



Royal Navy



British Army



Royal Air Force

## Aden Veterans Association Gloucestershire Branch

Volume 2 of 2023

### Chairman's Report

I have just watched a lengthy news report on the current situation in the Yemen, focusing on the horrific number of children lost during this long running civil war. It was titled 'The Forgotten War'. That title certainly brings back memories and of our time in Aden and the Protectorates.

Moving on to more positive items the Branch held a well-attended and successful, AGM on Wednesday July 5<sup>th</sup>. Graham Motley, National Membership Secretary, attended on behalf of the National Committee. The Branch elected a new Vice-Chair, Sheila Gibson, to replace Chris Blick who decided to stand down from the committee after serving, with great distinction, since the Branch was founded. We all owe so much to Chris for his involvement, dedication, hard work and sound advice during his time on the committee. He has been a tower of strength for me and I am assured that he will continue to play a significant role in the future of the Branch. His wide range of contacts are part of the reason that we are a strong and active Branch. Sally Welzel has been elected to the committee and has offered to help the National Association in organising an event to remember the 60th Anniversary of the Withdrawal from Aden, which will take place in 2027.

Many of you will know about the National Committee's aspirations concerning the future of the Aden Veterans Association. Briefly the National Committee have offered to continue in post, beyond their elected time, because of the lack of volunteers to take on the executive roles. They would like the National Association to continue until the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary when the National Standard will be laid up at Bispham Church following the September Reunion and AGM in 2017. The proposal is that Branches can continue, and retain their Standards, as long as they are an organised group with regular events. Once they cease as a Branch their Standard must be laid up. This is certainly good news for the Gloucestershire Branch.



Your Branch has been represented at a number of recent events including VE Day and D-Day Services in Cheltenham. The Remembrance Service at Earthcott Green. My thanks to Stan Shearer for laying the Branch wreath and to Robert Parrant for carrying the Branch Standard. Approximately eighteen members went to Weymouth to attend the annual event organised by the West Dorset Branch. It was, as always, superbly well organised. We all enjoyed the Friday get together, the Gala dinner and the parade on Sunday morning. Robert

paraded our standard, and Dennis Flamson carried the Kernow Standard. Denis Sparrow took our display to the Jet Age Museum to celebrate Armed Forces Day, and a number of members went to a Not Forgotten event at Gatcombe Park.



Tommy Clough was our guest at the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of our Branch. He is a Korean war veteran and was at the Battle of Imjin River. He was captured by the Chinese and was a POW.

Finally a few thanks from me for commitment to your Branch.

Michael and David continue to work hard for the Branch and their work is greatly appreciated.

Chris Price for his thoughtful and incisive advice.

Jean continues to organise our excellent first Wednesday lunches, and along with Sally is in the process of planning our Christmas Lunch, which will be held at the Robinswood Hotel who looked after us so well for our 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary attended by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal.

Denis for taking the Branch display to a number of events and, of course, Robert for parading our Standard.

Emlyn Phennah for collating the Newsletter and Ray Bunnage for his work on our website, keeping it up to date.

My final thanks are to you all who have been so supportive and active. Without you your Branch would not exist. I hope to see many of you at the future events that you can find on our website.

***Rick Rutter Branch Chairman***

## **Branch Secretary's Report**

Since the production of the last newsletter the Branch activities have continued pretty well as planned, and the number of attendees has remained fairly constant. We have been pleased to welcome Don McPhail, Mike Rees, Kenneth Walker and Alan Biggs to the Branch. At the beginning of this month, the AGM had 28 attendees with 13 apologies for absence. After the meeting, Graham Mottley sent me a "thank you to you all" e-mail, complimenting the Branch on the numbers attending, and also for showing that the latest proposals presented by the National Committee for the future of the AVA have Branch support in principle. Any amendments to the Constitution which will have to be made, will be proposed at the next National AGM in Blackpool this September.

Following on from last year's AGM, Brian Serrell told the recent AGM that his application for medal recognition, which he had sent to his MP, Alex Chalk (who happens to be the current Lord Chancellor) will be passed on to Baroness Goldie, who is the Minister of State at the MOD. Brian had been asked to submit further evidence, - courtesy of

another volume from the Denis Sparrow library, - in preparation for the application to be passed to the Minister. It is hoped that a decision will be received in a few weeks. Maybe, just maybe, the application endorsed by a very senior politician might have sufficient weight to persuade the relevant MOD committee to change its previous decision.

