

(Kilminster Branch) – BR2346

NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2012

RBL Devon County Annual Conference

Our Secretary, Michael O’Flaherty, was the Branch’s delegate at the Devon County Annual Conference held on 7 Jan 12 at the RBL Crownhill Club in Plymouth. The Conference was chaired by the County Chairman, Ralph Howard-Williams in the absence of the President, Rear Admiral Ric Cheadle. There were only 37 delegates among those present but the Standards of most Branches were paraded. The new County Secretary, John Prior, reported that the total number of Branches in Devon was now 74 but 6 RBL Clubs were struggling to survive. John Pentreath, the County Manager, reported that the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan had resulted in 574 fatalities in the British Armed Forces, with many more injured. The County’s welfare case workers had been working extremely hard in helping some of them and other veterans and their dependents. Carol Arnold, the Poppy Appeal Co-ordinator, reported that publicity had been exceptionally good last year as was fund raising by the Branches among which “little Kilminster” was specially commended. The County Chairman considered last year to have been a monumental one in terms of numbers of events to support the 90th Anniversary fund raising effort. He thought that little would change with the organisation in Devon in spite of earlier threats by RBL HQ. He mentioned that RBL pressure on the Government had resulted in the intention to write the “Deed of Covenant” into Law. A motion to discontinue the National RBL Annual Conference was narrowly carried as was one to ensure that War Memorials should be kept in a good state of repair.

Branch Committee Meeting - 5 Dec 11

At a Branch Committee meeting held on 5 December, Brian Lavender was elected President of Kilminster Branch in succession to Gordon Dendle; he thanked the Committee for the honour. Peter Huscroft was co-opted onto the Committee to serve as Treasurer in succession to Roger Lovegrove, and Susan Moore was re-elected Welfare Secretary. Gordon Dendle was appointed an Honorary Life President. After various reports it was decided to donate £1200 to the Poppy Appeal and £400 to the Devon County Welfare Fund. Members reviewed the list of “shepherds” and decided that there were not enough and that some had a disproportional number of members to serve. Ron Foster, John Watts and Susan Moore agreed to join the team and the Secretary undertook to share members fairly equally between the 8 “shepherds”. Please be understanding of the fact that a new “shepherd” might have been allocated to you and they will introduce themselves soon.

Operations in Helmand Province

Members that attended the power point presentation by Lance Corporal Rob Hill in the Village Hall on 2 December, attended by over 80 people, will know that it was an outstanding presentation. The Chairman opened the proceedings by leading everyone in the Exhortation in memory of the 7 Royal Marines from 42 Commando killed during Rob’s tour of duty in Afghanistan. Rob showed vividly how our troops operate there and what it’s like to patrol the paths and buildings where IEDs are present and Taliban snipers and fighters are often hiding close by ready to ambush. Without a note, Rob talked for an hour to a fascinated audience and after refreshments answered a large number of questions succinctly. £282 was raised for the Poppy Appeal and the Chairman wrote Rob a very complimentary letter with our thanks. The President also wrote to Rob’s Commanding Officer in K Company, Royal Marines, reporting that it was one of the best lectures to be held by the Branch in recent years.

## Frank Enticott

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Frank Enticott who died aged 86 was held in St Giles' Church, Kilmington on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012. An Axminster schoolboy, Frank joined the British Army in 1943 at the age of 18 years and was assigned to the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment which became the 12<sup>th</sup> (Airborne) Battalion when they started training on Airspeed Aviation Horsa gliders at Bulford Camp. In May 1944, they took part in a massive exercise when the whole of the 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division was air dropped or landed by glider to advance on bridges over the River Thames. Although they did not know it at the time, it was a dress rehearsal for D-Day.

Frank was one of the airborne troops air towed across the Channel in Horsa gliders by Halifax bombers during the evening of D- Day and he with the 30 others on board landed close to Pegasus Bridge to reinforce the forward party which secured the bridges over the River Orne and the Caen Canal shortly after midnight that day. A machine gunner, Frank fought to defend the bridges from a counter attack by the 21<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division and went on with the 12<sup>th</sup> Devons throughout Europe for the rest of the war emerging unscathed, unlike most of his comrades. He transferred to the Somerset Light Infantry before leaving the Army in 1947. Tragically, in 2003 he was badly injured and his wife Dot was killed in a motor accident and after a long stay in hospital had to sell his house in Silver Street and move into the Silverleigh Residential Home in Axminster where he was looked after very well.

The Service was conducted by the Rev'd Alastair McCollum and members of the Branch including our Honorary Chaplain joined his family and friends in the congregation. His niece, Maureen Jackson gave a Eulogy on his later life and the Branch President paid tribute to Frank's wartime Service. John Newbury, his nephew read the Lesson, Two veterans from the Devonshire Regiment Association were present bearing the colours of the Devonshire Regiment and the Devon and Dorsets. Prior to the Committal, the Branch Chairman led the congregation in the Exhortation, remembering in particular Frank and his 12<sup>th</sup> Devons colleagues killed in the war. Many tales were told about Frank over refreshments in the Hitchcock Pavilion afterwards as the Kilmington Branch sadly lost another 2<sup>nd</sup> World War veteran..

## Future Events

Saturday 21 April. The Village Hall has been booked for the Spring Coffee Morning.

Friday 6 July. The Annual Barbeque will be held in the New Inn

The Annual Outing and Annual lecture have yet to be planned. Please pass any suggestions to the Chairman or Secretary. Any other suggestions for events would be welcome.

## Membership

Branch membership now totals 142. To buck the national trend, we need to recruit more to replace some that we have sadly lost. Please do your best to encourage your neighbours and friends to join our worthy cause.

## Monthly "Get Togethers"

These gatherings on the first Friday of the month at 18.00 hours on a buy your own principle continue to be popular and even if you are on your own, please don't hesitate to come along as you can be sure of a warm welcome The next ones are on 3 Feb in the New Inn, 2 Mar in the Old Inn but as it is Good Friday on 6 Apr, lets make it 30 Mar in the New Inn to represent the Apr one.

