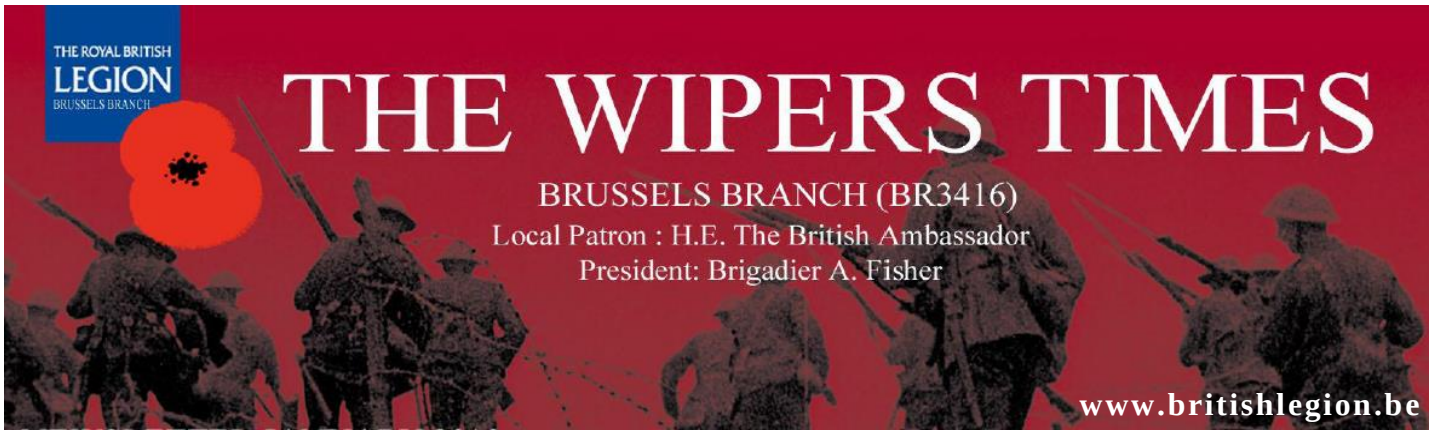


NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2017

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Looking back at 2016
2. Looking ahead to 2017
3. Remembrance Sunday
4. How Britain celebrated Xmas during wartime
5. Letters to Loved Ones
6. All about me: Léon Rubin
7. Poppy Appeal 2016
8. Xmas and New Year lunches
9. Condolences
10. Calendar of events
11. Birthday greetings

New Year's Greetings

On behalf of the members who contributed to this January issue of the RBL Brussels Branch Newsletter, on behalf of our Branch President and Committee Members, may I wish you the very best for 2017.
May the world be a friendlier and more peaceful place in the year ahead, and may each and every one of you enjoy many moments of joy and happiness.

Michael Whitburn
Newsletter coordinator

LOOKING BACK AT 2016

In 2016 a number of Newsletter articles focused on the **Somme Offensive** (1st July - 18th November 1916, 1 million casualties): on food and eating habits in the trenches, songs sung by the soldiers of the Great War, Marie Curie and her mobile X-Ray machine.

There were contributions by branch members including an article by **François Roberti-Lintermans** on the first use of the tank in warfare, by **Claire Whitfield** about entertainment after Brussels was liberated in September 1944, by **Greg Ruthven** about how Wilfred Owen and the war poets changed his vision of life.

Fred Hobbs and **Fernand Delcourt** told us about their time in the army in the *All about me* column.

In the Friends of the Fallen section, **Jacqueline Daugnaix** - **Whitfield** contributed moving stories about British servicemen laid to rest in Belgian cemeteries.

The RBL Brussels Branch was well represented at a number of celebrations including those at Jalhay, Zeebrugge, Hotton-sur-Ourthe & La Roche-en-Ardenne, Rebecq, at the Enclos des Fusillés in Schaerbeek, and at the Waterloo Monument & British and Commonwealth Cemetery in Evere. The branch also participated in the Belgian Memorial Day and commemorations to mark the 72nd Anniversary of the Liberation of Europe; it was also represented in Normandy for the 72nd D-Day Remembrance events in June.

Sadly, 2016 saw the passing of three of our members:

Kennith Schrijvers (d.31/3/2016)

In accordance with his wishes, Kennith was given a military-style send off at the Zemst (Vilvoorde) crematorium. Eighteen RBL members attended the funeral.

Octavien Ricour (d.11/4/2016)

Ferdinand Verheyden (d.22/7/2016)

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

AND SO, ON TO 2017

Major commemorations will take place in Belgium in the summer to mark the centenary of the **Battle of Passchendaele** (July-November 1917), one of the bloodiest battles of WW1.

Officially known as the Third Battle of Ypres, the Battle of Passchendaele became infamous not only for the scale of casualties, but also for the "sea of mud".

The infantry attack began on 31st July. Constant shelling and the heaviest rain for 30 years had turned the battlefield into a quagmire, producing thick mud that caused guns, tanks and other machinery to seize up. The mud eventually became so deep that men and horses drowned in it.

When the Offensive was finally called off, on 6th November, and despite claims of success by General Haig, nothing decisive had been achieved: it had taken over three months, 325,000 Allied and 260,000 German casualties to do little more than make the Ypres Salient somewhat larger. In world history this battle has become synonymous with a completely senseless attack.