Looking forward to the second half of the year, we have plenty of activities to look forward to,

notably our First Wednesday lunches, the Blackpool weekend (you can still apply), Remembrance Sunday, and the 56<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Withdrawal. We have been notified by the Mayor's Office that this will probably be the last year when we will have their support, so if you can make it to the event, please do so.

Finally, don't forget – Sally Welzel would appreciate your menu lists for the Christmas lunch on 6<sup>th</sup> December by the end of September.

***Michael Compton Branch Secretary***

## **Treasurer's Report**

We are now 4 months into the current financial year, and at the 6th July 2023 bank statement we had £1,274.78 in the bank. This sum will grow as we receive monies for the Christmas lunch, added to by receipts from our October Branch meeting, and offset by the normal expenses we have in running the Branch. We have paid a £200 deposit to the Robinswood Best Western Hotel for the Christmas Lunch. Thank you to all who made donations at the Annual General Meeting, and to those who have made on-line payments. These ensure that, along with raffle proceeds, the essential administration of the Branch can continue. It is heartening to hear that new Members continue to join us, and I am confident that we have a solid financial foundation for the ensuing years.

***David Gearing Branch Treasurer***

## **Branch Social Secretary's Report**

This is my report for lunches arranged for Members over the last couple of months, plus those arranged for the rest of 2023. Thank you for your continued support.

There were 15 diners at The Bell, Frampton on Severn held on 3/5/23. The Corner Cupboard in Winchcombe was the venue for June 23. 17 Members enjoyed the hospitality provided by Jason Hobbs and his team. Tea or coffee was included. Small and larger appetites were catered for at this excellent location.

It is not surprising that higher costs for staff, utilities and food, particularly in 2023, have contributed to many pubs putting up their prices. And yet .... I checked back to lunches I arranged in 2014. I was somewhat surprised to find that the average lunch in 2014 was £12.50 for 2 courses and £15 for 3 courses. The average this year is £16 for 2 courses and £20 for 3 courses. Therefore a rise of £3.50 for 2 courses and £5 for

3 courses compared to 9 YEARS AGO! seems like pretty good value to me. However, if you know of any better value deals I am happy to check them out for future lunch venues.

The next two venues are recommendations from two of our members:

Wednesday 2/8/23 at 12 for 12.30 pm. The Belfry, Broad Street, Littledean, Cinderford, GL12 3JS. 2 courses £15 / 3 courses £18.

Wednesday 6/9/23 at 12 for 12.30 pm. New Dawn Inn, Tewkesbury Road, Norton GL2 9LR 2 courses £16 / 3 courses £20.

I have not yet arranged the November lunch. Sally Welzel will provide details of the Christmas lunch which she is arranging this year.

Any queries please contact me on 01452 300878 or [jean.stubley@virginmedia.com](mailto:jean.stubley@virginmedia.com)

***Jean Stubley Branch Social Secretary***

## **Future Events**

6th September 2023. The New Dawn Inn, Tewkesbury Road, Norton, GL2 9LR. Tel: 01452 730001. 12 for 12.30hrs.

Battle of Britain Day 83rd Anniversary Sunday 17th September 2023.

Branch Meeting 4th October 2023 This will take place in the Conservative Club in Stroud at 11:00hrs. Following the meeting a Quiz and Raffle will be held and a buffet lunch will follow.

Garden of Remembrance Dedication 2nd November at Cheltenham.

Armistice Day 11th November 2023. Service Venue and Time TBA.

Remembrance Sunday 12th November 2023 Long Garden Cheltenham.

56th Anniversary Aden Withdrawal 29th November 2023.

Christmas Lunch 6th December 2023 at the Robinswood Hotel, Matson, Gloucester

## **Editor's Report**

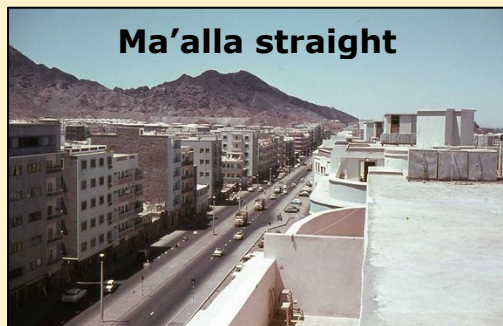
I hope you are all enjoying the weather and can swim!!!!!! The weatherman is advising of near Balmy Azores type temperatures on Thursday 10th August for one or two days and then back to winter!!!

