



Editorial

A reason why time seems to pass so much more quickly as we grow older is the relentless arrival of anniversaries. Depressingly, these occasions are a convenient means of ticking off the years. "Is it really our fifty-fifth, it doesn't seem five minutes since our Golden!"

For Legionnaires in particular, it is the time of the year for a number of anniversaries to be ticked off on the calendar. I shall begin with one which may seem to be a minor consideration, but it is of importance to all Branch members. I refer to the annual general meeting on November 12th and the election of officers and committee members. You are urged to attend if possible and to cast your vote on the enclosed form.

It hardly needs saying that we are fast approaching the climax of the Royal British Legion year when we confirm our debt of gratitude as we remember those who fell on the field of battle.

We shall also remember those survivors who, as age increasingly takes its toll, need all the help we can give them. We shall do this to the very best of our ability, of course, by supporting the Poppy Appeal.

In this enlarged, bumper edition of *In Touch* you will find full details of Remembrance events, fund-raising activities and other news of the Poppy Appeal, another instalment of Sid's Story, another contribution by Jerboa, a piece about the Royal Leicester Regiment Museum and the usual items of Branch news.

Looking ahead, I make my perennial plea for your contributions to *In Touch*. Over the years we have included many interesting, and often funny, stories from you, the members, and now I should like some more, please. It's a three-way thing, you see. You tell the story, I write it down and (hopefully) members enjoy a good read!

harbour. They hadn't got out and had been killed when the bombs dropped and the boats went down. It was the Red Caps who were getting the bodies out to identify them. They fetched a Negro out on a MT net because that was the only way they could get him out of the harbour and we were working on a boat close by. I can assure you that that was another experience that is still there to this day - I can't forget that. Well, I'm talking about it and it's bringing so much back to me.

Christmas was spent at Bari and afterwards there was a rumour that Sid's company were going home.

"We weren't sure, but this is what happened to us. We moved out of Bari to an army camp about 14 miles outside Naples and we were told, 'You have got to march from here to Naples dock where you will get on a boat and - we're going back home to England'.

"We assembled at midnight to start the march with our rifles and 50 lbs of kit, all the other stuff was taken on the lorry. We had only been marching for about an hour when 'the heavens opened' and it didn't stop raining until we got to Naples. By this time we were soaked to the skin and I can remember walking down this side road (from what I can remember Naples is built on the side of a hill) and we had to sit on the doorsteps until we could get on the boat in the harbour. There was no other way for it, the clothes just dried on us until we got on the boat.

"They told us that we could get strafed and bombed coming out of the harbour or getting across the Bay of Biscay and out into the Atlantic. The convoy that was in front of us had had a bashing, but we got away with it again. You have to remember that we had an escort, a destroyer and battlewagon, I think it was the Nelson, and the Ark Royal. We sailed into the middle of the Atlantic, and then the escort left us.

"At night we bedded down where we could on the boat. I remember waking up one morning, dropping anchor, and we could see the trees. We didn't know then where we were, but we were outside Greenock, and then we moved off into the docks in Glasgow."

To be continued

Come on The Tigers



The Royal Leicestershire Regiment Museum Appeal Trustees have undertaken to raise £250,000 by voluntary subscription towards the £1.5 million cost of upgrading the present Newarke House Museum in Leicester. A similar amount has been pledged by Leicester City Council as the basis of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant of £1 million.

STOP PRESS

We are delighted to announce that the Lottery Grant application has been successful. Your generous donations are still needed, of course.

In an interesting talk at the September meeting, Col. Anthony Swallow gave us some background to the 300-year history of the regiment. He told of the problems regarding suitable accommodation to house and display the historic collection telling the proud story of our County Regiment from its formation as the XVII Foot in 1688.

The help of Branch members is sought by Col. Swallow in the form of donations and your contribution should be sent to RHQ The Royal Leicestershire Regiment, TA Centre, Ulverscroft Road, Leicester LE4 6BY. Please make cheques and postal orders payable to The Royal Leicestershire Regiment Museum Trust Fund. For further detail, please telephone the Fund Raiser on 01780 764 802.



The Welfare Support Team

Members are requested that visits made be reported to the Team in order that records can be maintained. Please report any case which you feel merits the attention of the team



A Couple of Timely Reminders

Betty Jeacock's MacMillan Nurses Coffee Morning begins at 10am on 26 September at 21 Gardner Street. Husbands Bosworth Branch Fashion Show at Edinburgh Woollen Mill, 7.30pm on 3 October.

