



Royal Navy



British Army



Royal Air Force

Aden Veterans Association Gloucestershire Branch

Volume 1 of 2023

Chairman's Report

As this is the first Newsletter of 2023 I would like to wish you all a very successful and enjoyable year ahead. I am writing my report looking out of the window at some light flurries of snow. I do hope that by the time you read this Newsletter the weather has turned warmer and that we have sunshine rather than rain and sleet.

It is another significant year for the Gloucestershire Branch as it is the 15th Anniversary of the inception of your Branch. What is so pleasing to report is that founder members Chris Blick and Denis Sparrow are still very active in all Branch events as well as many National ones.

Our January Branch meeting was well attended and we welcomed some new members. We hope that they will join us in future events at both local and national level. Jim Major organised an excellent quiz, which we found interesting, educational and enjoyable. We were also joined by a new member to the Branch Helen Bakewell-Clare



who spoke about her book which she has written about her father Peter. He worked for Airworks Services in Aden during our time there and after the withdrawal. Helen was a child in Aden and attended the local school before the family left because of the deteriorating situation following the withdrawal in November 1967. Peter remained in Aden but sadly lost his life in the Yemen.

I must thank Michael Compton for arranging a last minute venue due to our usual meeting place, at the Carlton Club, being unavailable due to staff illness. The Toby Carvery in Brockworth looked after us very well, making us most welcome. Some members stayed on after the meeting for lunch. Your Social Secretary Jean Stubley suggested the venue. Jean, despite having an operation on her foot and being immobile to aid her recovery, still organised our Wednesday lunches, supported by Sheila Gibson and Sally Welzel. My thanks to all of them for their hard work in keeping these popular lunches going.

We have received sad news about the loss of five of our members. Sheila Woollaston, our Branch Chaplain's wife, long serving member Mike Norris, Daphne Edge, Major General Paul Stevenson OBE and Jefferson Pimm. Their funerals have been, or will be, attended by members of the Branch. Our thoughts are with their families as they adjust to the loss of a loved one. I have sent the Branch's thanks to Dr Suzanne Norris-Reeves RCA, the daughter of Mike Norris. She has set up a Charitable Donations page, through

the Poole and Wimborne Woodlands Burial Ground, with the donations going to the Gloucestershire Branch of The Aden Veterans Association.

I would also like to thank our Treasurer, David Gearing, for attending Sheila's funeral despite having a nasty fall resulting in a fractured arm and his leg in a brace. We are grateful that Angie drove him to Stroud for the funeral and for the April branch meeting.

Finally I hope that many of you will support the Branch's First Wednesday of the month lunches and our future events over the coming months. Let's hope that we have some warmer weather, especially for our outdoor events.

Rick Rutter Branch Chairman

Branch Secretary's Report



Our celebration of the 55th Anniversary of the withdrawal from Aden was the high point of last year's calendar. It represented culmination of a huge effort on the part of the members of the Branch committee. On the day in November 2021, over coffee in the Everyman theatre, Sally Welzel suggested how we should make a special effort for the 55th Anniversary. I have to admit that the possibility of having Royal attendance seemed very remote. When I submitted the original invitation, I was not aware of the various hoops we would have to go

through, and that most of them would have to be done on the strictest "need to know" basis; for those of you who did ask me about progress, I had to commit to lies or half-truths! Apologies to you who did ask. Finally, after all the planning and rehearsals, on the morning of the 29th I was told the programme would have to be shortened by 25 minutes to allow HRH to catch the train to London for her next engagement, because foggy weather had prevented her being transported by helicopter. So we had to do some quick thinking; the hotel staff were able to make last minute adjustments to the planned meal time, and the introduction time was reduced. Despite these minor wrinkles, I hope you all feel the day was a success. And for all those who gave their time to the event, a huge thank you.

And so on to the New Year, which heralded another complication: the venue for our planned quiz day had to be changed at the last minute, because of staff sickness at the Carlton Club. My thanks to Jean Stublely for suggesting the Toby at Brockworth. Anyway, Jim Major's quiz and Helen Balkwill's introduction to her book made it an interesting meeting. Since then we have had two successful Wednesday lunches at "The House in the Tree" and "The Rising Sun" on March 15th we held a committee meeting to confirm the dates for the rest of the year. They will feature in the Editors report Also, at the committee meeting, we discussed various options for the future of the AVA both nationally and at this Branch; so if you have any ideas please make the suggestions to the committee.

Finally, I have some good news; this year we have six new members. I hope to welcome them at the next Branch Meeting - 5th April at Carlton Club at 11.00 am.

Michael Compton Branch Secretary

Treasurer's Report

This edition of the Newsletter comes as the accounts for this financial year are being finalised. The main event of the year was our 55th Anniversary event. Much has been said and written about this event, possibly the most successful we have arranged. Unsurprisingly, it accounted for 80% of the years' throughput of money. It was yet another testament to the incredible support given by Branch Members, and on a personal note, I was delighted that we were able to set the meal price at the same level as our 45th Anniversary event, at the same venue.

