

In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

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The Royal British Legion

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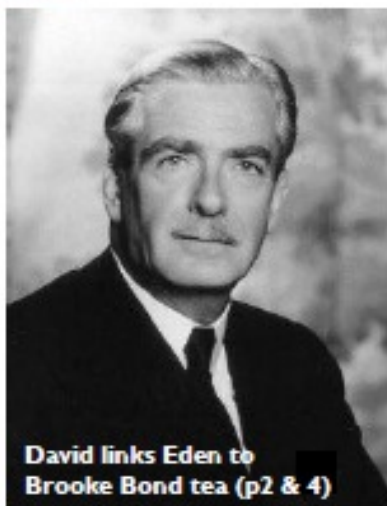
Shoulder to Shoulder with all who Serve

Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923



years of caring in the local community



David links Eden to Brooke Bond tea (p2 & 4)

Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm Wednesday 13 November
Committee 7 November

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Annual General Meeting

The President thanked those who had sent him good wishes during his illness. He praised the excellent work of the Chairman and the Secretary in the Branch and reported briefly on matters external to the branch. In his address (to be reported in the next Issue) the Chairman gave his review of the past year and thanked those who had helped to make it successful. He was standing down after two years in post and wished the new chairman every success. The Treasurer presented the Branch Accounts, for the new accounting year ending on 30 June, which were

approved. Reports on Welfare, Social, Poppy Appeal and Standard Bearer had been tabled with the agenda.

The Election results were as follows

Rev. John Morley	Chairman
Brian Thomas	Vice Chairman
Betty Ramsay	Secretary
Myra Grewcock	Treasurer

Committee Members

John Cox, Brian Lee, Janet Lee, Pat Middleton, Barbara Pickup, David Pryor, John Standish.

Members re-affirmed the positions of Andrew Granger, Con Halsall and Mark Hudson as President and Vice-Presidents.

Annual Conference Branch Delegate would be John Standish

Branch News 2012/2013 Year Highlights

Celebrating the Branch 90th Anniversary Year

The Anniversary Dinner was attended by special invited guests. At the Carnival, the Branch stand had a display about activities and events during the last 90 years. Members were taken back at the March meeting to 1923, with an on screen presentation of what was happening locally and world-wide in our formation year. An on-paper version was included with the March In Touch. A prominent '90 years' banner has appeared on the cover page of In Touch and the home page of the branch website

Armed Forces Day events

The Branch took a lead role in organising the Flag Raising, Welland Park events and coffee morning as chairman and secretary of the AFD Committee were branch members. Other members provided and manned a stand at Welland Park.

Social activities

A visit to the Poppy Factory was enjoyed by members and visitors. The management at Peaker Park invited members to several of the residents' social occasions including one for the Branch held in lieu of a general meeting. Regular monthly lunches at The Angel have continued and another

Cover Photo

Sir Robert Anthony Eden, British Prime Minister 1955 -1957 at the time of the Canal Zone conflict.

Copied from Wikipedia.

'Late Christmas Lunch' with RAFA and RNA was held as was the Annual Concert by Harborough Band.

Poppy Appeal

The 2012 Appeal Launch again included the Northampton Pipe Band and local Cadets Funds were raised from a coffee morning and a Swing Night. The presentation of Service Awards which followed the AGM, will be reported in next month's issue.

Branch Standard

Our Standard Bearer has been present

at many Branch, County and other events and funerals where requested.

Other happenings

County Half-year Conference was hosted by the Branch. A coffee morning raised about £350 for Branch funds. The In Touch editor resigned and a new editorial duo was appointed. Thanks to a generous offer by Prime Life Ltd, printing is being undertaken by them free of charge. Members of the closed Ashley Branch transferred to us. We again organised Remembrance time events.

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A Message from our New Chairman

I feel very privileged to have been elected Chairman of our branch and will do my very best along with the committee to serve your needs and interests. I pay a personal tribute to John Standish for his leadership for the last two years which have incorporated our celebrations of both the RBL and our branch's 90th anniversaries.

One of my major emphases this year will be to build up our branch membership. We have a lot of members - a majority - who are not attending our monthly meetings; in some cases this is because of age or frailty. If you are one of these and would like a home visit, please let us know. For some the difficulty may be transport; again please get in touch with us and we will see if something can be arranged so you can join us.

I would also like to challenge all our regular members to recruit one new member during the year. It might be someone in the family, a neighbour or a social contact. They do not have to have a service record but just be willing to support the aims and work of the Legion.

Remembrancetide is upon us once again and I appeal to to ALL members to offer an hour of their time to help with the street collections; contact our PAO David Prior who will tell you what slots are available

Let us move forward together standing shoulder to shoulder with all who serve and all who have served our nation.

