

In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996



The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279

Shoulder to Shoulder with all who Serve

Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923



years of caring in the
local community



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Issue 178

July 2013

Next Monthly Branch Meeting

7.30 pm Wednesday 14 August
Committee 8 August

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Branch News

Here is the picture of the Carnival marquee omitted last month.



Some Members attended and enjoyed the Peaker Park Open Day at on 20th June and their American themed Hoedown Party on 6th July.

At the Branch lunch on 2nd July it was good to see three of the members newly transferred from Ashley.

Events celebrating Armed Forces Day locally started with a Coffee Morning on 22nd June which raised £364 thanks to the help from ACF & ATC Cadets and RAFA, RNA & Legion members. The significance of the Flag Raising Ceremony on 24th June was marked by the presence of Neil Townsend, DL, Geraldine Robinson, HDC Chairman and Blake Piai, Council Leader. Then on Sunday 30th June, there was a full programme of activities following the ceremonial opening by Air Commodore Martin Halsall, son of members Constance and the late Bernard Halsall, introduced by the High Sheriff of Leicestershire, Mrs Sally Bowie. In the Show

Ring there were displays by The ATC marching band and Dogs from the Defence Animal Centre. RNA, RAFA, RBL (our branch & Riders East Midlands Region), and ACF, ATC and Sea Cadets each had stands as did the Army, RAF, St Johns Ambulance, Police and Fire Service. Vintage military and civilian (our Chairman's MG), were also on show. Harborough FM provided the Public Address system allowing all to hear Entertainer, Peter Wayre and Harborough Musical Theatre. A very successful event ended with



a Sunset ceremony and a fly-past by a Dakota.



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At the Branch meeting, Cllr Phillip Knowles had been invited to talk about the future of the War Memorial at the Cottage Hospital. His view was that the Portico should be sited at the new hospital being built at St. Luke's, especially if it was named M H Memorial Hospital. In discussion, one member disagreed. The Branch concern about the condition of the Memorial Cross on The Square was also discussed.

Cover Photo

Pipers at Helmstedt as part of the Berliner celebrations in 2012.

Sealed Orders

by Tom Jeacock

Another duty I got was when the sergeant major said, 'Jeacock, go to the armoury and draw live ammunition and the get down to the station. When we got there was a high ranking officer who said he wanted me to get a batch of German prisoners of war to the British Zone. They were



already on the train in cattle wagons although we had a proper carriage. The driver of the train said to me, 'I hope you know what you are doing because when I took some Americans they behaved like cowboys and Indians popping off ant anything as the passed through the Russian Zone'.

We eventually got to the check point near the border of the Russian Zone and before I could look out, the train had stopped and there was a rattle on the door and there was a German interpreter. All the prisoners were off the train, lined up in three ranks. I told my chaps, 'When you jump down from the train, slam a round up the breach

to show that we are armed and want no trouble.' I went along with the interpreter to where there were Russians who said that all the prisoners were to stay with them. I said, 'No, we are to take them back with us.' The chap in charge of the Russians then walked up and down and picked about half a dozen of them that he said they wanted, but again I refused to hand them over. He then selected four and became very insistent that he took them.

I asked the interpreter if the officer spoke any English and when he said he did not I said I had sealed orders on the train and went back to them pick up. Then in front of the Russian I made a great deal of breaking the red seal and showed him the paperwork with their squiggly signatures and told the interpreter to say that they showed that we had to take these men and everything had been agreed with their people. I had got away with it and we were told to get back on the train.

We stopped just over the border to the British Zone at Helmstedt and an officer asked for the guard commander but I was having a wash and shave. He came and opened the door saying, 'I would like a word with you. We are ever so pleased you got

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The Tom Boyd Story

Dick Fulford's article in *In Touch* in April 2006 is reproduced here but with a follow-up to give the sequel to his earlier story that was put on the BBC People's War Web site.

