

In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279

LIVE ON



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

91

Years of Caring



**2014: WWI
Centenary Year**



See page 4

With thanks to Prime Life Ltd, parent company of Peaker Park Care Village Market Harborough, for printing this issue.

**Issue 194
November 2014**

**Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm Wednesday 10 December
Committee 4 December**

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Have you paid your Sub?

Subscriptions for 2014 to 2015 were due on 1st October. If you have not paid please pay the £17 (of which £2.00 is for the Branch) to Treasurer, Myra Grewcock, 8 Holdenby Close, MH. LE16 8JE or at the December meeting. Paying by Direct Debit is so much simpler (and safe). Please ask Myra for details and a form.

Branch News

AGM & October Branch Meetings

The President gave an outline of the past year from a Legion and personal perspective and then nominated Rev. John Morley to continue as Chairman. This was unanimously approved so John then reviewed the activities of the Branch giving thanks to those whose efforts had helped to maintain the previous high standard. He hoped membership numbers will increase, particularly with younger, active individuals.

In the election, the Officers were returned unopposed and two new committee members Kathy Morley and Pat Walker were elected to replace two had resigned

The fairly brief General Meeting included reminders of forthcoming events and appeals for their support. An excellent buffet followed.

Poppy Appeal Launch

The event on The Square followed previous years' format with the Northampton Pipe Band, the Branch and ACF standards, decorated delivery trolleys manned by the Sea, Army and Air Training Corps Cadets, this year, a specially decorated Poppy Car and the Chairmen of the Branch and District Council. Once these had all been arranged to the satisfaction of press photographer, Andrew



Carpenter, this year's Poppy Appeal Collection period was launched with appeals for generous donations and volunteer collectors.

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Cover Photo

A French medallion showing the railway coach in which the Armistice was signed. The image was found on the Internet as an item for sale.

Remember This? From In Touch November 2004

A Bird's Eye View of the Poppy Walk Sunday September 26th 2004

The intrepid Ramsay Ramblers took part in the Walk again this year and their valiant efforts raised a magnificent total in excess of £500 Our Secretary, Betty Ramsay, and her daughters, Helen and Hilary, thank all of their generous sponsors, and especially the Lions Club, who contributed £100.

The following report, which was dropped all over the Ramblers by a passing pigeon, has been translated for us from the original pidgin English by the ever-resourceful Betty. Editor

My Sunday morning in Victoria Embankment Gardens was rudely disturbed by groups of walkers, all proudly wearing their Poppy T shirts and armed with maps. I have my eye especially on a team of three who seem to be taking this all rather seriously. They're marching along and now and again one of them rushes off the track to read plaques and study notice boards.

I do believe the younger one even approached a couple of Policemen for help and enquired of some local business people. They are really keen

to get these questions all answered. There's some dispute about Bishopsgate and Billingsgate and what theatre you can see from Hungerford Bridge. (I could have told them!)

Now they've been asked directions by a blind lady - well I must give them credit for stopping and helping, but in the end these minutes will count. I've noticed they're very crafty when they see something of interest they don't point or shout with glee - that would give clues to others taking part!



What's this - the old one should never have had that extra cup of tea at breakfast time they'll lose a few minutes for that stop. I've only lost them once when they went into a building on Pall Mall (can't think what's of interest there!)

Well I'm really tired out; I've been following these three for some 10 miles as the pigeon flies - but 13.6 on their pedometer - from 10am to 2.30pm and we're back where we started! I'm beginning to wish I'd stayed in Trafalgar Square.

WW1 Armistice

The armistice between the Allies and Germany, the agreement that ended the fighting in western Europe went into effect at 11 a.m. on 11 November 1918, although not technically a surrender and marked a victory for the Allies and a complete defeat for Germany.

The terms were based on proposals by American president Woodrow Wilson in January 1918 but mainly written by French Marshal Ferdinand Foch, included the cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of German troops to behind their own borders, the preservation of infrastructure, the exchange of prisoners, a promise of reparations, the disposition of German warships and submarines, and conditions for prolonging or terminating the armistice. Although the armistice ended the actual fighting, it took six months of negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference to conclude the peace treaty, the Treaty of Versailles.

The German delegation for the Armistice, travelling in five cars, was escorted across the devastated Northern France, arriving ten hours later on the morning of 8 November to where they boarded Marshall Foch's private train and taken to a secret destination, a railway siding in the forest of Compiègne.

The Germans were handed the list of Allied demands and given 72 hours to agree. The German delegation discussed the Allied terms not with Foch, but with other French and Allied officers. The Armistice amounted to complete German demilitarization, with few promises made by the Allies in return. The naval blockade of Germany was not completely lifted until complete peace terms could be agreed upon.

There was no question of negotiation,



German and Allied Officers sign the documents in a coach of Foch's train

although the Germans were able to correct a few impossible demands (for example, the decommissioning of more submarines than their fleet possessed), extended the schedule for the withdrawal and registered their formal protest at the harshness of Allied terms. The Armistice was agreed at 5am with signed between 5:12am and 5:20am, on 11 November, to come into effect at 11am Paris time (12 noon German time), "the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month".

The Allied powers had agreed that Germany's U-boat fleet should be surrendered without the possibility of return, but were unable to agree upon a course of action regarding the German surface fleet. The first craft to be surrendered were the U-boats, which began to arrive at Harwich on 20 November 1918; 176 were eventually handed over. They were put under British control, given Navy names and flew the White ensign.

