producing and distributing In Touch and has now received a cheque for £50. This together with the contributions from our advertisers means that the Newsletters will need only a small amount from branch funds in the coming year.

Continued on Page 8

## Remembrance Sunday.

Although the Parade and Church Service is really a civic responsibility, it has become established in Market Harborough that the Branch undertakes the organisation of the occasion. Once again the Parade which was led by the ATC band, was under the command of ACF RSM Dave Harrald. The Queen's Colour was carried by George Fleming, escorted by the same two Army Cadets who distinguished themselves in the 8th June Ceremonial. John Cox carried the Branch Standard and the Standards of the RNA, RAFA, ACF and the Scouts, with representatives of many other organisations, all added to the significance of the occasion.

The large congregation in the Church, included the Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire and Mrs Brookes, Cllr. Ken Day and Mrs. Day, Mr Edward Garnier, M.P., and H D C Chief Executive, Mr M Wilson and Mrs Wilson. The inter-denominational service was conducted by our Chaplain, Rev. Chris Moody, with Rev. Brian Pavis giving the Sermon. An unusual feature of the Service was the singing of the new hymn the words of which were published in the October/November edition of "Legion".

As the parade returned to the Town Square, the salute was taken by Cllr. Day and our President, Peter Wilson. Then followed a wreath laying Ceremony with the Last Post and Reveille played by members of the Harborough Band. The general opinion was that the whole event had been a success (despite the rain which started to fall as we reached the Square). Much credit is due to all those who were involved in the organisation.

## The Spice Girls & the Poppy Appeal

by  
Tom Ashmore.

So much has been said about the decision to use these super-hyped, sexy young ladies, that our I saw fit to seek the views of those present at the last Branch meeting. Those who spoke were violently opposed to the idea suggesting lack of dignity or respect for those the Poppy represented, insincerity on the part of the Girls and a gross error of judgement on the part of Legion HQ. Apparently, those who did not speak (perhaps overwhelmed by the vehemence of those who did) thought otherwise and after the meeting I was told that there was indeed a good deal of support for the launch.

This difference of opinion echoed messages on the Legion's Internet network. Here are some views from around the Legion.

Phil Manning, West Clandon Branch, wrote,

"Some of them looked on TV .. as if they were wondering what they were doing there... and as for one of them crying ...are you sure she did not have something in her eye, a false eyelash or something...? I know it is supposed to try and attract the younger generation to the whole idea of the Legion Poppy Appeal and not to forget the sacrifice our Service people gave to the country..... But the Spice Girls seem a whole world away from our Service personnel."

From Guy Voice, Poppy Appeal Secretary,  
Burgess Hill Branch,

"It is interesting that Phil described the Spice Girls as a world away from service personnel.

That is true and that is precisely why the Legion needs to engender that kind of support. ... Children today learn those events as history and in an age where people's dependence increasingly relies on charitable work the ability of the Legion to deliver a message that crosses age groups and social classes is paramount. It disappoints me that people will see this in a cynical fashion but children and younger people...are image, fashion & brand conscious and many of their role models... are pop stars, footballers and people in the media....."

Bernie Steed (54yrs) and 33 yrs service  
Pall Mall Member, said,

".... Very well done .. for gaining all that lovely publicity.... The few old cynics you may possibly antagonise may also learn something."

From Jeremy Lillies, Head of Public Affairs,  
The Royal British Legion.

".....Needless to say that every national newspaper yesterday covered the story prominently and with pictures. All the main TV and radio news programmes also carried it on the day, right through to the late evening. I was at the launch and at the grand old age of 57, was not at all uneasy at the Spice Girls inclusion. They.. actually wanted to do it as soon as they heard the proposal and there was no fee for the Legion to pay.