In issue 22 of *In Touch* I gave an account of the raid on St Nazaire which took place in March 1942. (I must emphasise that I did not take part, otherwise I doubt if I would be writing this article!) But, remaining on this side of the Channel, I had good knowledge of the action and with the help of the 1956 book entitled "The Greatest Raid of All" I was able to write the 1999 article.

Thanks to the invention of the Internet, Dr Martin, a lady from Bristol, came across my article on the BBC People's War Web site. She was helping her 9-year-old son with his school project, "What did my Great Granddad do in the War". She left a message on the web site (see p5) asking the author (me) for more information and, having traced her (see 2), Tom Ashmore put her in touch with me. This resulted in interesting correspondence concerning her Granddad, Lieutenant Tom Boyd RNVR. He was the CO of MLI 60 and

a hero of St Nazaire, whose boat was one of only three (of 16) which survived, and the only one which returned to Dartmouth, where I was stationed.

Tom Boyd was a "character", a "Jack the Lad" of the 1940s! But his

bravery during the raid was recognised and he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. His

Petty Officer coxswain was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal and his two Motor Mechanics the Distinguished Service Medal.

Dr Martin tells me that she is his eldest grandchild, but when her Granddad died in 1987 she was not too familiar with his exploits and knew little about the raid which, of course, had taken place 40-odd years beforehand. So I was able to recommend the book, and knowing it was long out of print I sent her my copy for her young son to treasure. This of course was received with much pleasure and the few personal details I gave her of her Granddad she circulated to his numerous other grandchildren.

It's a small world; but isn't it satisfying to know that our RBL Branch can



give pleasure to three generations of a previously unknown family?

In case a reminder is needed the St Nazaire Raid resulted in the destruction of the only Dry Dock able to house German capital ships, especially the Tirpitz. But sadly the cost was great; of the 611 sailors and commandos taking part 169 were killed, around 200 taken prisoner, and countless were wounded. Five Victoria Crosses were awarded which Admiral Louis Mountbatten said was "Surely by far the highest proportion of VCs ever awarded for a single operation".



However, Germany's capital ships were stopped from ever raiding Atlantic shipping which resulted years later in them being either destroyed or locked up in Norwegian waters.

Tom Boyd's bravery and that of the other 611 soldiers and sailors contributed to the eventual successful ending of WWII.'

1. Dr Boyd's message

Tom Boyd DSO I found the mention of my grandfather very interesting, he never spoke about the war as I expect is the case for many ex-service men and women. If Mr Dick Fulford has any other memories of my grandfather Lieutenant Tom Boyd I would be fascinated to hear them.
Dr Bee Martin

2. Tracing Dr Martin

In case she did not look on the BBC site for a response, I searched for her name on the Internet. This led to a list of some of the staff at Bristol University Hospital. From this guessed her email address but getting no response, emailed another name, Joanne Gardner, asking her to give her my email address.

I then received:

Dear Mr Ashmore,

Thank you very much for getting back to me and for the information. Please send it (again) to my home email address as the work one got rather scrambled by the NHS firewall!

What I had sent was:

Dear Dr Martin,

In the hope that I have located the granddaughter of Lt Tom Boyd, . . . Dick Fulford is most intrigued that you would like more information. . . If you wish to make contact with him his address is. . .

The result was as Dick's article describes.

Continued from p 3

through. We didn't think you would because the last guard did not and they are still in Russian hands and we don't know where they are.' He wanted to know how we got through and I explained I had had to break the Sealed Orders. 'That does not matter. You did very well to get here.' So that was that.

Background

At the end of the War the allies divided Germany into Zones of Occupation. Although Berlin was in the Russian zone, the city was split into Sectors to be occupied by the respective allies. The Russians allowed only limited access to the city and Tom travelled on the only rail link to the British zone. A regular freight and passenger service was set up, the latter known as 'The Berliner' British Military Train. This ran in each direction every day except Christmas day and during the 'Blockade' (which necessitated the Berlin Air Lift) from 1945 to 1991. It took about four hours to travel the 145 mile journey mainly due to the border inspections and changing engines.