October Luncheon Date

Join the party on the 14th at The Angel in the High Street MH for a tasty, enjoyable - and most reasonably priced - lunch.

Leicester City FC Poppy Events

For details see page 7.

Branch Coffee Morning

Please help our Social Team ladies raise lots of money - every penny for the Branch Poppy Appeal - by donating tombola prizes and items for sale, including homemade cakes, etc. Members are requested to bring contributions to the October meeting. If that is not possible, please ring Joan on MH 462 143 and she will arrange collection. Your presence, with all your friends, well-fortified financially, needless to say, is requested on 25 October at the Harborough Theatre.

RNA Big Night Out

You are invited to join members of the MH Royal Naval Association at the popular Mountbatten Concert at the Royal Albert Hall with the massed bands of the the Royal Marines. The approximate cost of the coach and ticket will be £28. Mike Middleton will collect deposits (£18 which is the seat price) at the October meeting or by post to 8 Elm Drive, Market Harborough LE16 9DS. Cheques payable to M Middleton, please. The event is in aid of Sir Malcolm Sargent Children's Cancer Fund.

ATC Flying High

Our friends in the local Air Training Corps Squadron are over the moon following their achievement in the Regional heats of the band contest. We wish them every success in the National finals.



Diary

Some dates to keep free.
Details of all Social Events are available from Joan McMillin on MH 462143

- 26 Sep MacMillan Nurses Coffee Morning
- 3 Oct Fashion Show Edinburgh Woollen Mills
- 11 Oct Poppy Appeal Launch and Awards (see page 5)
- 14 Oct Branch lunch at The Angel - 12 noon for 12.30n
- 17 Oct RNA Trafalgar Day Dinner
- 23 Oct Poppy Launch at the Walkers Stadium, Leicester
- 25 Oct Branch Coffee Morning - Harborough Theatre
- 26 Oct Poppy Appeal - House-to-house collections begin
- 1 Nov De Montfort Hall - Festival of Remembrance
- 2 Nov Poppy Appeal - Leicester City v Blackburn Rovers
- 8 Nov Branch Remembrance Concert, Baptist Church
- 18 Nov Branch lunch at The Angel - 12 noon for 12.30
- 16 Dec Christmas Lunch at The Angel - 12 noon for 12.30
- 2004
- 21 Feb Mountbatten Concert with MH Royal Naval Assn.

<p>MEETINGS The next meeting is on 8th October.</p> <p>Branch meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the <u>downstairs</u> Function Room, Conservative Club Building, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.</p> <p>The Branch Committee meets on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.30 pm in the upstairs Committee Room at the Conservative Club.</p>	
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The Royal British Legion

Reg. Charity 219279

Market Harborough Branch

Founded in 1923

Branch Website: www.mktharborbl.ukvet.net



In Touch

Issue 60

September 2003

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Regimental Nicknames

Some further gleanings from his researches into military history by Jerboa

I have always been intrigued by the nickname or epithet by which some of our British Regiments are known and, more particularly, how did they earn or deserve them.

Some derive from their uniform, these include such as the Buffs (Royal East Kents) and the Lilywhites (13/18th Hussars) who had distinct facings on their lapels. It is not difficult to work out how the 7th Armoured Division (now only a brigade) were known as the Desert Rats.

Other nicknames were claimed by the regiment themselves to remember their prowess in battle or were of a humorous or even derisory nature given to them by other units. To illustrate just two of these let us go back to 1811 and the Peninsular War.

In the Southwest of Spain near Badajoz lies the small village of Albuhera and it was here that the bitterest fighting of the whole war took place. General Beresford had command of three British brigades while the French, under Marshall Soult fielded two divisions. It was reported - "then followed a duel so stern and resolute that it has few parallels in the Annals of War". There was neither battle plan nor direction, our infantry fell in swathes but the line held. General Houghton and the Colonels of the 58th and 29th died, four fifths of one brigade were down, still the survivors stood, fired and fought. All sense had gone from either side.

French and English set their teeth into each other. They were going to fight to the finish, whatever the odds or casualties. The dispatch from the 52nd Foot - "...then was seen with what strength and majesty the British soldier fights". Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry, their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation, the mighty mass of the French reserve

A Brief History of The Royal British Legion

The Legion was formed in 1921 through the merging of four associations that had been set up after the First World War to support ex-Servicemen.

