



NEWSLETTER- APRIL 2009

New National President for RBL

Air Marshal Ian Macfadyen has now taken over the appointment of Honorary Inspector General of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force and has been replaced as National President by General Sir John Kiszely who had an outstanding career in the British Army, serving in the Falklands, Bosnia and Gulf wars.

New RBL Head Office

HM The Queen formally opened the new RBL HQ – Haig House – in London early in the New Year. She was welcomed by the National President and met the staff and some of the Legion beneficiaries, including young service personnel who had been badly wounded in the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan. This move will result in great financial savings in comparison to the old HQ in Pall Mall.

Return to Rationing

Those that subscribed to the Return to Rationing Campaign, launched in conjunction with Age Concern, will be pleased to hear that a 25,000 signature petition was taken to Downing Street by the National President. The Government has already made some concessions to pensioners and those in receipt of income support, and it is hoped that more help will be provided during the year.

Annual Outing – Wednesday 17 June

At its meeting on 6 April, the Branch Committee decided to arrange an outing closer to home this year, and approved a proposal to visit the new Devon County RBL HQ at Alphington for briefing on the work done there. After coffee/tea, Major Don Jellard MBE, from the Rifles Office at Wyvern Barracks, will brief us on the Regiment and give us information on the TA and Cadet Forces. After lunch under own arrangements at Exeter Quay, the party will board a special Stewart Line Cruise boat through the locks and down the River Exe to Exmouth where our Swards coach will be waiting to take us back to the Village Hall. The timings will be; 0930 depart Village Hall, 1015 arrive Devon RBL HQ, 1215 depart Devon RBL HQ, 1230 arrive Exeter Quay for shopping/lunch, 1415 depart on Stewart Line Cruise, 1630 arrive Exmouth, 1800 arrive Village Hall. A 38 seat coach has been booked and the outing is likely to cost about £13 per head. Please help by booking early with the Secretary on 01297 35873 as we can perhaps order a larger coach if the demand is there.

Spring Coffee Morning – Saturday 25 April

Please support the Branch Spring Coffee Morning in the Village Hall at 10.30 hours as all profit will go to the Poppy Appeal. Donations to the plant, gift, cake, book, CD/tape stalls and raffle would be much appreciated.

HMS Cumberland

Captain David Dutton OBE, son of Committee member Ted Dutton, is now at sea in command of HMS Cumberland after the type 22 frigate had undergone equipment upgrades, routine maintenance and shore side training for the crew at its home base in Devonport. You can follow the exploits of the ship and get all the details about her by searching for "HMS Cumberland" on the internet.

D-Day Celebrations

Celebrations to mark the 65th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings will take place on both sides of the English Channel on Saturday 6th June. The coup-de-main force of 126 infantry and assault troops that landed in 6 Horsa gliders which had been towed across by Halifax bombers, captured the bridges over the Caen Canal and River Orne, and they will be especially remembered this year. Runners bearing the names of all 126 will start from the old Tarrant Rushton airfield and will run through Portsmouth to embark on a ferry at Fareham to Ouistreham on 5 June to reach Pegasus Bridge on 6 June. Frank Enticott, one of our members, landed in his Horsa glider with a force from the 12th Devons, part of the Airborne Division, a few hours later and so his name will not be carried by one of the runners. However, at the age of 19, he fought to hold Pegasus Bridge - don't forget to ask him about it at the next "Get-Together".

European Force HQ - Chad

Commander Stafford Seward OBE, RN, our only serving member, is Assistant Chief of Staff Operations and the sole UK member of the main Force HQ at Abeche in Eastern Chad. He was home on a brief period of leave in March and has given us some idea of the situation there. The European Force consists of 3,400 troops from 18 EU countries tasked with protecting the civilians and thousands of refugees from Darfur who had fled to Chad and to the north east of the Central African Republic; the force provides humanitarian aid and ensures the safety of UN personnel deploying there who will eventually take over the whole operation. Stafford reported that the environment is extremely hostile with temperatures exceeding 40 degrees; while life for the European force personnel was unpleasant, it was insignificant in comparison to the hardships that the refugees had to bear. We can look forward to hearing more from Stafford at the Autumn Lecture.

Death of Harry Price

Past Branch Secretary and long standing member of the RBL, Harry passed away peacefully on Sunday 8 February aged 88 years. The Service of Celebration for his life, conducted by the Rev'd Alistair McCullom, was held in St Giles' Church on 19 Feb and was attended by many Branch members, relatives and friends. Ernest Fox, past Headmaster of Colyton Grammar School, and close associate of Harry, gave a lengthy and fitting tribute covering his war time service which was earlier reported in Postscript and the Parishes Paper. Ernest mentioned in particular Susan Moore, one of our members, who was Harry's companion for a number of years and who gave him tremendous support after his stroke some 7 years ago. The collection at the Service was divided between the Axminster Care Service and the RBL, and some £155 has been sent direct to the Poppy Appeal.

Dates for the Diary

Tuesday 16 Jun - RBL Poppy Train Buckfastleigh to Totnes & return

Sunday 28 Jun - Armed Forces Day - Plymouth Hoe

Saturday 4 Jul - 3 Commando Brigade March through Exeter on return from Afghanistan

Friday 24 Jul - Branch Annual BBQ - New Inn

Sunday 13 Sep - Devon Country RBL Rally - Oakhampton Camp

Thursday 5 Nov - Devon County Festival of Remembrance - Exeter University

Sunday 8 Nov - Remembrance Sunday

Monthly "Get-Togethers"

The next informal monthly events on a "buy your own" principle are at 18.00 hours on Friday 1 May in the Old Inn and Friday 5 June in the New Inn. Your Committee looks forward to seeing you there.

(B W LAVENDER)

Chairman

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9 April 09