A further reminder of publishing Newsletters on our Web site.

It was agreed at our last AGM that the midyear Newsletter should be published after the AGM's normally held in the month of July. This will mean edition publishing dates on the website will change to March, August and November.

At the last Branch meeting Sheila Gibson was voted into the post of Branch Vice Chairman. Sheila has kindly provided an insight into her experiences of life in Aden in the 1960's.

### **Sheila Gibson, a young matelot's wife's experience of her time in Aden**



At 4 o'clock one morning in May 1965, I arrived in Aden aboard a Bristol Britannia. This 22 year old lass from rural Surrey was very surprised firstly at the humidity level followed by the aircraft surrounded by armed guards as we disembarked. Hugh, my husband was there to meet me and we were soon aboard a naval bus heading for our hiring along Ma'alla straight. Later to become known as murder mile. In the morning Hugh disappeared off to work at the Joint

Headquarters Middle East, leaving me to become acquainted with the neighbours and finding the local shops.

Over the next few weeks/months my task was to turn the hiring into our first home together, interspersed with duty free shopping and the occasional visit to the Lido socialising and swimming.

From time to time Hugh took one of the naval boats (HLD) to the outer harbour for general enjoyment and swimming. Apparently this was much enjoyed not only by our neighbours but by a wide selection of families serving in Aden.

Surely one of the most welcome events was two week holiday on Mombasa. This also provided us with a five day safari within the Sarvo National park.

One Sunday I well remember three of us deciding to climb the mountain which overlooked Ma'alla. I couldn't make it to the top so Hugh handed me his 45 pistol and sat me on a rock awaiting the two boys return. It is said that if you climb the mountain you will never return to Aden.

As the security worsened life became difficult. There was general upheaval in the road outside our flat involving bazooka fire, grenades and general rifle fire. I did witness some awful things.

When February 1967 came along it was our turn to return to the UK. Nothing gave us greater pleasure than boarding the VC 10 bound for the UK. I returned a very different person from the one that arrived in Aden for a 21 months stay.

**Sheila Gibson, Vice Chairman**



## **Military Charities Section**

**Help For Heroes {H4H} : [helpforheroes.org.uk](http://helpforheroes.org.uk)**



Help for Heroes is a British charity which supports members of the British Armed Forces community with their physical and mental health, as well as their financial, social and welfare needs. The charity was founded in 2007 by Bryn and Emma Parry after they visited soldiers at Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham.

Founded: 1 October 2007

Headquarters: Downton

CEO: James Needham

Purpose: Supporting members of the Armed Forces Community

Founders: Bryn Parry, Emma Parry

### **It started with a swimming pool:**

when Bryn and Emma Parry heard in 2007 that people were shouting at wounded veterans in Leatherhead swimming pool, they knew they had to do something.



Without dedicated facilities, veterans were using the public swimming pool near Headley Court Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre in Surrey, at a time when they felt most vulnerable.

So, Bryn, a former Royal Green Jacket and eminent cartoonist, and his wife Emma started a movement. Their movement harnessed the spirit and kindness of

the Great British people and changed the way we see and support our veterans and their loved ones. They began by tackling the issue of the swimming pool. Bryn and Emma wanted to create a space, designed for veterans, where they could swim and recover in peace and privacy. With the help of The Sun newspaper, they launched a campaign to raise funds for a pool at Headley Court. Help for Heroes was born with UK Forces involved in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the need to support our veterans had never been more visible or raw. The Great British Public wanted to help. Within a month Bryn and Emma's campaign had raised over £507,000. Two months later, this figure stood at £2,188,000.

As the campaign grew, people across the country threw themselves into fundraising, wanting to give our veterans the vital support and facilities they needed. From Kensington Palace and Fleet Street to local communities and family homes, the upswell of love and support for our veterans was there for all to see.

### **A story of extraordinary people**

Our story is one of extraordinary people. Our veterans and their families, our founders Bryn and Emma, our incredible supporters, volunteers and fundraisers. Together they have changed the lives of people who have served our country.