We shall of course be returning to the horror of Passchendaele in forthcoming issues of the Brussels Branch Newsletter and reporting on the commemorative events.

Xmas will not be entirely forgotten in this **January issue**, with articles on how Britain celebrated Xmas during WW2 and Xmas letters from the frontline during WW1.

Also, Branch member **Léon Rubin** tells us about his clandestine journey in 1943 through France and Spain and how he finally managed to join the Free Belgian forces in England.

Michael Whitburn

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY - 13TH NOVEMBER 2016 – HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

by Kate Andrews

It was a grey and damp day and the service was very well attended. The service was led by the **Reverend Canon John Wilkinson** in a wonderful and uplifting, yet thoughtful way.
Alison Rose read from the New Testament. **Jean-Pierre Pede** read out the names of the RBL veterans who passed away in 2016. **Andrew Fisher** read from the Old Testament and For the Fallen. The two young scouts who led the prayers were so clear and mature in their reading that it was a real pleasure to listen to them. This is what keeps the service alive and relevant for each new generation. These readers added feeling and poignancy to the service.

The inclusion of representatives from the Commonwealth and local Scouts made the service particularly moving. Sadly though, the guides were not present.

This year there was a good number of senior military from the EUMS and a senior representative from the UK Mil Rep. They have promised to instruct their junior officers to attend next year.

The ushers **Nick Fern** and **Anne Freeman**, and the Standard Bearers **Jean-Pierre Blanquart** (RAFA), **Jean-Claude Favresse** (Belgian Veterans Association) and **Alan Pulpett** (RBL) helped the service run smoothly and with respectable formality. The Bugler, **Jenny Freeman**, performed the Last Post, hymns and National Anthems of the UK and Belgium. Her beautiful rendition made us all think deeply about why we were there. Then **Paul de Lusignan** led all the hymns from the Organ, adding wonderful music to the service.

We were honoured that **Michael Rose** attended the service, despite his frail health. He assured me he was strong and fighting on.

We are extremely grateful to have had the following representatives for the Wreath Laying:

- HM Ambassador **Alison Rose** (with a wreath from the embassy)

- HM Ambassador **Mark Higgie** and Mrs **Zoe Higgie**, Ambassador of Australia

- Mrs **Heidi-Beth Hudson**, Senior EU Liaison Officer, Northern Ireland Office

- Colonel **Peter Scammel** of the Defence Attaché Office of the US Embassy

- Air commodore **John Maas** Acting President RAFA along with Mr **Michel de Norman**, Chairman RAFA

Following the service most of the congregation headed downstairs where food and drinks were served by the friendly team behind the bar run by **Johan de Peypere**.

HOW BRITAIN CELEBRATED CHRISTMAS DURING WARTIME

WW2

Six years of war brought many changes to familiar festive rituals. Christmas celebrations during WW2 often had to be scaled down or adjusted as restrictions and shortages took their toll.

For many families, the most difficult part of a wartime Christmas would be spending the festive season apart from loved ones. Many men were fighting abroad in the armed forces or were being held as prisoners of war. Women might also be away in the services or carrying out war work. Many children spent Christmas away from home as evacuees. By the end of the war, thousands of families had suffered the death of a family member either in action or from enemy bombing raids.

Christmas luxuries were especially hard to come by at a time when even basic foods were scarce. People were forced to find substitutes for key festive ingredients. Gifts were often homemade and practical, and children's toys were often made from recycled materials. Cards were smaller and printed on flimsy paper.

1944 Christmas Ad

Because many toy factories were now making guns or plane parts or other war equipment, there was a shortage of new toys. Children swapped old toys at 'toy-exchanges'. Many wartime toys were made of paper or card, because rubber, plastics, wood and metal were needed for the war.

Lots of toys had a war theme. There were toy planes, toy tanks and toy battleships to float in the bath. There were books such as the 'ABC of Aeroplane Spotting', card games with pictures of soldiers and sailors, and a darts game with a picture of Hitler as the bull's eye to throw at!

Child sleeps in air-raid shelter festooned with Xmas decorations

As in peacetime, singing songs and carols were rituals of wartime Christmases, along with the performance of pantomimes and festive plays. The BBC also broadcast a special Christmas Day radio programme. From 1939 onwards this featured a Christmas speech by King George VI, and became so popular with listeners that it became an annual ritual.

Sources:

http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/how-britain-celebrated-christmas-during-the-second-world-war

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/topics/christmas_in_world_war_two

1940 - 1941

This was the first real wartime Christmas. In the previous year Western Europe had fallen to Hitler's forces, and thousands of British servicemen had been killed, wounded, or captured. In September the Blitz on London had started; in November the devastating raid on Coventry had taken place. December targets of the Luftwaffe had also included Birmingham, Southampton, Bristol, Manchester, Sheffield, Portsmouth and Leicester. The nation had survived the Battle of Britain, and the expected German invasion of these islands had not materialised, but Britain was still under siege. There was a break in the bombing over the Christmas holiday, but everyone was aware that this was only a brief respite.

This was also the first Christmas 'on the ration', with food rationing having been a part of everyday life for almost a year. By this time weekly rations were four ounces of bacon and/or ham, six ounces of butter and/or margarine, two ounces of tea, eight ounces of sugar, two ounces of cooking fats and meat to the value of 1/10d (9p), although in the week before Christmas, the tea ration was doubled and the sugar ration increased to twelve ounces.

