

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

95

Years of Caring



Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Centenary Year of 1918



Although un-named, Violette Szabo, was one of many at the centre of the story on pages 4 & 5

Next Monthly Branch Meeting
7.30 pm Wednesday 11 April
Committee 5 April

Issue 234
March 2018

Function Room, Conservative Club,
Fairfield Rd. Market Harborough

Branch News

February General Meeting

The Chairman welcomed two new Members: Christopher Brazil (our first Youth Member) and Liz Johnson, and a guest from U3A. These and the 23 members present heard that the Forward Planning Committee had discussed the need to establish the official Branch Area, its potential beneficiaries and contact with schools; that the Commemoration of the end of WWI Group had proposed three events; that 75% of any proceeds from the Poppy Walk should go to the Poppy Appeal and 25% to the Branch; that Branch delegate, Stewart Harrison Mr Harrison spoke briefly about the January Conference since when the Chairman, Jim Rowlinson, had passed away, Mr Standish having represented the Branch at the funeral and there was no Branch proposal for his successor; that the future of the Portico was unknown although the hospital site had been sold; that the Branch would donate to a Gift to County Patron, Lord Lieutenant, Lady Gretton, following her retirement; that a questionnaire to find members wishes about how the Branch operated was being prepared; that the Branch Standard Bearer and Chairman would take part in GP90, TRBL Great Parade in August; that branch

membership was now 132; that the Poppy Appeal total was comparable to last year's; that as part of Branch Community Support (Welfare) Members were encouraged to use the Poppy Calls (Handyman) Service accessible through the Central Contact point. It was understood this was not 'means tested' if applicant over 70 years. Visits/telephone calls were being undertaken by the Branch's Supporters and recorded by the Representative. Anyone wishing to help with visiting etc was asked to contact a Committee Member; that the Standard Bearer had attended the ATC/100th RAF Anniversary Parade and Service in Little Bowden; that 24 people had been at the February lunch; that there would be no local Armed Forces Day Parade but the Cadets might arrange an event; that In Touch was ready for distribution but due to ill health of two 'paper Boys', Paul and Joy Whitlock would do John Cox's round but a volunteer was needed to take over from Dave French.

After Meeting Event

John Standish entitled his presentation 'Some were Famous, Some were not' and from his extensive research of WWI especially of the Western Front casualties, gave examples of who they were and why, where, when, and how.

Cover Image

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violette_Szabo

Remember these? From March 2007

Pause for Thought

Why, Oh Why?

- Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the battery is low?
- Why do banks charge a fee on "insufficient funds" when they know there is not enough money?
- Why doesn't glue stick to the bottle?
- Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?
- Whose idea was it to put "S" in the word "lisp"?

- If we evolved from apes why are there still apes?
- Why is it that no matter what colour bubble bath you use the bubbles are always white?
- Is there ever a day that sofas are not on sale?
- Why is it that no plastic bag will open from the right end on your first try?
- How come you never hear father-in-law jokes?

Hanging out with Albert

by Tom Jeacock

The article about Lord Haw Haw in last month's *In Touch* reminded me of when I met Albert Pierrepont while I was serving in Germany. He used to

come over now and again to hang those guilty of war crimes.

He came into the Sergeants' Club in Hamlin and sat with my mates and I. We had a good chat about his job and he ended up by guessing our weights and taking our neck sizes. All in good fun, I might add!



Once again the Poppy Appeal in our area

has raised a record sum, beating last year's result, itself a record!

With the current appeal year almost complete, the total stands at a magnificent £21,836.

Douggie McMeeken, the Branch Poppy Appeal Organiser, paid tribute to the army of house-to-house and street collectors, and the staff of pubs, clubs, shops, offices and other businesses, who gave holehearted support to the Appeal.

Douggie also expressed his gratitude to the team of willing volunteers who assisted him. "It is because of their efforts", he said, "that the organisation ran smoothly throughout the campaign".

WW2 Clandestine Operations

The Special Operations Executive had been created in July 1940 (after a good deal of inter-ministry rivalry and little support from the conventional arms of the Forces) to encourage guerilla activities in occupied countries. Winston Churchill said "set Europe ablaze". Initially SOE was part of the Ministry of Economic Warfare under Dr Dalton and in October 1940 the above building became its Headquarters.



Many indigenous groups were already harassing the enemy but co-ordination, direction, organisation and material support were required but SOE lacked secure means to contact with them. The solution was to get agents on the ground in occupied Europe. Suitable people



would need be recruited and trained as secret agents and got into occupied territory for which the small Lysander aircraft was used.

SOE became a quite large organisation and Headquarters staff overflowed



into adjoining properties in London and Regional HQs were established in Cairo and Delhi. In 1943 Maj. Gen. Gubbins was appointed as Officer Commanding

SOE.

Because of the very secret nature of the organisation, very little was known about this aspect of the War until official records became available from National Archives. Now thousands of agents are listed on the Internet at <https://archive.org/details/TheMostSecretListSOE>. Much else has been written about the work of SOE and http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/special_operations_executive.htm gives a good outline. Sometimes referred to as its most successful operation, was the attack on the Heavy Water Plant in Norway leading

to Germany abandoning its attempts to develop a nuclear bomb. The outstanding courage of individual agents has been published in books and on web-sites. Many lost their lives on duty or after capture, torture and concentration camp. There were many military and civil awards often posthumous and the on-line encyclopaedia Wikipedia includes these in a long list of operations



during the war in Europe.