These extraordinary people have undertaken challenges, given their time and energy and galvanised communities to raise funds and change lives for the better. Their compassion and determination to do the right thing for our veterans is the bedrock of our Charity. This spirit is as strong today as it was when Bryn and Emma launched their campaign to build a swimming pool.

## GRANT FUNDING

If an injury or illness is making things tough, we might be able to help with some of the financial costs to make life easier or to help you get the care you need.

If we can't fund something ourselves, we'll point you in the direction of someone else who might be able to help.

Things we could possibly fund, include:

- Helping with travel costs to go to a medical appointment
- A laptop so you can have counselling sessions
- Putting in ramps and widening doors so you can use a wheelchair in your home
- Adapting a bathroom or kitchen so you can use them properly
- Leg braces or another similar medical item
- Special furniture so that you are comfortable.

If you are entitled to state benefits or extra support from NHS and council services, we ask that you apply for these first. We can help you look at what possible help is out there. For example, gas, water and electricity companies give some customers extra support if they are in vulnerable situations.

We may means assess household income when we receive a request for grant funding. This will include asking you to provide us with three months' bank statements along with your application form.

If you have a Help for Heroes case manager, they can help you fill in your form. If you don't have a case manager, email [getsupport@helpforheroes.org.uk](mailto:getsupport@helpforheroes.org.uk) or ask for help.

Support for other charities

We have worked with more than 90 Armed Forces organisations and charities to support veterans and their families. After carrying out a review of our spending, we decided to focus our attention on providing the best possible services for veterans and families who come to us for support. Therefore, we no longer give grants to other charities and organisations. However, we are always keen to work in partnership with others in the sector to bring together skills, knowledge and resources to support the Armed Forces community.

## RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine. These events will be affecting people in different ways, and our services are available to veterans and families in need of support. Our **wellbeing advice**, is also available to help you look after yourself and each other.

**"You only have to ask"**

**In crisis? Find out how you can get urgent support**

If you need support urgently or outside of our working hours, please don't hesitate to contact:

## **SAMARITANS**

Freephone their Veterans Support Hub for the military community on 0808 175 3075 (24/7)

or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) – to access confidential emotional support for feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts.

## **SHOUT**

A crisis text support service for people in the military community who are struggling and need immediate support to get through a crisis. Text CONTACT to 85258.

## **NHS 111**

To access medical help fast but when it's not a 999 emergency, telephone 111 (available 24 hours). To access information from the NHS on conditions, treatments, local services and healthy living, visit the NHS website.

## **COMBAT STRESS**

For urgent psychological support, please call 0800 1381619

## **SHELTER**

For urgent housing support, please call 0808 800 4444

How H4H can help

If you're in pain, or if you feel anxious, stressed or lonely, we can help.

We offer a wide range of support, whether you're having money troubles, or need support with housing or applying for benefits. You might just need a listening ear. We can provide that too. Start your recovery journey today by getting in touch.

Get in touch

If you have a question, feedback or suggestion, we at H\$H would love to hear from you.

Write to us

Help for Heroes, Unit 14 Parkers Close, Downton Business Centre, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 3RB.

If you would like to help us support veterans and their families, call us on 0300 303 9888 - Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm. Calls to this number are charged at your standard network rate.

For Shop orders and queries call 01725 514144 or visit the shop online.

Email us If you want to help us support veterans email [fundraise@helpforheroes.org.uk](mailto:fundraise@helpforheroes.org.uk)

We are also on hand to respond to any questions you pose on our Facebook pages and on our Twitter account. Follow us on these channels for news and updates from around the charity.



On 28th March Rick Rutter, Chris Blick and myself went to Wimborne overnight to attend the next day 29th March Mickey Norris's internment at Poole and Wimborne Burial Ground. In order to swell the ranks, I appealed to the Poole Veterans Breakfast Club for members to attend and 15 turned up to help Mickey on his way. Many thanks to them were given.

We had 2 wreaths for Mickey, one from Stroud "Friday" Veterans Breakfast Club and one from our Branch.

Mickey's Daughter {who came over from New Zealand} and his 2 Grand Daughters were present and could not thank the Aden Veterans Gloucestershire Branch from the Chairman down, for all the help and kindness we gave them.

## **Emlyn Phennah Editor**

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