There was still plenty of non-rationed food available, however - at a price. Wines and spirits were plentiful, but French goods were almost completely gone, and imported fruit was extremely expensive. For Christmas, practical gifts were in vogue - gardening tools, books, bottling jars, seeds. Some gardening magazines even recommended a bag of fertilizer as a gift, and the most popular present for Christmas 1940 was … soap.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/britain_wwtwo/christmas_underfire_01.shtml

December 1914: the Real Story of the Christmas Truce

Late on Christmas Eve 1914, men of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) heard German troops in the trenches opposite them singing carols and patriotic songs and saw lanterns and small fir trees along their trenches. Messages began to be shouted between the trenches.

The following day, British and German soldiers met in no man's land and exchanged gifts, took photographs and some played impromptu games of football. They also buried casualties and repaired trenches and dugouts. After Boxing Day, meetings in no man's land dwindled out.

The truce was not observed everywhere along the Western Front. Elsewhere the fighting continued and casualties did occur on Christmas Day. Some officers were unhappy at the truce and worried that it would undermine fighting spirit.

After 1914, the High Commands on both sides tried to prevent any truces on a similar scale happening again. Despite this, there were some isolated incidents of soldiers holding brief truces later in the war, and not only at Christmas.

In what was known as the 'Live and Let Live' system, in quiet sectors of the front line, brief pauses in the hostilities were sometimes tacitly agreed, allowing both sides to repair their trenches or gather their dead.

Today, a simple wooden memorial cross marks the field outside Ploegsteert Wood (popularly known as 'Plugstreet'), where British and German soldiers played football during the World War One Christmas Day truce in 1914

http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-real-story-of-the-christmas-truce

This astonishing and totally unofficial truce, which has become legendary, lasted in some cases for several days. To the young Henry Williamson, who was then a private in the London Rifle Brigade, a Territorial battalion in the front-line trenches at Ploegsteert Wood, and who was present at the Truce, the experience came as a revelation that changed his life. Witness this letter he wrote to his mother on Boxing Day 1914:

Trenches, Dec 26 1914

Dear Mother,

I am writing from the trenches. It is 11 o'clock in the morning. Beside me is a coke fire, opposite me a 'dug-out' (wet) with straw in it. The ground is sloppy in the actual trench, but frozen elsewhere. In my mouth is a pipe presented by the Princess Mary. In the pipe is tobacco. Of course, you say.

But wait. In the pipe is German tobacco. Haha, you say, from a prisoner or found in a captured trench.

Oh dear, no!

From a German soldier. Yes a live German soldier from his own trench. Yesterday the British & Germans met & shook hands in the Ground between the trenches, & exchanged souvenirs, & shook hands. Yes, all day Xmas day, & as I write. Marvellous, isn't it? Yes.

This is only for about a mile or two on either side of us (so far as we know). It happened thuswise.

On Xmas eve both armies sang carols and cheered & there was very little firing. The Germans (in some places 80 yds away) called to our men to come and fetch a cigar & our men told them to come to us. This went on for some time, neither fully trusting the other, until, after much promising to 'play the game' a bold Tommy crept out & stood between the trenches, & immediately a Saxon came to meet him. They shook hands & laughed & then 16 Germans came out.

Thus the ice was broken. Our men are speaking to them now.

They are landsturmers or landwehr, I think, & Saxons & Bavarians (no Prussians). Many are gentle looking men in goatee beards & spectacles, and some are very big and arrogant looking. I have some cigarettes which I shall keep, & a cigar I have smoked.

We had a burial service in the afternoon, over the dead Germans who perished in the 'last attack that was repulsed' against us. The Germans put 'For Fatherland & Freedom' on the cross. They obviously think their cause is a just one.

http://www.henrywilliamson.co.uk/first-world-war/57-uncategorised/158-henry-williamson-and-the-christmas-truce

WW1 Xmas cards from the front

LETTERS TO LOVED ONES

During the First World War, letter writing was the main form of communication between soldiers and their loved ones, helping to ease the pain of separation.

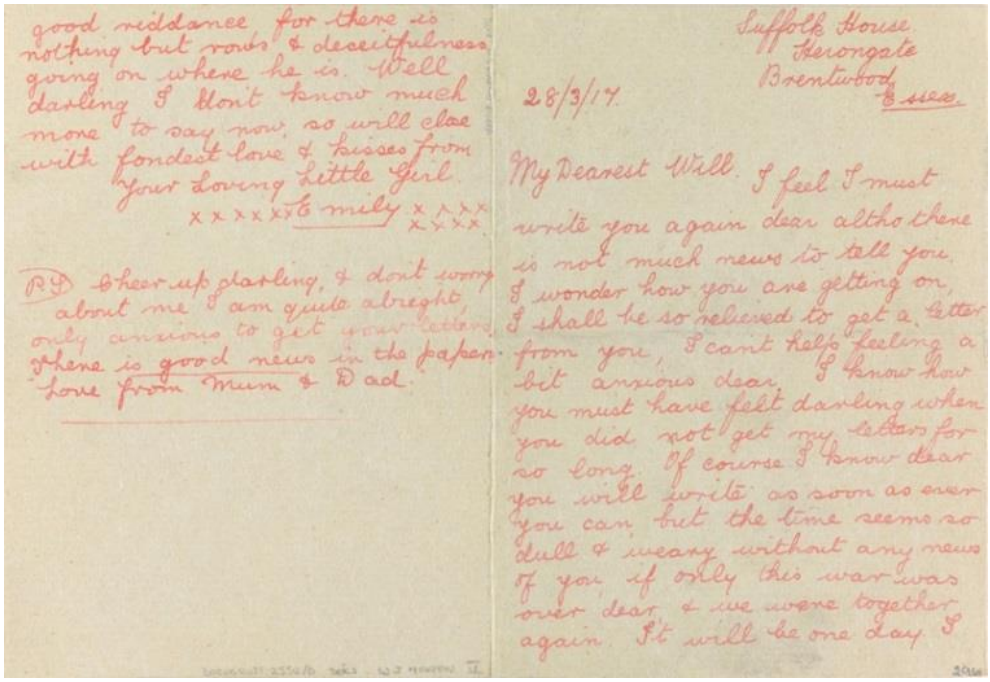
The British Army Postal Service delivered around 2 billion letters during the war. In 1917 alone, over 19,000 mailbags crossed the English Channel each day, transporting letters and parcels to British troops on the Western Front.

