



Aden Veterans Association Gloucestershire Branch Volume 2, 2021

Chairman's Report

You will all know about the very sad news about our National Association Chairman Judith Holland. A number of us from the Gloucestershire Branch, along with other Branches, were proud to be part of the Guard of Honour at Cheltenham Crematorium on Friday 14th May. Robert Parrant carried our Branch Standard. There were a number of other Standards present. Clive Candlin and Geoff Giles were in charge of the Standards and the Guard of Honour. It was an appropriate, and fitting, tribute to Judith, not just for her commitment and hard work on behalf of the Association, but also to her as a person.

My thanks go to Chris Blick for writing a tribute in this newsletter. Chris has also written a tribute to Vic Freeman (South West Branch), who was instrumental in encouraging the formation of the Gloucestershire Branch. Vic passed away on April 26th 2021.

Both Judith and Vic will be sadly missed. Our thoughts go out to both Tony Holland and Wendy Freeman, their families, and their friends.

On a happier note, by the time you read this newsletter we will be able to meet up, and eat, indoors as long as we follow the Government regulations. Hopefully we will have enjoyed our first Wednesday lunch in many months.

As we are now in Step 3 of the Roadmap and I gather that the Annual Service of Remembrance will be held at the Memorial Woodland, Earthcote Green, after being cancelled last year. The capacity is limited to thirty and is by invitation only. Robert Parrant will carry our Branch Standard and Edward 'Curly' Knowlton will lay our wreath.

I hope that we will be in Step 4 by the July AGM. This will enable us to have a good turn out and a catch up with each other. Hopefully Jean Stubley will be able to let you know about future Wednesday lunches and of course arrangements for Christmas Lunch.

I believe that my car will be very surprised about coming out of lockdown. It will now have to journey more than the forty miles a week that it had been used to in recent months.

I hope that we can all enjoy a sunny, and warm, summer.

Rick Rutter

Secretary's Report

Apart from the sad news of those who passed away, I have little to say about the past few months, except to say that it has been a period of hibernation, except for excitement of being vaccinated.

We are now faced with the situation where we can either wait for the eradication of Covid-19 or learn to live with it. The current situation is a bit like snap shooting – waiting for new target (variant) to pop up and shooting it within a few seconds. If you miss or take too long, there will be 20 targets to shoot at next time. With this situation we have two choices – stay at home or become involved in whatever we can do.

Until recently, our main challenge, apart from the Covid Safety Rules has been to keep fit, firstly in the belief that a fitter person has a better chance of resistance to any illness, and secondly, at our ages, any loss of fitness would be difficult to regain in the future. So, like many others walking became the only active recreation. Living in Gloucestershire has given us plenty of opportunity. During the last year, I have been on many paths that previously I was not aware of. As "Rules" have become more relaxed we can get back to some degree of normality.

Now with the arrival of the vaccines, we have been given a second opportunity, so we can move forward with a fair degree of confidence. I believe that we can all become involved in the activities of the AVA as we used to. The Committee has therefore decided to name 3 dates for your diary:

1. 2nd June – Wednesday lunch at The Fleet Inn, Twyning
2. 7th July - 2021 AGM at Carlton Club, Stroud
3. 4th August – Wednesday lunch at the Carpenters Arms, Westrip

Jean Stubley is sorting out the details of the lunches, and I will be writing an agenda for the AGM. If you have any issues you wish to raise at the AGM, (including proposals for committee members) please let me know, and they can be included.

I look forward to seeing you all again.

Michael Compton

Treasurer's Report

Elsewhere, our Newsletter pays tribute to Judith Holland, our Chair, who passed away recently. I add my own condolences to Tony; we will miss Judith's quiet and astute leadership.

At last, there seems to be some light at the end of the COVID tunnel. Hopefully, all of our members are now fully vaccinated, giving us real protection against whatever the virus may throw at us in the future. Booster jabs, added to those for 'flu, will probably be the order of the day.

There have been no financial transactions since my report in the last Newsletter, and our bank balance remains at £1420-57.

On a historical note, the first deposit was made into our Lloyds Bank account in Stroud, on the 23rd May 2008, the Gloucestershire Branch having held its inaugural meeting

on 5th April 2008. I mention these facts at this point, as the Branch official financial account book is now full, and the 2021/22 account year and beyond will be in a new book. It has been my privilege to have been the Branch Treasurer since 2012, and it is my hope that we will continue to flourish for many years to come.