The National Association of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers, Comrades of the Great War and the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers were all established by the end of 1917. They unified to represent and support all ex-Servicemen in May 1921.

The Legion is often wrongly viewed as only working with older veterans, whereas it helps ex-Service people of all ages and their families. Many of those who started its work, and who needed its help, were young men themselves in 1921.

On returning from Service, many were faced with a poor economy, lack of jobs, and also had to cope with trauma and injuries sustained in the conflict. They were a vulnerable group, who, with their families, numbered some 20 million. To support so many would be costly, and immediate action was needed.

Government provision was inadequate, and often denied through poorly-designed criteria for eligibility. The first Poppy Appeal in November 1921 raised much-needed funds, and the Legion started more than 80 years of campaigning on ex-Service issues by pressurising the government into keeping war disability pensions rates at their existing level despite a fall in the cost of living.

Over the next ten to twenty years, many of the older veterans from the World Wars and National Service period will, due to old age and infirmity, require a more costly level of care and support. At the same time, the Legion will be working for those affected by more recent conflicts, and those currently in or joining the Services who will become the veterans of the future.

Remembrance and the Two Minute Silence

Remembering all those who have died in the service of their country is an important part of the Legion's Royal Charter.

The first Two Minute Silence was held on 11 November 1919, when King George V personally requested through the media that the public observe a silence at 11am. This was in response to a suggestion from the father of a boy killed in France two years earlier and marked the start of an enduring tradition. A spontaneous remembrance procession formed at the Cenotaph on 11 November 1919, which had been built for a Peace Day march earlier that year. In 1920 the memorial was officially unveiled in its current state by the King.

The Two Minute Silence on Armistice Day was adopted by the Legion after its formation in 1921, and in 1924 the Legion proposed that a national Remembrance Sunday should also be introduced. This became so popular that for a period after the Second World War it replaced the Armistice Day Silence.

Since 1995 the Legion has successfully campaigned for the Two Minute Silence to be observed both on Armistice Day - at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month — and on Remembrance Sunday, always the second Sunday in November.

The Legion anticipates that in 2003 more than 45 million people will take part in what has become by far the biggest annual spontaneous demonstration of public support for any cause in the country.

Independent research commissioned by the Legion shows that 92 per cent of people (including younger age groups) think that Remembrance events and observing the Two Minute Silence should be an important and permanent feature in the life of the nation. This augers well for the years ahead.



Sid's Story

Part 4

We left Sid on the Mediterranean Sea aboard a Canadian cargo boat, having escaped from a German bombing raid.

“We had to unload the boat before we could get off and you can just imagine how everyone was working so that we could get off that boat and get on the shore somewhere.

“When we lifted the 70 tonne lighter over the side the boat listed, but they got it off and dropped it. Then the Bren carriers and everything had to go on this to get to the shore. When we had done this we got off the boat and went ashore on Sicily. With our kit, 50 lbs of it, rifle and ammo’, we got onto the beach. I’m sure it was called Red beach where we landed, and from there we moved up into an orchard where there was a farmhouse building and we dug in .

“I can remember that night when we lay in this orchard, as soon as it got dark the German planes were there bombing the ships that were left out at sea. They started hitting these boats with the bombs and I can remember hearing men being burnt alive and you couldn’t do anything about it. Not a very pleasant experience.

“The next day we knew that we had got to go and unload the boats that were left. We used to go out on a Z craft with an Indian crew, and they were marvellous, those Indian lads. We went out on these things and I can remember that next morning after hearing what went on in the night, seeing what was left of the ‘poor sods’ that we had heard the cries and the screams, and what was left of them. Skulls - and I can’t explain what it made you feel like when you saw these things, because it was dreadful, awful, terrible. And we always used to think

like this, ‘I wonder what they’ll think at home when they get the letter to say that these people have been killed’. “That was one of the things that you always thought about when somebody was killed, it was always ‘home’. And you always thought like this, ‘I wonder if I shall ever see that again’. Because what we were living through, and escaping, I can’t to this day imagine how I survived all this, but I did, I did, and I was very fortunate.

“Anyway, after that we moved out of the orchard into Siracusa. We were in Siracusa for a while and they said the Germans had been driven out of Sicily into the heel of Italy so then we had to go to Italy. We went from Siracusa to Catania to get on an LCI, an Infantry Landing craft.