In May 2012, in a special celebration, 'The Berliner' ran again using the original (refurbished) locomotive and recreating the excellent service the Royal Corps of Transport used to provide for their passengers. A nostalgic trip for many who were in Berlin in the Cold War.

Miscellany

Cadets From the [MOD web-site](#) (in July 2008) we read, 'The history of the cadet forces dates back to the 1850s with the formation of forerunners of the existing organisations. . . The [Army Cadet Force](#) has 44,000 cadets in over 1700 Centres and the Air Training Corps almost 41,000 members, in over 1,000 Squadrons. The [Sea Cadet Corps](#) started in the 1850's with orphanages set up after the Crimean War run with the help of sailors returning from the Crimea.'



The Poppy Bus at the Air Show at RAF Cottesmore in July 2000.
I can find no current mention of this mobile exhibition, which was also available for local events.
Does it still exist?

A Bit of Fun

Slept like a log last night..... Woke up in the fireplace.

I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day but I couldn't find any.

Sign in a Cocktail Lounge - 'Ladies are requested not to have children in the Bar.'

County Half-year Conference

The Branch acted as hosts on 15th June to a poorly attended meeting at which the main agenda item was a presentation by the new East Midlands Area Manage, Paul Mulingani. He showed a video about the newly established Call Centre and then outlined how the Pathway to Growth is being progressively developed. Some of the HQ functions are being decentralised to the three Regions and fourteen Areas into which the country has been divided. The HQ of each Region and Area will have prominent, well located premises with trained staff able to offer face to face help and advice to the public and in particular to potential beneficiaries. The same will apply at the more local level, such as at Market Harborough, with 'drop-in' centres manned by trained volunteers in appropriate shared premises.

Although the emphasis of the changes is to ensure that all those for whom the Legion exists to support, receive the help they need, they also are intended to make the work and purpose of the Legion more widely known.

In discussion, there was some scepticism about the proposals and criticism of some lack of local involvement within our Area. However, it was pointed out, such changes will take time to fully develop and to overcome problems that arise.

LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

6 AUGUST *MEET IN THE BAR
AT NOON*

MENU

Whitby whole tail scampi with
British Maris piper chips and garden
peas

Mini Angelic Ploughman's
(Grasmere farm scotch egg, pork pie
and red Leicester cheese served
with a wedge of crusty onion bread)

Roast shoulder of British lamb
with roast potatoes, Yorkshire
pudding, gravy and vegetables

Paris brown mushroom, spinach and
mascarpone Lasagne
with garlic dough balls (gf)



Individual summer pudding
with clotted cream and clotted
cream Ice-cream

Zesty Lemon cheesecake
with raspberry sorbet

Fresh fruit Salad
With fruity Sorbet (v) (gf)

(V)= Vegetarian (gf)= Gluten free (can be GF= and
item can be changed to make the dish Gluten free

£8.50 Pay on the day

To book, ring Les Moore (01858 463112) before 30 July. To cancel a booking you must phone The Angel (01858 462702) before 10 am on the day or you will be charged.

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 14 Jul Poppy Walk - please sponsor our Ramsay Walkers
- 26 July Cheese & Cocktail Party 6 to 8pm @ Peaker Park
- 6 Aug Branch lunch- see menu
- 10 Aug RNA Coffee Morning @ Harbro' theatre
- 20 Aug Visit to Poppy Factory- For a place contact Betty Ramsay ASAP
- 26 Oct Poppy Appeal launch
- 2 Nov Festival of Remembrance de Montfort Hall
- 10 Non Remembrance Sunday
- 16 Nov Annual Band Concert

Welfare

If you are aware of any one who qualifies for, and may benefit from The Royal British Legion welfare services please contact

Betty Ramsay
01858 434923

Coming Next Month

VJ Day 60th Anniversary', 'Culture Shock' for new ex-pat, news and Miscellany

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Branch Website

www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/market-harborough

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