David Gearing

Social Secretary's Report

Hello – At last the opportunity to live up to my title of “Social” Secretary and arrange a get together for us all. Of course, there are still restrictions in place, but even bearing those in mind I am hoping you will still be up for a lunch at the Fleet Inn, Fleet Lane, Twynning, Tewkesbury GL20 6FL. Tel: 01684 297618.

The Fleet has a super terrace overlooking the River Avon, and whilst the food was fairly basic, the pub has been revamped under new management with a more gastro feel to the food. Obviously Covid means there are still some restrictions in that whilst up to 30 can socialise outside the pub for drinks, we will be restricted to tables of 6 inside for our meal, and we would not be able to walk about between tables whilst dining. I do hope you will support this, our first AVA lunch. **It is important that you let me know as soon as possible if you intend to join us, and in the event, you have to cancel, please let me know, as AVA would have to pay the cost of the cancelled meal.**

July is our Quarterly meeting at Stroud, followed by a lunch booking for Wednesday 4/8/21 at The Carpenters Arms, Westrip Stroud, menu choices to follow when available. This is a recommendation from Chris Blick, so it will be good with far reaching views across the Stroud valley.

Nothing in place yet, but consideration is being given to holding our Christmas lunch once again at Tortworth Court Hotel, Wootton under Edge – (minus the beef, which was under par in 2019!). We invited the Grenadier Guards Association to our last Christmas lunch which boosted our numbers and was very much appreciated by the Grenadiers. If members are happy with this arrangement, then hopefully we could do the same again. Date tbc but either 1st or 8th December 2021.

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Jean Stubley

Editorial Comment Report

Hello everyone, a light has appeared at the end of the tunnel!!

I have a few comments to make re-the near future, I'll leave out Chris's jokes this edition, but will advertise a couple of new books on Aden by our illustrious Author Denis Sparrow. They are “**Ghost's from Aden's Past**” which covers the period from 1967 to the present. Not a very happy story if you reside in our former protectorate.

The second one brings a story dear to a lot of our hearts and minds if you were present at our departure in 1967. **"Aden's Unfriendly Fire"** This is a story of the growing dissent among the local population and antagonists against our military presence. Which was ignored by High Command and led to almost 50 British servicemen being killed or wounded. These books can be purchased on Amazon, but are cheaper by at least £6 or £7 buying direct from Denis djsparrow@live.co.uk>

Veterans Identity Card

We were promised early 2020 that from the end of 2020 year Veterans would be issued with an identity Card to signify recognition of your Military Service.

I have made enquiries of the MOD and SSAFA and TRGL again and to date still, no answers. plus a request for information I made with Veterans Gateway also got nowhere!! They are still dragging their feet!! Even though Col. Tom got his!!



This what it looks like?

Veterans Rail Cards

Veteran's railcard gives a 30% fare saving for a Veteran and Spouse or nominated Partner Male, Female or Indifferent, plus a couple of children {Unless you travel on LNER}

Gloucester Older Veterans Information Guide {GOVIG}

I still have access to this booklet. Should you require a copy contact: - The Editor. GOVIG can be sent via email or post.

Weymouth Celebrations are cancelled this year.



ARMED FORCES DAY
Saturday 26 June 2021

Armed Forces Day 2021 is on

More info will appear on our website.

Blackpool is on at the Moment. 10th to 12th Sept. 2021

at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Queens Promenade, FY29AA.

Rooms to be booked **direct**, with the Hotel by Members wishing to attend.

All members should be in receipt of a booking form. If not contact: eventsorg@adenveterans.org.uk or **01526 322697**.

Full event details are available on the National AVA website.

A few dates for your diary:

Wednesday 16th June 2021: Memorial Woodlands Earthcott Green, near Thornbury. This year it is a very slimmed down version with four of our Branch Members attending to include our Standard Bearer Robert Parrant and Wreath layer Edward Knowlton.

Wednesday 7th July 2021: at 11.00 hours our Branch Annual General Meeting at Stroud Conservative Club. Please let the Branch Secretary know if you are attending and if you require lunch.

Sunday 11th July 2021: is planned as Stroud Vintage Bus Rally at Stroud College on Stratford Road from 10.00 until 16.00 hours. Again, this event depends very much on Covid 19.

Wednesday 4th August 2021: First Wednesday Lunch. Details to follow about venue and timings etc.

Wednesday 1st September 2021: First Wednesday Lunch. Details to follow about venue and timings etc.

Sunday 19th September 2021: Battle of Britain Service Cheltenham.

Wednesday 6th October 2021: our Branch Meeting at Stroud Conservative Club at 11.00 hours.

Wednesday 3rd November 2021: First Wednesday Lunch. Details to follow about venue and timings.