Soldiers wrote letters in spare moments, sometimes from front line trenches or in the calmer surroundings behind the lines. Censorship dictated what servicemen were permitted to disclose in their letters. However, in practice, men often found ways to impart information, and their letters offer a powerful and highly personal insight into the experience of war.

Receiving letters from family and friends was also vital to morale, keeping men and women connected to the homes they had left behind.

http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/letters-to-loved-ones

Many touching personal stories are vividly brought to life through letters exchanged during the First World War. The correspondence between **Private William Martin** and his fiancée Emily Chitticks reveals one of the most heart-breaking of all of these stories. Emily wrote this letter to Will before she had heard the devastating news that he had been killed in action:



good riddance for there is nothing but vows & deceitfulness going on where he is. Well darling I don't know much more to say now, so will close with fondest love & kisses from your loving little Girl

xxxxxxEmily xxxx xxxx

PS Cheer up darling, & don't worry about me I am quite alright only anxious to get your letters there is good news in the paper. Love from Mum & Dad.

Suffolk House Kerongate Brentwood Essex

28/3/17

My Dearest Will. I feel I must write you again dear altho there is not much news to tell you. I wonder how you are getting on, I shall be so relieved to get a letter from you, I can't help feeling a bit anxious dear. I know how you must have felt darling when you did not get my letters for so long. Of course I know dear you will write as soon as ever you can but the time seems so dull & weary without any news of you if only this war was over dear & we were together again. It will be one day I

'My Dearest Will, I feel I must write you again dear altho there is not much news to tell you. I wonder how you are getting on. I shall be so relieved to get a letter from you. I can't help feeling a bit anxious dear. I know how you must have felt darling when you did not get my letters for so long. Of course I know dear you will write as soon as ever you can, but the time seems so dull and weary without any news of you, if only this war was over dear and we were together again. It will be one day I suppose. Don't think dear I am worrying unnecessarily about you, because I know God can take care of you wherever you are and if it's his will darling he will so are you to come back to me, that's how I feel about it dear, if we only put our trust in Him. I am sure he will.'

http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/letters-to-loved-ones#entry1

With more and more letters being sent to and from the front line, the British Army became increasingly worried about the messages they contained. It was this worry that led to a huge **censorship** operation. At the start of the First World War, there was only one person involved in censorship. By November 1918, 5,000 people were involved in that job.

In their letters home the soldiers were forbidden from saying where they were, from talking about their general condition. Suspected enemy movements, action plans, indeed, even a comment as simple as "Three of my friends have died" wouldn't have made it past the censor.

So why did the army go to such lengths? They claimed this sort of censorship would keep vital information out of the enemy's hands. But in reality the powers that be were more concerned that any bad news would damage morale on the home front.

The army believed that if the public understood the true nature of the battlefield, support for the war would simply collapse. Any letters that contained forbidden information were abruptly censored. Banned phrases were scribbled out with pencil or coloured pen. Whole chunks of the letter were simply torn away.

The task of checking letters home fell to the junior officers at the front. Many of them got to know their own soldiers through their letters, discovering their hopes and dreams and fears. The letters were often so deeply personal that some junior officers refused to read them – though of course someone else would have to. And once they reached Britain the letters were re-opened and read again, before finally being delivered to the expectant families.