John Morley

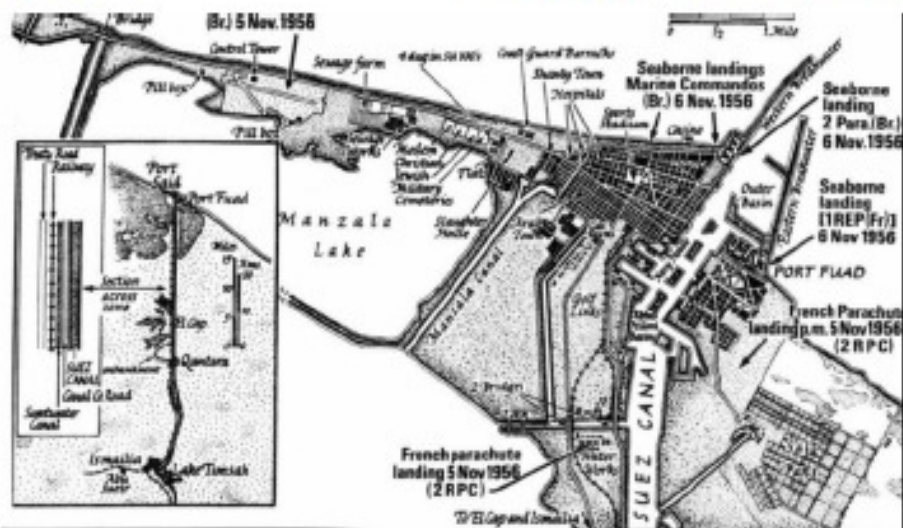
Suez in the Eyes of an 18 Year Old

By David French

My Suez encounter started from the time that I passed from being an ordinary 18 year old raw recruit in the Royal Signals to my volunteering and being accepted by the Parachute Brigade stationed at Aldershot. After passing out from P Company, then Airborne Training School at Weston on the Green, I gained my parachute wings and became a fully fledged parachutist.

smooth to join the aircraft carrier HMS Theseus. We set sail for Cyprus on 5.8.56, arriving on 12.8.56. During our stay in Cyprus preparing for Suez, we carried out various exercises to flush out the EOKA terrorists that were very active during this period.

We set sail on landing craft from Famagusta harbour on 4.11.56 en route to Suez. I remember the crew being mainly Chinese. I do not recommend taking a long journey in a flat bottom boat! Upon entering Port Said harbour, a piper in full dress uniform



The original source of this very relevant map is unknown. It is reproduced from Google images of the Suez Crisis.

On completion of the course, I was preparing to go on leave when out of the blue the Brigade was called out and told that we were going to Cyprus, all leave cancelled. Within days we were en route to Port-

stood on the bows of the boat playing away, seemingly oblivious of the action (a very brave man). Unbeknown to me, Corporal Alan Staff of 2 Para (now a near neighbour) was also on board. On embarking, Alan and rest of 2 Para set

off down the canal, eventually to dig in at a place called El Cap - a stand-off between them and the Egyptian army.

It was my responsibility, with members of Brigade HQ, to take over a block of flats on the harbour front, with instructions to set up a radio link from the top floor apartment/roof top to link up with the troops who had landed by parachute on El Gamel airfield some way outside of Port Said. That night we were subjected to a bombardment of artillery shells from the Egyptian army. Luckily for us they all exploded harmlessly in the harbour and the rest of the night passed fairly quietly apart from sniper fire.

The next day we moved to a Brooke Bond tea factory located between the Suez Canal and the Sweet Water Canal. The place was infested with rats that were, as the saying goes, as big as cats. After the cease fire we attempted to make life as comfortable as possible. However, a mattress made out of cardboard boxes took some getting used to. Playing cards with NAAFI money issue was quite funny - we felt like millionaires with a wad of notes. I never met up with Alan Staff in Suez, although I did meet with a chap called Norman Sturgess from Arthingworth, who was in the Tank Corps.

Civilian life in Port Said was grim for a while, there being very little food etc. Where the majority of the people disappeared to I don't know. However, when they started to return

there seemed a never ending stream of people walking or riding back to the city. Prior to leaving Port Said, one of our last tasks involved the hunt for the young officer who went missing, a member of the Moorhouse jam family I believe.

Unfortunately we left without him.



Canal zone medal

Miscellany



The Cabin being unloaded

What is greater than God,
more evil than the devil,
the poor have it,
the rich need it,
and if you eat it, you'll die?

Answer on page 8

One should go invited to a friend in
good fortune, and uninvited in
misfortune. *Swedish Proverb-*

Most conversations are simply monologues delivered in the presence of witnesses. *Margaret Millar*

From the Minutes March 1981
Mr. Brown proposed that a
Women's Section be formed.

The Royal Air Forces Association 70th Anniversary

Although RAFA is celebrating its 70th Anniversary this year, its roots go much deeper. After the 1914-1918 War ex-members of the Squadrons who served in the war tended to follow the military pattern and formed Squadron Associations on Regimental lines.