“We sailed from Catania across to Taranto, where we stopped to refuel, and then I’m sure we went round the heel of Italy. We weren’t allowed to talk or make any noise because they said there were U Boats about and there was a possibility that we would get hit with a torpedo. But, fortunately again, I escaped and we went right round the heel of Italy to Bari. The company went to a hotel along the front in Bari, where we were billeted.

“We worked the docks in Bari and when we were back at the billet at night, the Germans came over to bomb the harbour. I don’t know how many ships they hit in the harbour but there was a lot of carnage and explosions. One of the boats blew up and it broke nearly every window in Bari because it was loaded with ammunition, octane and all sorts, and there were many more like that.

Sid worked on the quay at Bari docks for at least three weeks, despite the danger of unexploded bombs.

“I can remember seeing bodies floating about in the harbour. They hadn’t got out and had been killed when the bombs dropped and the boats went down. It was the Red Caps who were getting the bodies out to identify them. They fetched a Negro out on a MT net because that was the only way they could get him out of the



Branch News

Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting of the Branch will be held on 12th November. Please make use of the enclosed form for your nominations for Branch officers and committee members, who automatically resign, but may offer themselves for re-election.

Treasurer Vacancy

With the resignation of John Standish the post of Treasurer is now vacant and a member willing to take on this role is sought. John gave the assurance that duties are not onerous.

Bequests and the RBL

An informative response was given by George Fleming to a query raised at the September Branch meeting following a recent newspaper article on the subject of legacies of over £5,000 left to a specific Branch.

The matter had been raised under Motion 15 at the Annual Conference and the National Council had responded in a recent ‘Resolutions Action Taken’ leaflet. Mr Fleming reminded members that the money held at Pall Mall on behalf of a Branch earned a greater rate of interest which was either accumulated in the name of the Branch or was credited to an appropriate Branch fund. It was emphasised that Branches always had full access to their funds for appropriate use.

Bank Policy Change

Lloyds Bank are no longer to pay interest on business accounts and this will mean a loss of some £40 a year to the Branch. It is expected that other banks will follow suit.



Appeal Organiser
Dougie McMeeken Reports
Contact telephone 01858 463203

As the climax of the Poppy Appeal approaches, I am ensuring that we are firing on all cylinders and covering every opportunity to raise money. I call upon all members to support the appeal in whatever way they can. At the present time, I particularly need people for Town collections and the Market stall. Please contact me now on MH 463203 to offer your services or suggest money-making possibilities.

I have tickets for the De Montfort Hall Festival of Remembrance and hope to arrange transport. Please try and support this wonderful occasion. Remember, too, the Branch concert at the Baptist Hall and events at the Walkers Stadium.

The Appeal launch takes place on October 11 and I have a number of awards to make. If you know of someone you consider to be a worthy case, please let me know. I look forward to seeing you at the Working Men's Club.

Finally, here's a brilliant way to solve a few Christmas present problems - and support the Branch Poppy Appeal at the same time.

'Memories Are Made of This' is an excellent book edited by Tom Ashmore and Bob England and produced entirely 'in-house'. Although not for sale, the book would make an excellent 'stocking filler' gift for just £6.50, the minimum donation requested.

Copies ordered on the enclosed form or by telephone from Tom (MH 433108) will be delivered with the November In Touch. All profits on pre-Christmas sales will go to the Branch Poppy Appeal, so why not help to boost the fund in this useful - and festive - way?

The Poppy Appeal 2003/04

In Flanders' Fields

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from falling hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' fields.

Having seen the poppy survive the bloody conflicts in France, a Canadian doctor, John McCrae, serving with his country's forces in Flanders, wrote this poem in 1915.

Moina Michael, a secretary with the American YMCA, was moved by the poem to collect money from her work friends to buy poppies for sale to raise funds for ex-Servicemen.

Madame Guerin, a French colleague, suggested the sale of artificial poppies to the British Legion in 1921, and the first sales in November that year raised £106,000, the equivalent of over £3 million today.

Major George Howson, who had formed a society to help disabled ex-Servicemen, suggested to the British Legion that his members should make poppies and the artificial flowers were designed so that they could be assembled by a person with only one hand.

The Poppy Factory at Richmond, Surrey, was founded in 1922, and is still in production.



Leicestershire Events
From the
County Field Office

Appearing in the Leicester Mercury on the 24th October will be details of the of the Leicestershire and Rutland Poppy Appeal launch. A media event involving Leicester City star players and manager is planned at the Walkers Stadium on the afternoon of the 23rd October. A number of enthusiastic collectors, members and anyone else who will look happy, cheerful and friendly in the photos, will be needed. For more details please call the County Field Office on 0116 254 4099.