The editorial in the Daily Telegraph sums it up,

"Anyone who winced yesterday at the Spice Girls reading from ... "For the Fallen.... forgets who those fallen were. They were, in the great majority, heterosexual young men. The idea that their death would have been honoured in public by five sexy British girls would have delighted them. If there were a war today, the Spice Girls would be the Forces' sweethearts. Their example should help to persuade the young to remember, and to give."

## County Chairman says, "Thank You"

*The following is taken from the County Circular for November.*

"Yet another year has passed and we are now into the counting of the poppy appeal. May I take this opportunity to say thank you to all the unsung heroes who give freely of their time to help in this annual appeal, which in many cases takes a year to plan and complete. This year we have taken on the additional task of a public education programme "Pause to Remember" which I am happy to say I think we are winning for, as I have travelled around the county, I have been greatly encouraged by the public support we are receiving. This in many cases is due to the hard work being carried out at Branch level to make the public aware. In turn, this awareness and support is coming from young and old alike."

## The MOD says, "Sorry"

*The following letter has been received by the National Chairman, Graham Downing, from George Robertson, Defence Secretary.*

"Dear Graham,

I have investigated the circumstances in which a damaged Union Jack was flown upside down over the Ministry of Defence Main Building on Remembrance Sunday. This was a regrettable human error: immediately the mistake was ascertained the flag was lowered and then re-hoisted. I have instructed that an immediate review be made of our arrangements for the flying of flags to ensure that these regrettable and embarrassing circumstances do not recur.

Meanwhile I want to express my deepest regret for any hurt and distress this has caused your members and other veterans who participated in the moving ceremonies over the weekend.

Yours sincerely, GEORGE ROBERTSON"

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**A Community Building for Market Harborough?** As a member of the South Leicestershire Council for Voluntary Services, the Branch has been asked whether we would support the idea of a building which could be used by different voluntary organisations in the district. Our response has been that we could be interested depending on what accommodation and facilities were provided and would wish to be involved in the development of the proposal. This is likely to be a fairly long process. We certainly should not regard this as our new Headquarters yet!! There is another possibility of similar premises being provided as part of the recently reported redevelopment of Welland Park. We will keep in touch with that idea, also.

**Remember the Home Guard?** A television company is seeking urgent contact with former members or their relatives for a major documentary. They want to hear from anyone with a funny, tragic, moving or revealing story to tell. If you can help please contact Jeremy Williams in confidence at Laurel Productions, 116-118 Grafton Road, London NW5 4BA or by telephone on 0171 267 9399.

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Branch members who live out of town will have attended their own local Remembrance Services. In Lubenham, for example, the whole service was held around the Village Memorial where our Standard was carried by George Fleming, the Last Post was played by members of the Harborough Band and wreaths were laid.

## Armistice Day.

Here in the town, two short ceremonies took place. At 10.30 am. A few Members gathered by our Memorial in Welland Park. The Act of Homage and Silence was observed, a Wreath laid and crosses planted.

On the Square, members of the Branch, the RNA and RAFA formed two ranks in front of the Memorial Gates. The Act of Homage and the Kohima Epitaph were recited, the beginning and end of the Silence being signalled by the firing (by Andrew Marriott) of maroons. Prayers were said by Mr Eric Buswell. The Police halted the traffic and the quite large number of the general public on the Square stood still and there was complete silence. It was most encouraging to see how well the revival of the Two Minutes Silence is being respected.

Earlier and in the very different setting of the Chapel of Neville Holt School, Dick Fulford recited the Act of Homage, his grandson played the Last Post (on the euphonium), and the 7 to 11 years old pupils stood in silence. This followed a short talk by Tom Ashmore on the meaning and importance of the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

## **The Malayan Campaign 1948 - 1960**

*In the previous issue of In Touch, John Cox recalled how, as a National serviceman, he served in Malaya during 1953 and 1954. The following article puts John's story into the context of a little known but 12-year long campaign involving a hundred thousand British service personnel, the vast majority being National Servicemen. We are grateful for permission to reproduce the text from "75 More Years", the Official Publication to mark the 75th Anniversary of The Royal British Legion, published by Strategems Publishing.*

