



(Kilmington Branch BR246)

NEWSLETTER- AUGUST 2009

Afghanistan

It is likely that all members of the Branch would have been very disturbed over recent weeks about the heavy toll in lives lost and injuries sustained by our young Service personnel in Afghanistan. Whatever the cause, and most of us have strong views about the reasons, let's hope that the Government and the MOD will at last sort the problems out. What is abundantly clear is that our Armed Forces deserve better support and we can help by lobbying our MP's and the Government. Membership of the Royal British Legion shows that we care, and our fund raising efforts for the Poppy Appeal will be put to good use. As at the end of Jul 09, the National total raised was already in excess of £30M and the Devon County portion was £816K. Some £900K in welfare assistance has been awarded to deserving cases in the County this year.

D-Day 65th Anniversary Commemorations

No doubt most of us viewed the D-Day Commemorations with great interest this year, and members that attended the monthly "Get Together" on 5 Jun in the New Inn were pleased to toast Frank Enticott who was remembering his landing in a Horsa glider on D-Day and his subsequent advance on Pegasus Bridge. David Pattison, one of our members, was waiting in Fareham on 6 Jun 44 with his Army Signals unit but they only embarked on a tank landing craft 5 days later (fortified with Navy rum) for a "cruise" to Normandy; on arrival, they drove their jeeps into the sea and on to Juno beach. Subsequently he served in Europe providing communications for RAF squadrons operating out of many makeshift airfields. This year he travelled to Normandy to relive some of his experiences visiting Pegasus Bridge, the Ranville Commonwealth Cemetery, the Merville gun battery, and the beaches of Sword, Juno and Gold. He had a day at Arrowmanches in torrential rain where most of the parades had to be cancelled; however, he reported that the French President and our Prime Minister spoke well at a moving ceremony there and were supported by many Generals who joined the veterans afterwards. All 10 veterans travelling with David received a commemorative Bar from a French Admiral as a tribute to their actions in 1944.

Annual Outing

The coach was full for the Annual Outing on 17 Jun stopping first in Alphington at the new RBL Devon County HQ where County Secretary Dick Jennings gave a warm welcome as the first Branch to visit them. He briefed us on the "Review of Membership" being conducted nationally with the object of improving recruitment and retention. He was followed by the Welfare Officer, Amanda Mendoza, who briefed on the very impressive amount of support being given to ex-Service personnel in the West Country. After coffee, Major Don Jellard gave an excellent briefing on the "Rifles" Regiment, the Territorial Army and the Cadet Forces. After lunch on Exeter Quay, we embarked on a Stuart Line boat and cruised down the canal through the locks and then down the river to Exmouth. It was an interesting and very enjoyable day out.

Annual BBQ

The Annual BBQ at the New Inn on 24 Jul proved so popular that, after 82 tickets had been sold, 8 members/guests had to be turned down because of catering and seating restrictions. It was a lovely evening after rain most of the day so everyone sat outside and enjoyed the food prepared so well by Denise and Brian Jenkins; how Brian coped with cooking for so many in such a short time is difficult to comprehend, but members showed their appreciation. It was a very pleasant and relaxing evening.

RBL Devon County Rally – Sunday 13 Sep 09

The Devon County Rally will be held this year at Okehampton Battle Camp in North Dartmoor on Sunday 13 Sep 09. It will be held in conjunction with the Dartmoor Military Heritage Weekend open from 1000 to 1600 hours when there will be the opportunity to meet and learn about today's Armed Forces, take part in practical activities e.g. fitness trail, laser rifle shooting, climbing walls, archery etc. At 15.15 hours there will be a parade of RBL Standards and at 16.30 hours the Rifles Regiment Salamanca Band will Sound Retreat. This should make a great day out for families and friends where parking and entrance is free.

Passing of Friends

The Chairman wrote to Frank Pape, aged 101 years, one of the Branch's Honorary Life Presidents, sending our condolences on the death of his wife Muriel who would have been 101 this month; many members attended the Service of Thanksgiving for her life in St Giles' Church on 16 July. The Chairman also wrote a letter sending our sympathy to 93 year old Phil Hamblett on the death of his wife Pat, aged 86. Pat served in Army uniform for the NAAFI close to the front line in Europe during World War II, meeting and serving many wartime leaders including Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle and Bernard Montgomery; a number of members attended her funeral Service on 6 Jul which the Chairman recorded for Phil because he is bedridden in the Seaton Nursing Home.

Devon County Festival of Remembrance

The theme for this year's Festival of Remembrance at Exeter University on Thursday 5 Nov is our Armed Forces Operations in Afghanistan. Obviously, it will feature a number of personnel that have served there, some of whom would have suffered serious injuries; the Band of HM Royal Marines and the Neath Male Voice Choir together with a young vocalist and pianist will ensure a moving and entertaining evening. The event is likely to be sold out early, but Michael O'Flaherty, our Secretary on 01297 35873 will place a bulk order for tickets at £7 per head. Please telephone him by 7 Sep advising your preferred seating (balcony or main hall) as all tickets will be numbered with seats reserved. Having attended for the last two years I can assure members that it is a very professional performance and one that should not be missed. Coach transport will be arranged.

Membership

Branch membership now stands at 119 and it is a pleasure to report that we have recruited our second serving member, Rob Hill, who has just been awarded the Kings

Badge at a Passing Out Parade at Royal Marines Lympstone on 17 Jul 09. King George V presented the badge on 7 Nov 18 directing that it should be awarded to the best all round recruit in the Kings Squad, provided that the nomination was worthy of the honour. It is such a prestigious award that the Badge is worn throughout the service of the Marine, no matter what rank is achieved. Rob now goes to 42 Commando with our best wishes and has promised to keep us updated with his activities in the future.

Monthly "Get-Togethers

The next monthly "Get-Togethers" on a "buy your own principle" will be held at 1800 hours on Friday 7 Aug in the New Inn and Friday 4 Sep in the Old Inn. You can be sure of a warm welcome even if you are on your own.

Dates for the Diary

Friday 16 Oct Annual Lecture in the Village Hall by Commander Stafford Seward OBE RN
Wed 21 Oct Poppy Appeal Collectors Coffee morning at The Cider Orchard
Sat 24 Oct Poppy Appeal Starts
Thur 5 Nov Devon County Festival of Remembrance at Exeter University
Sun 8 Nov RBL Remembrance Sunday Service in St Giles' Church followed by lunch
Wed 11 Nov Armistice Day Act of Remembrance on Playing Field followed by coffee
Sat 14 Nov Autumn Coffee Morning in Village Hall

(B W LAVENDER)
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3 August 09