This however excluded the new technical branches of the RAF.

Legend has it that in 1929 in the Sergeant's Mess at RAF Andover three men discussed the problem that as many small organisations had grown since the end of WWI to keep Squadrons and units in touch it was time for one organisation to be formed dedicated to this work. This was to be called 'The comrades of the Royal Air Force.

The idea was promoted by the Planesman Magazine and in 1930 an inaugural meeting took place, followed in 1933 by recognition by the Air Ministry. From 1933 to 1939 membership remained small but some benevolent schemes were organised together with a distribution of Christmas Hampers.

In 1939 the WRAF was reformed opening its Old Comrades association to all ranks. In 1941 the two organisations combined to be renamed The Royal Air Forces Association.

In 1943, with more than 1 million serving in the RAF it became clear that the Association would need to be organised on a much sounder basis to play an effective part in the post-war era. To this end the Central Committee

decided that RAFA's aims and objectives should be extended beyond its original purpose.

These were –
"To advise and

assist all ranks leaving the RAF with regard to pensions, disability awards and Grants. To assist all ranks leaving the RAF to find suitable employment and to advise them about business and financial transactions connected to their re-entry into civilian life".

The foundations of the present structure were laid in the remaining wartime years and when demobilisation began in 1945, Welfare Officers, employment officials and legal advisers were appointed at both National and Local level.

On demobilisation membership peaked at 200,000 in 568 Branches.



Membership is now much smaller but we still maintain the original aims of the Association. Our services are available to all those who served in the Royal Air Force or the Air Forces of the Commonwealth.

Together with the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund we maintain 4 Care Homes for respite care, visited by 2,000 clients in 2012.

Also Welfare officers made 13,000 visits to clients, travelling 160,000 miles to dispense Welfare and Financial advice. Our War Pensions Sections gave advice to 2350 clients helping them to get the most appropriate pensions, grants etc for their needs.

RAFA is also involved in the RAF itself. Through the RAF Families Association we provide Welfare and Financial Advice to serving Airman and their families

Geoff Moth, Chairman, MH RAFA

Continued from page 3

Home Alone Christmas Day?

If you, or someone you know, would like to spend the day in the friendly company of others with a full Christmas Lunch, you are invited to an event organised by Churches Together with transport provided. For details please contact Betty Ramsay on 01858 434923, Mel Stride on 01858 468136 or Margaret Bowers on 01858 469215.

LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

5 NOVEMBER MEET IN THE
BAR AT NOON

Menu

Oven baked Norfolk chicken breast
sat on a bed of butter bean & potato
cassolet (gf)

Grasmere farm shoulder of pork
served with roast potatoes, stuffing mini
jug of apple laced gravy

Baked white fish sat on diced potatoes
held in a rich tomato sauce (gf)

All served with a selection of vegetables

Pumpkin & red onion tagine with
timbale of rice & warm pitta bread (v)

Fruity bread & butter pudding with
custard (v)

Fresh salad with frozen yoghurt (v)

Vanilla cheesecake topped with red wine
poached pear served with clotted cream
ice cream (v)

Trio of frozen yoghurts topped with
mixed berries (v)

Coffee and mints

£8.50 Pay on the day

To book, ring Les Moore (01858 463112) before 29 Oct. 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

- 26 Oct Poppy Appeal launch
2 Nov Festival of Remembrance at de Montfort Hall
4 Nov 9am Helpers please to set up Remembrance Garden
5 Nov 4pm Fireworks party at Peaker Park. All welcome. 9 Nov
Swing Night -7.30pm Welland Park Assembly Room, -£15 including buffet
9 Nov Sunset Ceremony
10 Nov Remembrance Sunday
11 Nov Armistice Day Ceremonies
13 Nov After Meeting event
16 Nov Annual Band Concert
Note there is no December lunch
11 Dec After Meeting Quiz
2014
7 Jan Late Xmas Lunch
22 Mar Anniversary Dinner at M H Golf Club

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

In Touch Next Month

Remembrance time features, Poppy Appeal Awards, News & Miscellany

Branch Contacts

Chairman

Rev. John Morley 01858 419714
revjmorley@talktalk.net

Vice-chairman

Brian Thomas 01858 431119

Secretary, Welfare & Youth

Betty Ramsay 01858 434923
betty.ramsay@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer & Membership

Secretary

Myra Grewcock 01858 419517
myragrewcock@supanet.com
8 Holdenby Close, MH. LE16 8JE

Poppy Appeal

Dave Prior 01858 540431
Office - 6 Fairfield Road MH LE16 9QQ
01858433492 paoteam.rbl@btinternet.com

Standard Bearer

Hilary Brazil c/o 01858 434923

Monthly Lunches

Les Moore 01858 463112

In Touch - Editor

Tom Ashmore 01858 433108
tashmore@ukvet.net
9 The Pastures, MH . LE16 9EA

Branch Website

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

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