http://a.files.bbci.co.uk/bam/live/content/z2dtgk7/transcript

ALL ABOUT … ME

by Léon Rubin

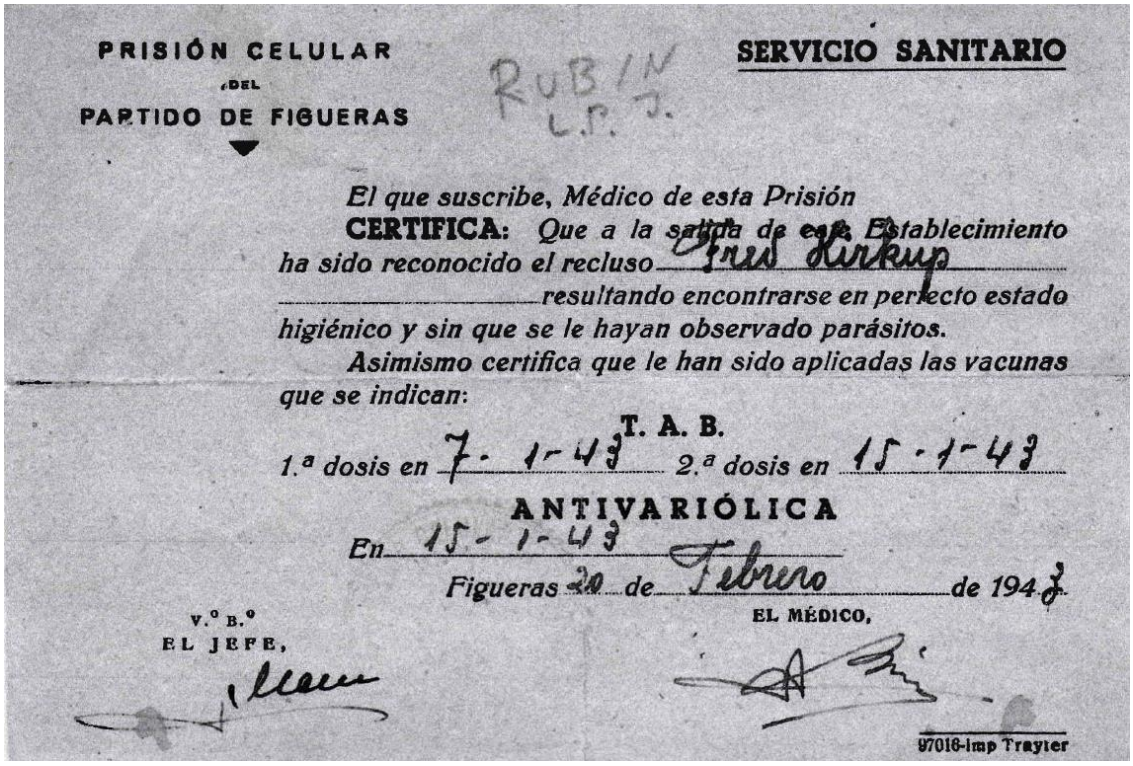
The following article is based on a recent interview of Léon Rubin, a long-standing member of RAFA and a member of the Brussels Branch of the RBL since 2008. The interview was conducted in French and translated into English by Michael Whitburn.

When Belgium was invaded In May 1940, I decided to join the Free Belgian forces in England even though I was officially a Swiss national by my father. The trouble was I was only 15 at the time and still at school in Brussels. I had no money, no contacts and no knowledge of English.

Not before 1943 was I finally able to put my plan into practice. I had in the meantime managed to save what I believed would be enough for the long and perilous journey through occupied and Vichy France, Franco's Spain and via Gibraltar, to England. I had also spent many hours learning the language with the help of an *Assimil* textbook and gramophone records, and after two years of studying I felt reasonably confident about my level of English.

The first part of the journey through France to the border with Spain took longer than anticipated, but everything proceeded more or less according to plan. I was put I touch with a local "*passeur*" (people smuggler) whose job it was to take me over the border to Figueras. In actual fact he took me no further than within sight of the town, gave me the name and address of a contact (both of which would later prove false) and then left me to fend for myself. It took me many hours to complete the journey, but I finally arrived, still on foot, famished and looking pretty ragged.

Hardly had I set foot in Figueras than I was stopped by the *Guardia Civil* and asked to produce some kind of identification. I had none to show them, but told them in my *Assimil* English that my name was Fred Kirkup, that I was a British citizen who had luckily escaped imprisonment in France and that I wished to be handed over to the local British Consular Service, whereupon I was promptly taken to the local police station and jailed in an overcrowded and smelly cell. I was finally set free in February thanks to the mediation of a British Consular Officer.



PRISIÓN CELULAR
DEL
PARTIDO DE FIGUERAS

RUBIN L.P. J.

SERVICIO SANITARIO

El que suscribe, Médico de esta Prisión
CERTIFICA: Que a la salida de este Establecimiento ha sido reconocido el recluso Fred Kirkup
resultando encontrarse en perfecto estado higiénico y sin que se le hayan observado parásitos.
Asimismo certifica que le han sido aplicadas las vacunas que se indican:

T. A. B.
1.ª dosis en 7-1-43 2.ª dosis en 15-1-43

ANTIVARIÓLICA
En 15-1-43

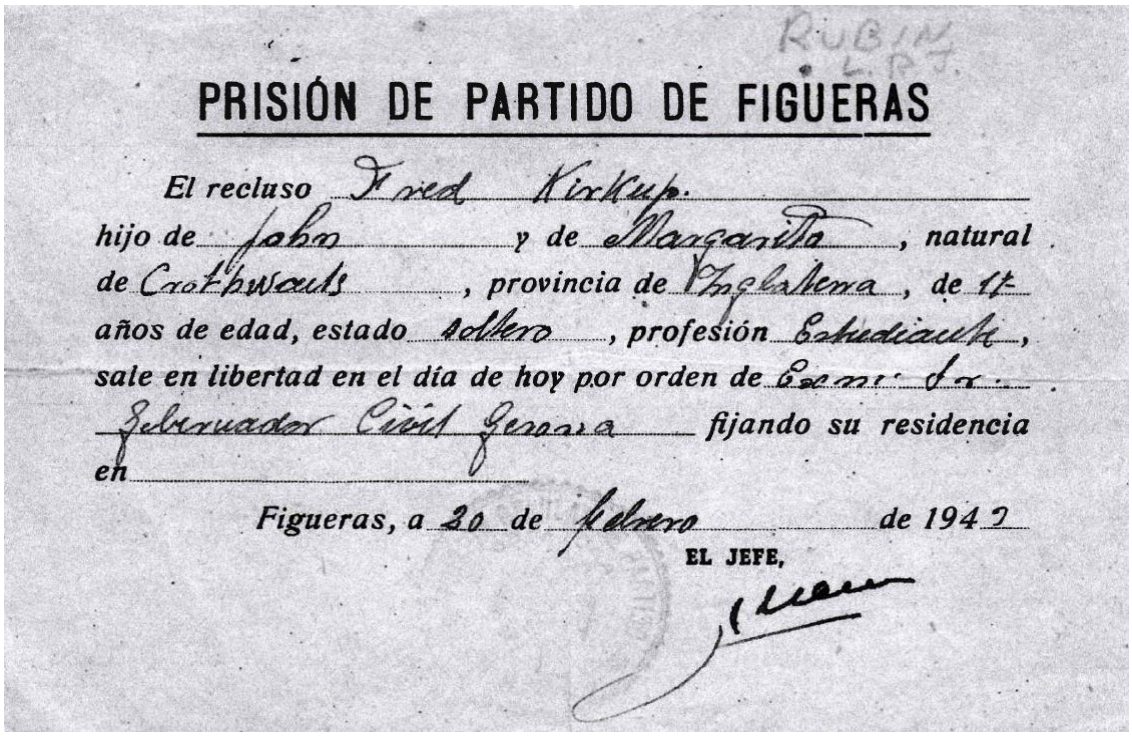
Figueras 20 de Febrero de 1943

V.º B.º
EL JEFE,

EL MÉDICO,

97016-Imp Trayter

Léon Rubin's vaccine record established by the prison doctor



RUBIN L.P. J.

PRISIÓN DE PARTIDO DE FIGUERAS

El recluso Fred Kirkup.
hijo de John y de Margarita, natural de Crothwaits, provincia de Inglaterra, de 17 años de edad, estado soltero, profesión Estudiante, sale en libertad en el día de hoy por orden de Excmo. Sr. Gobernador Civil Gerona fijando su residencia en

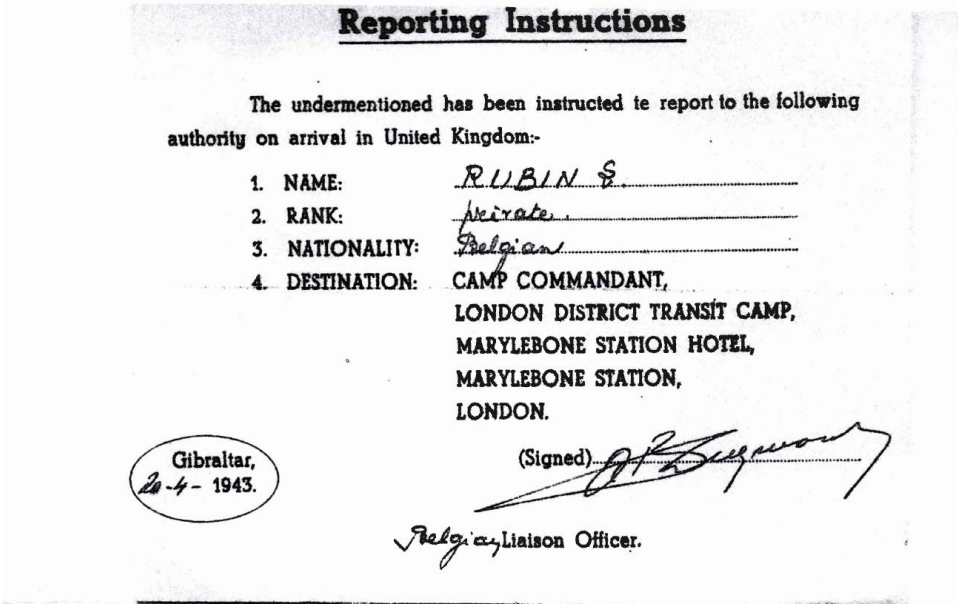
Figueras, a 20 de Febrero de 1943

EL JEFE,

Document confirming the release from prison of Léon Rubin, aka Fred Kirkup, son of John & Margaret Crothwarts, 17 and single.

Though the British representative was not taken in by my claims of British citizenship, he confirmed everything I had told the Spanish police and made sure I was set free. He took me to Barcelona where I was provided with new clothes, given a false certificate of British nationality and told I could move about at will. I was questioned on a number of occasions and asked to give a great many details about my life history.

After Barcelona, the next stop was Madrid where I arrived escorted by a Consular Officer and where I was again questioned about my past life history. From Madrid I travelled to Gibraltar where I was able to join the Belgian forces and from where I was put on a ship in a convoy of some 30 or 40 vessels heading for England.



Reporting Instructions

The undermentioned has been instructed te report to the following authority on arrival in United Kingdom:-

1. NAME: RUBIN S.
2. RANK: Private.
3. NATIONALITY: Belgian
4. DESTINATION: CAMP COMMANDANT,
LONDON DISTRICT TRANSIT CAMP,
MARYLEBONE STATION HOTEL,
MARYLEBONE STATION,
LONDON.

