

In Touch

The monthly newsletter founded in 1996

The Royal British Legion

Registered Charity No. 219279



LIVE ON

To the memory of the fallen and the future of the living

92

Years of Caring



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Centenary Year of 1915



Why has this museum piece anything to do with General Franco?

See pages 4 & 5

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

Issue 196
January 2015

Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm **Wednesday 11 February**
Committee 5 February

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

A New Year message from our Chairman

First of all, may I wish you and your families a happy and healthy 2015. Last year was very significant for the service community and the country, as we commemorated the centenary of the start of WWI. These times of remembrance will continue this year with many significant anniversaries of 1915. 2015 is also the 75th anniversary of Dunkirk and of The Battle of Britain and "The Few" These and many other wartime events give us pause for thought and for gratitude.

Locally, our Branch will be at the forefront of the campaign to safeguard the WWI hospital portico as the future of the Coventry Road site is determined by the NHS. For this and for your on-going support for the RBL and its 4 Pillars of Comradeship, Representation, Remembrance and of course the Welfare of the whole Service community I give you my thanks.

Branch News

A plaque in the form of a shield bearing the Legion badge, made by a prisoner at Gartree, has been hung



on the stairs of the Conservative Club as an indication of the Branch's regular use of their facilities.

December Branch Meeting

The Rolling Branch Plan had been updated but still showed that a Recruiting Officer was still needed. On Youth matters, it was reported that the branch was represented at the ATC Enrolment Service (reported in last month's Issue). The ATC band had secured third place at the recent National competition. Affiliation of the Sea Cadet unit would take place at the re-commissioning of TS Fernie and of the local Scout groups on 16th January. Youth Officer, Betty Ramsay was congratulated and thanked for these achievements.

The Treasurer reported that 11 Members had not paid their subscriptions leading to extra cost of posting reminders. Members were urged to pay by Direct Debit to avoid this and the risk of losing membership.

Continued on page 7

Cover Photo

An antique model made by the National Cash Register Company, now in a museum in the USA

Remember This?

From January 2000 **Social Notes by Bob England.**

We will be holding another Beer and Skittles evening at Kibworth on Friday 18th February. Members wishing to attend should inform the Social committee by the February meeting. Also by then we must know if there is sufficient interest for holding a Birthday Dinner on Friday, 24th March, possibly at the Golf Course. Cost about £13 to £15 per ticket.

The Social committee hope that, once again, we can depend on members' time and generous donations of prizes and cakes etc., for the coffee morning to be held at Harborough Theatre on Saturday February 26th.

On a Saturday in May we are hoping to arrange a day trip to Winchester, with a visit to the Army Air Corps Museum en route and a refreshment

stop at Newbury RBL Club on the return journey. We need about 30 seats to be taken to justify booking a coach at £10 or less - a full coach would cost only £6.50 a seat - so names, please at the February meeting.

I need to know as soon as possible how many places to reserve for the proposed trip to Normandy from 3rd to 7th September.

Non-members are welcome to join any of these events, so if you, your family or friends wish to book or you need more information please phone me.

There is a vacancy on the Social Committee and they would welcome another member to help with planning and organising a quite ambitious programme of activities.

From January 2010 **A Grand Day Out**

Members are invited to enjoy an outing to London being organised by Rev'd John Morley on Saturday, 24th April.

An interesting itinerary has been arranged to include visits to The Guards Museum, at Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk, and St Clement

Danes, the Central Church of the RAF in the Strand.



Assuming there will be a full 35-seater coach, the cost will be £20 each.

For further details of this fascinating trip, please contact John on 01858 419714.

ALBERT MOTH **1911-1942**

by Geoff Moth

I met my Uncle Albert only once, some time in 1940 when he finally persuaded his employers, and the British Government to allow him to return from Spain to join the Royal Air Force

He had joined the National Cash Register Company as a stenographer to the British Sales Manager and at 18 soon asked for a territory as a Salesman. His chance came 3 years later when the Spanish NCR wanted an English Correspondent in Madrid. He remained there until 1936, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Madrid was

bombarded and several of families of members of Staff were living in the basement of the office. It was decided to evacuate all dependants of employees who wanted to go, and Albert organised three parties to travel to France..

However, his heart was in Spain, and he pointed out to NCR in London, that they had heard nothing from their Agents in the Franco Area. With great difficulty Albert managed

to get a visa and set out with £250 advanced salary and £250 expenses to find only 3 of the 10 agents who had been there before the war.

Throughout the Spanish Civil War he travelled through Spain retrieving NCR machines , arranging repairs and hiding them from the Combatants so that at the end of the war NCR had a very viable business in Spain. He also married in 1938.



An NCR model Albert could have 'liberated'

His experiences during the war, especially the tactics of the Fascists and the bombing of civilian targets by the Kondor Squadron from the German Air Force caused him to cable to London on September 8th 1939, "Wishing to return for military service" . London Office of NCR replied " Appreciate

your cable. In your family's and the Company's interest carry on in Madrid until your service can be used or you receive your call up papers"

In 1940 he was finally given permission to return to the U.K to join the RAF. His age (29) and the fact that he had a Spanish wife made it difficult for him to be accepted for flying training, but finally he was accepted and trained as a Ground Defence Gunner. He made further applications for flying training

and in March 1941 he was accepted. He qualified as a Sergeant Observer in Bomber Command and was posted to a Manchester Squadron. His first operational flight was on the night of June 5th/6th 1942, and from this he never returned,



Ironically, some six weeks after his death, the Squadron's notoriously unsuitable Manchester Bombers were replaced by

Lancasters .