Arthur Walker managed the Elphin Estate rubber plantation in Sungei Siput some eighteen miles north of Ipoh in North Malaya. Shortly after he had started work in his office on the morning of 16th June 1948, three young Chinese rode up to the estate offices on bicycles. They knocked on his door, bade him good morning and then shot him twice through the chest. The same day two other European estate managers were killed in the Sungei Siput area. A 'state of emergency' was proclaimed that evening in several districts in Perak and Johore. This was extended to the whole of the two States on the following day and on 18th June a 'state of emergency' was declared for the whole of Malaya. So began the twelve year long anti-Communist war in Malaya.

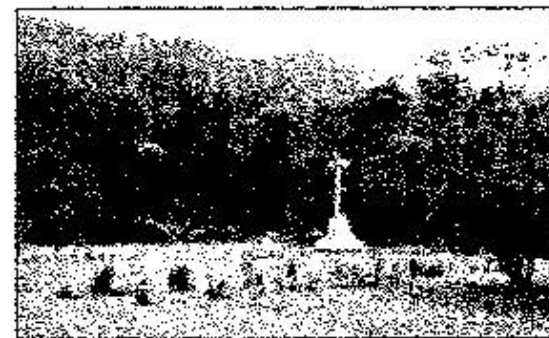
The Communist Army which had fought the Japanese invaders throughout the 1942-45 war in the Far East had now re-organised as the Malayan People's Anti-British Army (MPABA). Their aim was to achieve, by force of arms, a break from the British Colonial system and to create a Communist State. In 1949, in an attempt to win wider support for

their cause, the MPABA was re-named the Malayan Races' Liberation Army (MRLA). Successive British Governors resisted the terrorists demands and large numbers of British troops, for the most part National Servicemen, were deployed to wage a successful anti-guerrilla campaign in the most inhospitable jungle terrain. A successful 'Hearts and Minds' campaign was initiated by Sir Gerald Templer, appointed both High Commissioner and Director of Operations in 1951, which began to turn the tide. The Malay Regiment was expanded and given additional responsibilities; villages were protected and isolated from terrorist intimidation, and psychological warfare programmes were initiated to persuade terrorists to defect.

Successive regiments, particularly the Gurkhas, engaged the Communist guerrillas in the jungle and beat them at their own game. Whilst the Americans struggled in Vietnam, the British fought an anti-terrorist campaign in Malaya which has since remained a textbook example of how to fight a jungle war.

It took twelve years to defeat communist insurgency. The campaign was, in many ways, an object lesson in successful anti-guerrilla operations which sadly has not been repeated very often since. Though the backing of regular troops, aircraft and relatively sophisticated equipment was a vital ingredient in defeating insurgency, success could not have been achieved without the wholehearted participation of the indigenous population - the Federal Army, the Home Guard, the Police Force, the Malayan Chinese Special Branch double agents and the bulk of the civilian population itself. By the end of the war the

police force numbered 67,000 and the Home Guard 350,000. Some 3,000 civilians, 1,350 policeman and 128 Malayan soldiers lost their lives during the war. British Army casualties were seventy officers, 280 men and 159 Gurkhas killed. Of the 12,000 members of the MRLA who had opposed the security forces throughout the Emergency, 6,710 were killed, 2,696 surrendered, 2,820 were wounded and 1,290 captured. The remaining thousand died of disease or malnutrition, deserted or were executed by their own commanders.



Part of the War Graves Commission Cemetery at Taiping, Perak, Malaysia in which some of those killed during the "Emergency" are buried.

*A visit to this cemetery was described in the November 1996 issue. Many men of the Leicestershire Regiment killed in December 1941 are among the 900 mainly British, Indian and Gurkha troops buried there.*

### **War Grave Pilgrimages**

The programme of visits to War Graves throughout the world, is available from the Editor, Tel: MH 431515