Gibraltar, 20-4-1943.

(Signed) ...

Belgian Liaison Officer.

Document instructing Léon Rubin to report to the military authority on arrival in the UK

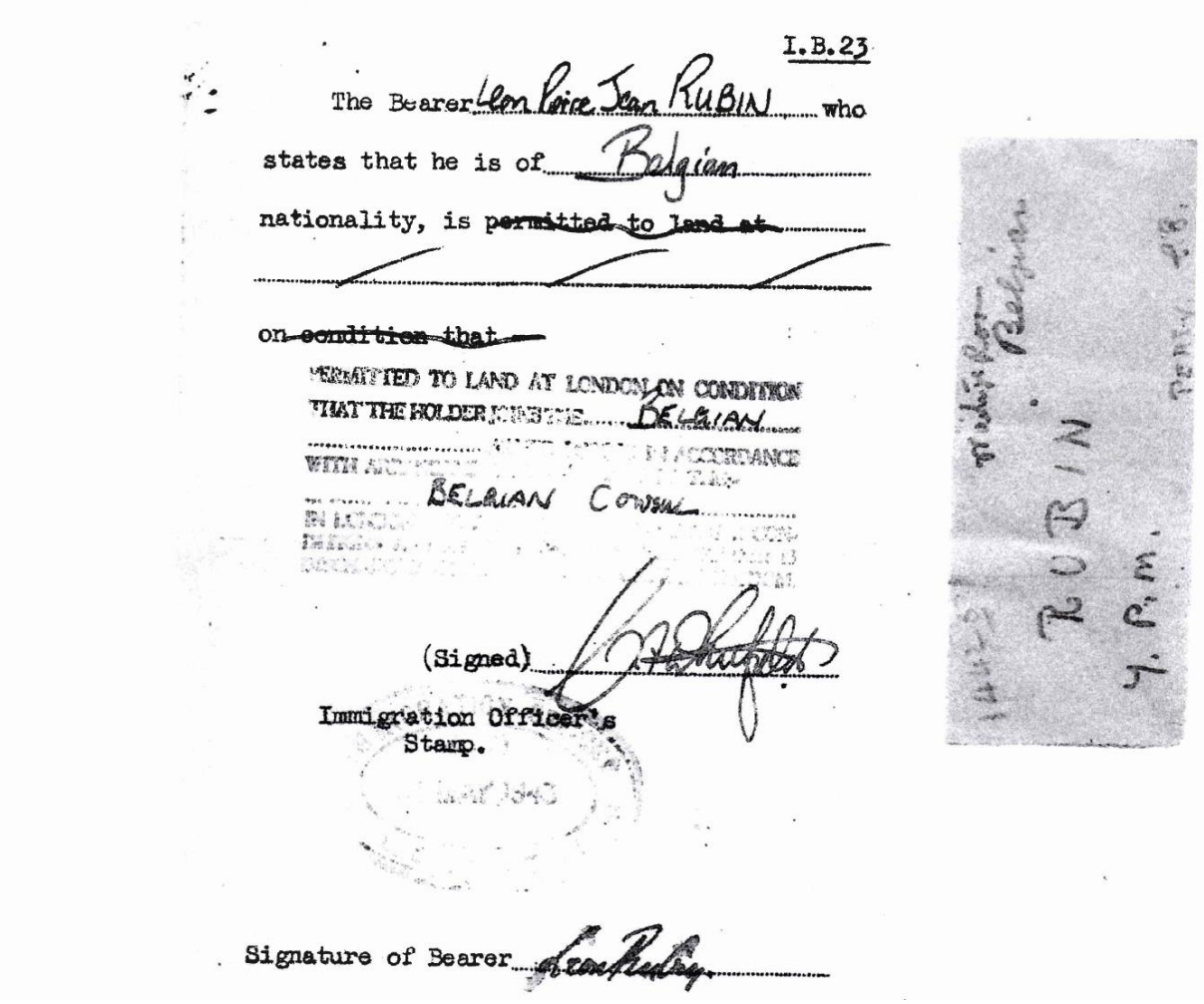
The journey at sea was a dangerous one and on several occasions the convoy came under attack by German fighter planes before we finally docked at Liverpool harbour. From Liverpool, immigrants like myself were immediately taken by train to London and the London Reception Centre in The Royal Victoria Patriotic Building, Fitzhugh Grove off Trinity Road.

Patriotic School, Fitzhugh Grove off Trinity Road, London

Note:

Built in 1857 with its foundation stone laid by Queen Victoria, The Royal Victoria Patriotic Building was originally an orphanage for dependants of servicemen killed in the Crimean War. During WW2 it housed MI5 and MI6 and was used as a detention and interrogation centre.

For several days we underwent tough and intense questioning by highly experienced interrogators.



I.B.23

The Bearer Léon Poire Jean RUBIN who states that he is of Belgian nationality, is ~~permitted to land at~~

~~on condition that~~

PERMITTED TO LAND AT LONDON ON CONDITION THAT THE HOLDER IS/BE BELGIAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH ... BELGIAN CONSUL

(Signed)

Immigration Officer's Stamp.