Thursday 4th November 2021: The Mayor of Cheltenham Borough Council Annual Cross

Thursday 11th November 2021: Armistice Day.

Sunday 14th November 2021: Remembrance Sunday Service at the Long Garden in Cheltenham.

Monday 29th November 2021: the 54th Anniversary Service of the withdrawal of British troops from Aden, (29th November 1967).

Congratulations

We wish Keith and Pam Spiret a 72nd happy wedding anniversary for 4th June. They were married on the 4th June 1949. Pam served in the WRAF at Bentley Priory between 1945 and 1946. Keith served in the British Army with D Battery, 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery and of course Aden in 1962/3.

Good wishes to you both from all of us at AVA Gloucestershire.

Obituaries

We have lost some of our dear friends over the last quarter.

Judith Ann Holland Passed Away 27TH April 2021 in Gloucester Royal Hospital

Judith had been Chairman of the Aden Veterans Association since November 2009. Previously Judith had been the Merchandising Officer for the Aden Veterans Association between 2006 and 2009. Judith had come from a military background having served in the Women's Royal Air Force which included postings to RAF Ely and RAF Wegburg (Germany) Hospitals.

She travelled with her two children to join her husband Tony who was a serving in the Photographic Section at RAF Khormaksar. They lived in Married Accommodation on Ma'alla Straight between 1966 and 1967. It was whilst in those Quarters that Tony became injured in a mortar attack on their building. Tony was flown home to the UK along with Judith and her two children to recover from his injuries following this event.

Judith was familiar with committees and groups of like-minded people since she spent two years as Chairman of the Aberporth (West Wales) Women's Institute. She was also involved in the charity Age Concern as Deputy Manager and later Manager of their local shop and has continued to be involved with volunteering ever since. She was also at one time Chairman of the AVA Fenland Branch. Judith writes, I am very passionate about the AVA and if elected to the post of Chairman (which of course she was in 2009) I will commit to the task with enthusiasm and vigour. I feel I can bring a new sense of direction and purpose to the Association and whilst I appreciate that I shall have a very hard act to follow taking over from Captain Alastair Macdonald, I will do my very best. I will be your "hands on" Chairman and assist the Committee to carry out any work required. I will always listen to member's worries or queries by letter or telephone.

Judith was also very much in tune with our Gloucestershire Branch, that started informally in August 2007, and became recognised by the National Committee of the Association on Wednesday 5th April 2008 when we held our first formal meeting at the Stroud Conservative Club. She along with her husband Tony attended many of our events and certain meetings or in her absence ensured which other members of the "executive" attended. When attending at the National AVA Events including at Blackpool and Nottingham, for the once-a-year Committee Meeting that had a Branch delegate attend, she would also make us so welcome.

A small representative group attended her Funeral at the Cheltenham Crematorium on Friday 14th May 2021. Our Branch Standard was carried by Robert Parrant plus a guard

of honour near to the Chapel of Rest. This was a real privilege and honour for our Gloucestershire Branch and our thanks to Tony and the family for making this possible.

Victor John Freeman Passed away on Monday 26TH April 2021 at home in Plymouth

Those of you who were early AVA Gloucestershire Branch Members will of course remember Vic during the years of our setting up since he played a pivotal part in making it possible to not only connect with the Aden Veterans Association at National level but also in the South and West of England.

With Vic it was not a case of "would you like to start up a Branch in Gloucestershire" but "you will of course be starting up a Branch in Gloucestershire"! With that remark he promised whatever help needed to make this possible, plus he also provided good contact details! Hence Chris Blick and Denis Sparrow got "The Branch" started.

Vic was born on Sunday 24th January 1937 in St Austell, Cornwall and moved with his parents Edward and Rhoda Freeman to Plymouth when he was about six months old. In November 1939 the family moved to Bristol to avoid the bombing on their home but was then faced with something similar in their new abode. In January 1955 Vic returned to Plymouth to be with his parents and was called up for National Service that April. He signed on for three years to join the RAF and to receive the additional three shillings and sixpence in our wage packets.

During his three years of Service with the RAF he was posted to both Cyprus and Aden being demobbed in April 1958 and becoming in civilian life an Insurance Agent. Later he was to obtain a job at a Plymouth Hospital

Vic retired in April 2001 and became involved with the Aden Veterans Association in the South West and was for many years their Secretary and Magazine Editor.

It was Vic's daughter Anne that gave the Eulogy at his Service at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Plymouth that was relayed by video link to those that wished to join with the family at a distance. Vic had written much of his Eulogy and prepared the Service before he passed away.

Our Gloucestershire Branch send our deepest sympathy and prayers to Wendy and the family at this sad time.

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