On Sunday 2nd November the Leicester Mercury and Leicester City will hold a Poppy Appeal event at the home match against Blackburn Rovers. The game kicks off at 4pm, but RBL involvement starts about 3pm and teams of collectors will be needed to cover the Walkers Stadium. At about 3.15 an 'air attraction' is planned to keep the crowds entertained.

There will be parking spaces at the ground and seats to watch the match. However, the task is not quite complete. At half-time 40 members and veterans of the RBL (with medals if applicable) will be needed to walk around the ground waving to the crowd. As the match is being televised live on Sky (13m viewers) and they will give the RBL some coverage, there is a good chance of being on the telly!

Each Branch participating will get an equal share of the money raised for their Poppy Appeal. Several collectors are needed, so if you would like to take part in this unique fund-raising opportunity - and see a pretty good football match for nowt - please contact Dougie on MH 463203 as soon as possible.



We will remember them

Programme of Remembrance Events

**Compiled by
George Fleming**

Saturday, November 1st

The De Montfort Hall, Leicester.

The Festival of Remembrance County Concert with the King's Division Waterloo Band. Commencing at 7pm. (Please see page 5 for further details re tickets, etc.)

Monday, November 3rd

Set up the Garden of Remembrance, Market Harborough. Your help is needed and volunteers are requested to meet at the Garden at 8.30am. It is hoped that the setting up will be completed by 12.30pm.

Monday to Saturday, November 3rd to 8th

A short Sunset Ceremony led by the Branch Standard Bearers will be carried out at 4pm. Your support at this moving ceremony will be appreciated.

Saturday, November 8th

The Branch Remembrance Concert with the Harborough Band will take place at the Baptist Church, Market Harborough commencing at 7.30pm.

Sunday, November 9th

The Remembrance Service and Parade. You are invited to join the parade to the Parish Church, assembling at 10am on the Tesco car park. The service will commence at 10.45am, but you are requested to take your seat in the church by 10.30. Following the service there will be the laying of wreaths on the Memorial in The Square.

The Garden of Remembrance in 2002.



Monday, November 10th

The Royal British Legion County Marquee will be erected in the Garden of Remembrance and manned by members in a final Poppy Appeal effort.

Tuesday, November 11th

At 10.15am *sharp* - the Act of Remembrance in Welland Park at the Memorial near the main entrance in Welland Park Road.

At 10.55am - the Act of Remembrance in The Square by the Memorial Garden gate, followed by the Two Minutes Silence and the Wreath Laying Ceremony. Maroons will be fired to signal the beginning and end of the silence.

Wednesday, November 12th

At 8.30am - the volunteer working party will commence the removal of the display in the Garden of Remembrance. With help from members, it is hoped to be completed by 10.30.

At 7.30pm - the Branch Annual General Meeting and Buffet in the Conservative Club.

gave way and, like a loosened cliff went headlong down the slope, and fifteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant. In the thick of this bloodbath were the 57th foot. They were being slaughtered but Colonel William Inglis, lying wounded among his soldiers urged them on with the cry, "Die hard the 57th. Die hard" The 57th Regiment of Foot, later to become The Middlesex Regiment, were henceforth known as The Diehards.

From the laudatory to the uncomplimentary we go to May 1811, where the cavalry came in for leg pulling, no doubt at the initiation of an infantry regiment who felt that the cavalry had too high a regard for themselves! The cavalry in question were a detachment of the 11th Hussars who, erroneously believing they were well behind their front line, had dismounted and were taking their ease in a small orchard when they were taken unawares by a troop of French cavalry. The Hussars had no time to mount their horses and were forced to fight dismounted, as infantry, not their style at all. Although, to their credit, the French were seen off, the action caused the Hussars considerable chagrin which was further reinforced when, as a result of their being caught unawares in the cherry orchard they became known as "The Cherrypickers". The 11th Hussars continued in being until 1969 when they amalgamated with the

Not All Bad, Then

Doctor: "I've got good news and bad news, which would you like first?"

Patient: "Tell me the bad news."

Doctor: "I'm afraid I shall have to amputate both your legs."

Patient: "Oh, my god. What's the good news?"

Doctor: "The chap in the next bed is interested in buying your slippers."