Signature of Bearer

RUBIN

Document granting permission to Léon Rubin to remain in London

Once they were satisfied I was telling the truth, I was issued with a document granting "permission to land at London" and told to report to the Belgian Embassy at Eton Square. Being a Swiss citizen I was referred to the Swiss Embassy at Montague Square where I was informed that my father had been moving heaven and earth to find his missing son. I was told I would be sent back to Switzerland which, I bluntly told them, I would refuse. Finally, my parents were informed of the situation and agreed to emancipate me. I was later told Hubert Pierlot, the Prime Minister of the Belgian government in exile, had insisted I be granted permission to join the Belgian section of the RAF.

The six-week training programme (ITW, for Initial Training Wing) was at Scarborough, North Yorkshire. It was designed to improve discipline, physical fitness and mental alertness and provide a sound basic knowledge of the Royal Air force. The syllabus included Armament,

Engines, Hygiene and Sanitation, RAF Law and Discipline, Mathematics, Meteorology, Navigation, Flight and Signals and, for immigrants like myself, English.

I completed my training programme in Canada at North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and received my wings on 2nd March 1945 - just two months before the end of the war in Europe!

Who knows, maybe it was when the Germans heard that Léon Rubin had officially been appointed a pilot officer in the RAF that they realised there was nothing left for them to do but surrender…

2016 POPPY APPEAL

by Ann Morley, Poppy Appeal Coordinator

The 2016 Poppy Appeal was supported by businesses, offices, shops, pubs, churches, associations and clubs in and around Brussels. Despite the loss of SHAPE the results in 2016 exceeded all our expectations with most locations totalling more than their 2015 total.

The Brussels Branch remains extremely grateful for the support it receives from all locations during its Annual Poppy Appeal. Nothing however would be possible without the help of all the volunteers who so generously give their time to deliver and/or collect the poppies and collecting tins. This year we welcomed two new helpers, **Gerry Cain** and **Bernard Pire**, who together with helper **Andrew Girvan** gave their very best and did a magnificent job.

So, many heartfelt thanks to our helpers, then, and many thanks to ALL the supporter locations, to those who delivered and collected boxes and, of course, to all those who bought a poppy and wore it with pride.

XMAS AND NEW YEAR LUNCHES

Everyone was clearly in a festive mood at the traditional **Xmas lunch** held on 12th December at *Le St Hubert*. The event was well-attended and, as always, much appreciated. To add to the fun there were the traditional Xmas crackers. It's hard to say which of the many very bad Xmas cracker jokes was actually the worst. Maybe this one: *What did one eye say to the other*? *(A: Between you me something smells)*? How awful can they get?

Ethel Pede-Moffatt and Eric Johnson

Colin and Brenda Puplett

The **first Branch lunch of 2017** was marked by the return of **François Roberti-Lintermans** who seems to be making a good recovery after a delicate hip operation in November. **Colin Puplett** welcomed him back into fold, congratulated him on his recent birthday and gave him a small birthday present on behalf of the Branch. In his reply, François thanked the RBL for all the sympathy expressed during his stay in hospital. He added that he had just set himself a new goal: having heard that a French amateur cyclist, aged **104**, had managed to cover 22 of the 37 km of a time trial stage scheduled in this year's Tour de France, he was now determined to live for at least another 10 years. We wish François the very best now and in the future.

François Roberti-Lintermans and Colin Puplett

A reminder that **lunches** are organized all the year round, **on the 2nd Monday of every month**, **from 12.00**, at **Le St Hubert, Place des Chasseurs Ardennais, 1030 Brussels**. All branch members are more than welcome.

CONDOLENCES FROM THE RBL BRUSSELS BRANCH

The Brussels Branch expresses its heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of **Noël Ancelot**. Noël was born on 12/06/1924 and passed away on 12/01/2017. He had joined the Brussels Branch in 2009 and was holder of the *Légion d'Honneur*.

WE WILL REMEMBER HIM

CALENDAR OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2017

RBL Lunches	13th Feb, 13th March, 10th April, 8th May, 12th June
Sun 7th May	Commemorations of the Battle of the Bulge at Hotton-sur-Ourthe and La Roche-en-Ardenne
Sat 24th June	British and Commonwealth Memorial Day at the Brussels Cemetery in Evere

Happy birthday wishes to the 24 branch members who have recently celebrated or are about to celebrate their birthdays:

Jacques Blavier, Michel Bourland, David Boyd, Wilfred Burie, Joëlle Campion, Garry Cartwright, Jack Christy, Sheila Lyle Cuthbertson, Justin Davies, Luc Dewolf, Brigitte d'Hulster-Ceulemans, Paul Grayson, André Hespel, Rainer Hiltermann, Ivy Lilian Hobbs, Lawrence Anthony Kelly, Terry Ann Kemp, Michael Andrew Light, Andrew Lysak, Anthony More, Paul-Henri Philips, Colin Puplett, Jean-Pierre Schellekens, Michael Serra

Very special congratulations to the branch members who have recently celebrated their **90+ birthday**:

François-Marie Jacobs*, *Peter Pallett*, *François Roberti-Lintermans *and* ***Léon Rubin***

Super special congratulations to

Brenda Ghislain-Knight, who on 27th January will be celebrating her **100th birthday**.

Victor Rasquin, who celebrated his 103rd birthday last November.

Hugs and warmest congratulations to both of them.

With many thanks for their contributions to this January issue to Ann, Kate, Léon and, for her patience and invaluable technical assistance, Filomena.

Newsletter contributions gratefully received – please email the NL Coordinator Michael Whitburn on mwhitbur@vub.ac.be