The Spanish Civil War 1936 -1939

The right wing Nationalists, lead by Generals Franco and Sanjurjo were opposed to the left wing Republicans. Support for the two sides at the start of the war differed in different parts of the county.

The Nationalists received help from Nazi Germany in the form of the Condor Legion from the Luftwaffe. 50,000 "volunteers" from Mussolini's Italy also helped the Nationalists.

Stalin sent advisers and technicians from Russia and an International Brigade comprising of volunteers from all over the world helped the Republicans

However, the Nationalists held the advantage in the sense that those who fought for them were professionals – the "volunteers" from Italy went to fight with Mussolini's approval and

many of these volunteers had a military background. The Republicans relied on real volunteers; many holding idealistic beliefs, but with minimal military training.



General Franco

Early in 1939, Republican resistance all but collapsed and on April 1st they unconditionally surrendered.

The war also witnessed the first ever deliberate aerial bombing of a city. On April 27th 1937, the ancient city of the Basques – [Guernica](#) – was bombed and destroyed by the Condor Legion. This shocked people world wide and was a warning to the politicians of Britain and France. For Hitler it was a useful experiment.

Produced from information in the History Learning Site and other Internet sources found by the Editor.

County Conference

Hosted by Syston Branch it was held at the district Conservative Club on 3rd January. Our Branch was represented by four members of the Executive (County Vice Chairman, John Standish, Chaplain, Rev John Morley, Youth Officer, Betty Ramsay and Training Officer, Hilary Brazil) and as visitors, Branch Vice Chairman and the Editor.

The very comprehensive Agenda Papers included reports by the speakers and Executive Officers. Following the usual procedure, addresses by County President, Col. R Martin and County Chairman, David Atterbury and the Treasurer's report, Officers and Committee members were formally elected.

Guest speaker, Debbie Kimpton, RBL Business Change Manager. Spoke about the new Comradeship Services Programme which is aimed at simplifying and integrating existing systems for Membership, Supporters and Volunteers. There will be changes to how one joins the Legion and to the renewal and collection of subscriptions in which there will be more direct contact between HQ and members. Information on the development of the programme, which will be completed by 1st October, 2015, will be available to Branch secretaries and to members through Legion magazine and website

(and as far as possible in In Touch.). Changes to the way the Legion interacts with the public was dealt with by two other speakers. Bill Parkin, from the Board of Trustees, gave examples of successes at national level and Linda Flecknell spoke of activities in the East Midlands Area of which she is the Manager. There are now five fully trained Case Officers (dealing with Welfare matters) and Advice and Information Officers each holding 'clinics' throughout the Area (such as those at the Symington building in Market Harborough). Contact with military units is being further developed and at three large RAF stations there are monthly out reach clinics. None of this must be seen as conflicting with established Branch or County activities, but complementary to them.

Miscellany

January news 100 years ago

1. British Army now 720,000 men
4. London Stock Exchange reopens
15. New Russian Army of 800,000 advancing on West Prussia.
28. German warship sinks US ship William P. Frye in Atlantic.
30. Three UK merchant ships sunk by German submarine in Irish Sea.
31. Tear gas used for first time against the Russians

In his report, the Poppy Appeal Organiser highlighted some results from the recent collection period: street collections were down but House to House and static points were higher than last year. Details were on display. It was also mentioned that Kibworth was now in our area.

To give members up-to-date news on the future of the War memorial at the Cottage hospital, Cllr Knowles had been invited to the meeting. He had recently been in discussions with top level NHS authorities who made it clear that the NHS would not fund the relocation but issued the statement (reported in the Harborough Mail) 'We understand how important this war memorial is to local people and the NHS remains absolutely committed to its protection. That is why we will make it a condition of sale that any future developer should preserve and maintain public access to the monument, if the Commissioners decide to make it surplus. Its listed status also ensures the monument is protected.' Another statement said that legal arrangements would be made to ensure its protection either in its present location or to remove it to an agreed place.

The After Meeting event had a seasonal atmosphere with mince pies and a tot of sherry followed by a quiz from Santa clad Janet and Brian Lee.

LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

3 FEBRUARY MEET IN THE
BAR AT NOON

MENU

Braised faggots sat on bed of mash potato draped with a red wine root vegetable laced gravy

Fillet of smoked hake sat on fried potatoes with a rich parsley sauce

Roast shoulder of British pork with roast potatoes, stuffing, Yorkshire pudding & gravy (can be gf)

Individual peppered mushroom, stilton & onion pudding with mash potato & jug of gravy (v)

All served with a selection of vegetables

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Fresh fruit salad with fruity sorbet (gf) (v)

Cherry bakewell cheesecake with mini jug of cream (v)

Jam roly poly draped with creamy custard (v)

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Fresh tea or coffee with chocolate mints

£8.50 - pay on the day

To book, contact Kathie Morley, email kathiemorley@talktalk.net or phone 01858 419714 -before 24 January. To cancel, ring The Angel (01858 462702) before 10 am on the day or you will be charged

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 21 Feb Branch Coffee Morning @ Theatre. Helpers & items for Raffle & Cake & Tombola stalls please.
- 27 Mar Anniversary Dinner at M H Golf Club. See details and menu in enclosed sheet.
- 8 Apr Branch meeting + talk 'War & peace in the Holy Land....by Sir Michael Carleton-Smith

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 **0800 802 8080** for advice and support for serving & ex- service people and dependents.

In Touch Next Month

'A Regular's Recollections of the National Service era', Remember This?, News, etc.

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Branch Website

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

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