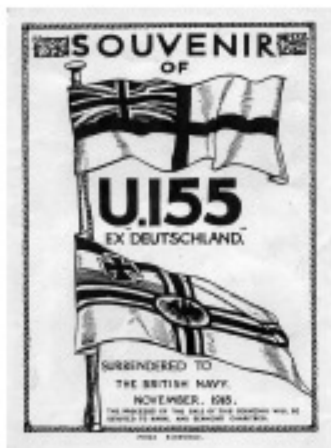
Branch member, the late Honor Dugdale's father was given command of U155 which had been the Deutschland. It was on display at St Catherine's dock in London and open to the public. The entry fee and the sale of the souvenir went to

a diagram of the interior of the and this and another photograph of surrendered German crews. U155 was described as having been 'the first submarine merchant-vessel. She had made several voyages to the United States, and, on the entry of the States into the War, was



converted into an overseas commerce-destroyer, and fitted with an armament of two 19.7 inch torpedo tubes and two 5.9 inch guns.'

The souvenir booklet was amongst other documents donated to the Branch by Mrs Dugdale.
Editor



Naval and Seaman's charities. The four page booklet described 'The Work of our Submarine Service', had

The German surface fleet was met by the light cruiser *Cardiff* on the morning of 21 November escorted into the Firth of Forth, where they anchored. A sailor on the battleship *HMS Hercules*, in a letter dated 22n November wrote 'When I went on deck, the German fleet was steaming down between our two fleets, in an opposite direction, led by one of our light cruisers, the *Cardiff*. Each British fleet was about 3 miles distant from the Germans. After we had passed

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them, the two British fleets did a magnificent 16 points turning movement and steamed down the German line, closing in on them at the same time, and so they were escorted into the Forth.' (The letter is in the archives of the Royal Museums Greenwich)

The fleet was then moved between 25 and 27 November to Scapa Flow where eventually a total of 74 ships were interned. They were manned and commanded by their German crews but guarded by a British Battle Cruiser Squadron. Their personnel were not allowed to go ashore or to move between their ships. There were German doctors in the interned fleet but no dentists, and the British refused to provide one. Food was sent from Germany twice a month. There was repatriation and of 20,000 men who had sailed the ships over in November, batches of 4,000, 6,000 and 5000 returned to Germany during December, and then approximately 100 a month.

Unknown to the British, the German Commander planned to scuttle his ships and on 21st June 1919, when the guarding Cruiser Squadron was on an exercise at sea, his crews sank 15 Capital and 36 other ships. Their crews were rescued and treated as prisoners of war.

The Editor acknowledges Wikipedia as the source of the text and the picture of signing the Armistice.

Miscellany

November WWI Snippets

1914

Claridge's Hotel in Mayfair hosts sewing guilds making clothes for troops and the poor.

1915

First women to be employed on permanent staff at Scotland Yard.

1916

Reported that 3.3 million women are employed outside the home.

1917

British troops in France are to receive Christmas puddings.

1918

UK League football to be resumed.



Anyone can get old. All you have to do is to live long enough.

Groucho Marx

It is easier to get older than to get wiser.

Anon

If God had wanted me to touch my toes He would have put them on my knees.

Anon

I started out with nothing and I still have most of it.

Anon

Garden of Remembrance

On 24th October, for the eleventh successive year, the 328 crosses, cenotaph and two memorials were set out in the town Memorial Gardens. This year the work was done by just three members. Thanks are due to them and to the Prison Workshops for their refurbishment work.

An abbreviated **Sunset Ceremony** was held at 4pm each day during the week 3 to 8 November. A few Branch members stood by the Cenotaph as the union flag was lowered, the RNA Standard dipped, the Exhortation spoken by the Chairman and the two minutes silence observed.

Festival of Remembrance at De Montfort Hall

Using the arranged mini-bus, a group of members attended the event on 25th October. Standard Bearer, Hilary Brazil was in the muster and Chairman, Rev. John Morley, as RBL County Chaplain, officiated at the Drumhead Service. The programme included a Military Wives Choir, the MH ATC Band and that from RAF Waddington.

LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

Branch Lunches

23 people, including two fairly new members, were present in October and 25 in November. As there is no December lunch the next gathering will be the joint late Christmas lunch on 13th January when we will be joined by our RAFA and RNA friends. The menu will be in next month's issue. Details from Pat Middleton 01858 445827

In Touch Distribution

For medical and personal reasons two members have had to give up their rounds. There is now an urgent need for new volunteers to deliver the newsletter in the town. Please spare a short time each month to do this important job. Please contact the Editor to say you can help so that new Rounds can be organised.

Ring Tom Ashmore on **MH 433108**

Legion News

Arrangements have now been made and publicised for a local RBL **Outreach Centre** in the Symington Building where the Leicestershire Advice and Information Officer will be from 2 to 4.30 pm on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. The Welfare Officer can also be contacted there.

To coincide with the launch of the 2014 Poppy Appeal a new slogan (see Cover) was introduced to replace 'Shoulder to Shoulder with those who Serve'. The two words **LIVE ON** signify 'To the memory of the fallen and the future of the living' i.e. the purpose of the Legion.

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 15 Nov Remembrance Concert
7.45pm Baptist Church. Tickets £7 or pay at the door
- 6 Dec RNA Coffee Morning 9am to 12 @ Harborough theatre
- 10 Dec Last Branch meeting of 2014 followed by a Quiz.
- 3 Jan County Conference at Syston. Brian Thomas is our delegate
- 13 Jan Late Xmas Lunch at The Angel with RAFA and RNA friends. See page 7
- 14 Jan Branch meeting and talk
- 27 Mar Anniversary Dinner @ Golf Club. Details later.

Welfare

If you are aware of any one who qualifies for, and may benefit from the Legion welfare services please contact **Betty Ramsay on 01858 434923**

RBL Helpline

is open to everyone, 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week on Freephone **0808 802 8080** for advice and support for serving & ex- service people and dependents.

In Touch Next Month

Christmas fun. Centenary Snippets, 'Remember this?', News, etc.

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Branch Website

www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/

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