Operations outside Europe were directed from regional headquarters with Cairo responsible for Africa and the Middle East and Dehli for India

and South-East Asia. An early success was to organise a force in Abyssinia of Ethiopian irregulars under Orde Charles Wingate (of later Chindit fame) against the Italians and in support of the exiled Emperor Haile Selassie.



To serve countries in and to the east of the Indian Ocean, the SOE group was known as Force 136B

and was based in Ceylon. A full and interesting account of its origin, development and operations is given in *Operations Most Secret - SOE: The Malayan Theatre* by Ian Trenowden (ISBN 0-947554-43-2). There were active resistance groups especially in Malaya but they were beyond the range of available aircraft until quite late in the War. Submarines were used but were only available as part of normal Naval patrol



activity (Ceylon itself was always under threat from the powerful Japanese fleet). Another serious problem was the limited range of the Wireless/Telegraphy sets then available to the agents. One party was unable to contact Ceylon for eighteen months!

Despite these logistical difficulties, Force 136(B) by the end of the War had infiltrated over 400 British Officers and other ranks into Japanese held territory.

One less well known aspect of clandestine operations was the creation and training of "stay behind" parties in Britain in anticipation of enemy occupation.

Much of this article is based on Issue 25 of Click 2 B, a monthly emailed newsletter by Tom Ashmore

From the Archives



Residents chat at
TRBL Lister House care home



Branch members chat at a RNA
cheese and wine event



Expletives deleted!! at the 2011
Armed Forces Day



Reverential silence in National
Memorial Arboretum Chapel

Miscellany

March 1918 News Items

- 3rd Russia surrenders to Germany and Turkey, ceding much occupied territory
- 3rd In a Turkish town every male was massacred by Muslims
- 9th British maximum conscription age raised to 50
- 13th School leaving age raised to 14
- 20th Coal, gas & electricity rationed, theatres to close by 10.30pm
- 26th British led troops oust the Turks from the Euphrates
- 31st Germany smashes Allied lines in France, advancing 40 miles

THE ORIGINAL STONEHENGE



I just hate
all the
effort to
alter the
clock
twice a
year

March Sayings & Proverbs

As mad as a March hare (hence 'Harebrained')

March in January, January in March I fear.

March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.

A bushel of March dust is worth a King's ransom.

March grass never did good.

From www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/march.html

Obituary

George Cator died on 1st March aged 89 in hospital after a short illness. A long time member of RAFA where he had been Treasurer, George became an active member of our RBL branch 10 years ago as did his wife Margaret. We offer her and their family our sincere condolences.

ATC Sunday 5th February

by John Standish

A Service to commemorate the founding of the ATC on 5 Feb 1941 and also the formation of the RAF in 1 April 1918 was held at St Nicholas Church, Little Bowden.

About 27 cadets and 3 members of staff including Officer Commanding Flt Lt Adam Griffin RAFAC, the Squadron Standard, RAFA Standard and our branch Standard with Hilary as Standard Bearer and Geoff Moth as RAFA Chairman were present. I was invited as Branch Chairman and wore my uniform as a retired RAFVR(T) officer and past CO of the Squadron. My wife, Valerie another past CO accompanied me. I was also invited to take the salute as the cadets led by the Squadron band marched off after the service.

Fraud and Cyber Prevention Conference

on 23rd March organised by Leicestershire Police is a free to attend event about protecting against Fraud and Cyber-crime. For details call 0116 248 5322

Obituary

Keith Bowley died on 25th February after a long period of declining health. Having served in the RAF in WW2, he joined the Police Force. He was a long standing member of the Branch as was his wife Josie, to whom we offer sincere condolences.

Committee Members

Jill Mann (MH 461572)

Colin & Pauline McIntyre (email cMcIntyre1945@yahoo.co.uk)

Pat Middleton (MH 445827)

Kathie Morley (MH 419714)

Barbara Pickup (MH 433492)

Pat Walker (MH 545560)

LUNCH AT THE ANGEL



for good food and good company

3 APRIL

**MEET IN THE
BAR AT NOON**

MENU

Chicken in sauce on mash; Cod Loin on mash; Roast leg of Lamb; all with vegetable selection. Pear & almond tart; Fresh fruit salad & sorbet; Vanilla Chesecake & mandarins, ice cream & custard. Tea or coffee & mints. £9.25

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

What's Going On?

Forthcoming Events

- 7 Apr 100th RAF Anniversary@
Welford Road Cemetery
- 16 May RNA trip to Greyhound racing @ Peterborough
- 19/20 May TRBL Annual Conference @ Belfast
- 10 Jun Sponsored Walk in Welland (TBC) Park
- 23 Jun RNA Cheese & Wine @ Gt Bowden Village Hall
- 23 Jun Armed Forces Day Service & Parade @ Leicester
- 30 Jun Local Armed Forces Day event

Welfare

If you know any one who may benefit from Legion welfare ring
Betty Ramsay on 01858 434923

RBL Helpline

is open to everyone, 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week on **0808 802 8080** for advice and support for serving & ex-service people and dependents. Locally, visit the **Pop In Centre** at the Library 10am-noon on the second Thursday each month

In Touch Next Month

'Two Grandads', Miscellany, Remember This?, News, etc.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. The editor reserves the right to decide what is to be published. No part may be reproduced without prior permission.

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Branch Website

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

Committee - see Page7