The National Grant of £1,000, plus donations towards the event ensured financial success. Without that, we would have expended virtually all of our Branch funds. However, we end the year on an exceptionally good footing. Overall, we are likely to have a small deficit of about £125, and importantly, our Bank balance of £1,191.78 will see us well into the future. Subject to any further transactions during March, the headline figures are

Income : £3723.00
Expenditure : £3848.89

David Gearing Branch Treasurer

Branch Social Secretary's Report

Hello everyone, unfortunately, due to foot surgery with a 3-4 month recovery period, I have not been able to go to the last two lunches. Good news is that things are progressing and I will soon be back to my usual active self. I did go to the March Committee meeting, thanks to a lift from Sally and it was so nice to receive such a warm welcome. Our first venue this year on 01/02/23 at The House in the Tree was very well attended with 23 diners. We have been to this pub before and as always, the service and food had good reports.

The Rising Sun at Cleeve Hill was visited on 01/3/23 and again numbers were around 20. I love the views from this place. Whilst the food was value for the price, I gather it was a bit chilly in the conservatory, requiring coats on. To date I am still waiting for Spring menus to be issued by the inns I have contacted for 03/05/23 and 07/06/23. Hopefully they will be available by our April Quarterly meeting and they will of course be on the AVA website.

I look forward to seeing everyone soon and thank you for your continuing support at the lunches.

Jean Stubley Branch Social Secretary

Future Events

Helicopter Museum WW2 Event 1st April 2023.

Branch Meeting 5th April 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.

ANZAC Day 23rd April at Leighterton.

St George's Day Service 24th April at the Holy Trinity Church Longlevens at 19:00hrs.

Luncheon Outings on the 3rd May 2023 and the 7th June 2023. Venus and Time TBA.

Earthcott Green Memorial Service 14th June.

West Dorset Branch Weekend Gala Dinner and Parade - 16th -19th June.

Gloucester Jet Age Museum and the Docks Armed Forces Day 24th June 2023.

Falmouth Armed Forces Day 24th June 2023.

Branch Meeting 5th July 2023 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.

Luncheon Outings 2nd August 2023, 6th September 2023 - Venus and Times TBA.

AVA AGM and Re-union Blackpool Friday 8th 2023 September to Sunday 10th September 2023.

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

Hi all, another year gone and welcome to 2023. Apologies for a slightly late Newsletter I have been on Leave in the Sunny Canaries.

Greetings and welcome to new members who have recently joined our ranks:

George Bastin from Woodchester who was commissioned into the 10th Royal Hussars having attended Mons Officer Cadet School near Aldershot. He served in Aden between February and November 1967 being amongst the last to leave!

Helen Bakwell-Clare is the author of a book giving wonderful images of Aden in the 1960's and after the British Troops had left on 29th November 1967 when she was a child attending school in Steamer Point and her father was a civilian worker at RAF Khormaksar. Helen is a full member.

Gillian aka Gilly Chalmers served in Aden during the mid-1960's in the WRAF.

John Edge and his Son Edward aka Eddie has joined us from the South West Branch based at Plymouth having moved to Westerleigh near Yate. John served with the Army REME MELF as a commissioned officer during the 1960's and Eddie must have attended school in Aden to be a full member!

Major General John Peter William Friedberger served in Aden with the 10th Royal Hussars (PWO) in 1961 and again in 1964/1965.

Colin Lambert from Winstone near Cirencester served in Aden with the RAF between August 1956 and September 1958 with the rank of SAC.

Christopher and Karen Mead from Quedgeley have re-joined our ranks after a short gap! Christopher served in Aden March 1964 until December 1965 with the RAF as a Flying Officer. John was a Navigator on the last Hercules which touched down to pick up stragglers at RAF Khormaksar and took off again. His wife Karen is an associate member.

John Graham Williams of Winchcombe served in Aden between January and November 1967 with 84 Squadron RAF Khormaksar. John was the Navigator on board the 84 Squadron Beverley blown up by an IOD, on the end of the runway, at RAF Habilayn in the Radfan!!



The Founding of the Royal British Legion

In the aftermath of the First World War it became apparent there was a need for an organization to support and represent all members of the Armed Forces, to hold the Government to account and ensure all those who served and sacrificed were given the support they needed and deserved.

Support for the Armed Forces

Before the war soldiers received little support from the state apart from a small war pension. When the size of the Armed Forces grew through civilian volunteers and later conscription during the First World War the huge increase in military personnel and sheer number of casualties resulting from the war made it clear this was insufficient and more support was needed.

In response the British Government set up a scheme for those who returned home from the frontline as a result of injury to claim compensation. But this fell short when men who had been sent home due to injury and had been through the medical system were sent back to the front line...including men who were medically unfit to serve...because of a shortage of fighting fit men. This was met with outrage and led to the formation of a body called the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers in January 1917. The Federation was based in the South East of England and had links with the Liberal Party. In the same year, The National Association of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers was formed in Blackburn which had strong links to the Labour Party and campaigned for better pension. The Comrades of the Great War was also formed in 1917 and was established to fight for the rights of the ex-servicemen and women.

Earl Haig

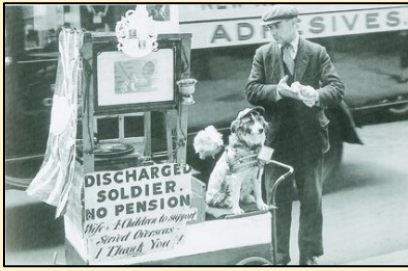
During the war the three organisations campaigned for better support for the Armed Forces, But their work really began in 1919 due to the huge challenge of bringing home millions of soldiers who were scattered across Europe.

Field Marshal Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, had concerns for the future welfare of the men who had served abroad long before the war ended. He proposed demobilisation based on age and length of service as early as 1917. But his proposals were dismissed, and it was decided that "key workers" were to be brought back first as it was seen as crucial to get industry back up and running again.

This caused a great deal of resentment among those who had been in the services for longer and led to demonstrations and riots by serving soldiers who were deeply angered by the way demobilisation was being handled.

It was becoming clear to Haig that there was a need for one large organisation to support all the Armed Forces, including Officers, that would hold the Government to account on behalf of the men and women it represented.

Haig refused to be associated with any one of the ex-Service organisations separately and pushed for them to come together to focus on care for ex-servicemen and their families.



By spring 1920 the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and soldiers and the Comrades of the Great War had realised that unity was the only way forward and called a conference and invited the other organisations. The conference was chaired by the President of the Federation, Sir Frederick Lister, who successfully argued for the amalgamation of the four existing bodies.

The British Legion

On Sunday 15 May 1921, a small group of ex Servicemen and representatives from the four organisations, The National Association of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers, The British National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers and The Comrades of the Great War and Officers Association walked to the Cenotaph in London's Whitehall. As Big Ben struck nine, the four men representing the organisations laid a wreath the badges of the four organisations that would officially unite to form the British Legion.

The following day the constitution was presented to and agreed by 700 delegates at the Unity Conference in London. The then Prince of Wales was also invited to become the British Legion's Patron, whilst Earl Haig was appointed as the British Legion's first President and Sir Frederick Lister the National Chairman.

The British Legion was founded by and for Armed Forces personnel and as a demonstration of its attitude towards its members the constitution was proposed by a soldier and seconded by a General ... there would be no distinction between rank, religion or political affiliation

A life dedicated to the Armed Forces

In the early years of the newly formed British Legion, founder and President Earl Haig worked tirelessly championing the needs of the Armed Forces, launching the Poppy Day



Appeal in 1921 and helping to shape modern Remembrance. He also worked hard at grass roots level, touring the country with Lady Haig, making speeches, visiting branches, opening bowling greens and hospital wards.

On 27 January 1928 Haig visited the Poppy Factory in Richmond and greeted a group of scouts. Sadly, the next day at the age of 66 he died suddenly. It was a devastating loss to the British Legion but his commitment to always put duty before self had earned him the undying devotion from its members and leaves a legacy that is still felt within RBL today.

100 years on we continue Earl Haig's legacy ensuring all members of the Armed Forces can live dignified and fulfilled lives through our ongoing welfare and campaigning work, whilst remembering those who have given their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today.

Light Talk

The Smaller Beatitudes (author unknown)

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves: they will have no end of fun.

Blessed are those who can tell a mountain from a molehill: they will be saved a lot of bother.

Blessed are those who know how to relax without excuses: they are on the way to becoming wiser.

Blessed are those who know when to be quiet and listen: they will learn a lot of new things.

Blessed are those who are sane enough not to take themselves too seriously they will be valued by those around them.

Blessed are you if you can take small things seriously and face serious things calmly: you will go far in life.

Blessed are you if you can appreciate a smile and forget a frown: you will walk on the sunny side of the street.

Blessed are you if you can be kind in understanding the attitudes of others even when the signs are unfavourable: you may be taken for a fool but this is the price of charity.

Blessed are those who think before acting and pray before thinking: they will avoid many blunders.

Blessed are you if you know how to hold your tongue and smile, even when people interrupt and contradict you or tread on your toes: the gospel has begun to seep into your heart.

Above all

Blessed are you who recognise the lord in all whom you meet: they light of the truth shines in your life for you have found true wisdom.

Emlyn Phennah Editor

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