



Royal Navy



British Army



Royal Air Force

Aden Veterans Association Gloucestershire Branch

Volume 1 of 2024

Chairman's Report

Spring has arrived at last, some blossoms are out and hopefully we will have some warmer weather soon. Since our last newsletter we had a very enjoyable, and well attended Christmas lunch. Once again the Robinswood Hotel looked after us, and our guests, well providing a warm welcome and an enjoyable meal. My thanks to Sally and Jean for organising the event and to Sheila and her team for running a very successful raffle, which certainly helped our funds.

Thanks go to Jim Major for running a very interesting and wide ranging quiz at the January Branch meeting. We are never too old to learn.

The Wednesday lunches continue to be well supported and very successful thanks to Jean's excellent choices of venues. They are always efficiently organised. The last one, at the Old Forge in Whitminster, was attended by twenty-six members, who enjoyed a good value lunch. We were looked after very well by George and his team.



You will have read in the March edition of the Dhow that our Branch campaign for the award of a GSM, started by Denis Sparrow and Brian Serrell, for those who served 'up country' during the 'gap years' continues to move forward and gain support from Members of Parliament, the Gloucestershire RBL and the National Association. Clive Candlin, our National Chair, has given his full support to the Branch and Stephen Wheal, National Secretary, held two pages of the Dhow so that we could report on our meeting with some Gloucestershire MPs or their representatives.

Details are in the Dhow about contacting your MP. Michael has application forms for the retrospective award of the GSM and he is collating any AVA members applications.

My thanks to Michael and the committee for approving events that we will be attending during the year and to Robert Parrant who will carry the Branch Standard. The full list of events is on our website which is run by Ray Bunnage. I am looking forward to a good turn-out at the April Branch meeting, when some decisions will be taken, by members attending, regarding venues for the 2024 Christmas lunch and a possible change for Branch meetings.

Rick Rutter Branch Chairman

Branch Secretary's Report

As we are making slow progress towards Spring, it seems a long time since November when I wrote my last notes for the newsletter. We were looking forward to our Commemoration of the 56th Anniversary of Withdrawal followed on by our Christmas lunch. On 29th November we were blessed with reasonable weather and very little noise from the buses on the Promenade. Thank you to those who made a contribution and also to those who attended. Regrettably, it is possible that this may have been the last time that we could avail ourselves of the Mayor's hospitality. It seems the whole area including the council offices and mayor's parlour are due to be sold. If and when this happens remain to be seen.

Meanwhile your Committee is planning to have the Commemoration of the 57th Anniversary of Withdrawal on 29th November with the same format for the service as previously (Brian Woollaston has kindly agreed to officiate again.) We had our Christmas lunch at the Robinswood hotel together with a number of friends so that we could achieve the stipulated minimum for a special meal. Personally, I enjoy meeting those with similar interests and experiences from other organisations- particular other veterans. However, I realise that others may take a different view, and so, as you may see in the minutes of the recent committee meeting, we are keeping an open mind as to the format of this year's Christmas lunch. So please attend our April meeting if you wish to express your opinion.

To ring the New Year in, we had our quiz meeting on 3rd January. Our thanks to Jim Major who had racked up a very varied and comprehensive range of questions; also my thanks for his continued determination to proceed regardless of the fact that he had been in hospital only a few weeks earlier.



Since the beginning of the year we have been preoccupied with the third and, probably, final attempt to gain medal recognition for those who served in Aden and "up-country" during the years 1960-1964 up to the start of the Radfan campaign I have been asked to be the focus of these individual applications for medal recognition, ensuring that they meet the criteria. Looking at the list of members nationally, where the dates of service and units/organisations served in, are shown, I estimate that there are about 100 members who would meet the criteria. Denis Sparrow has already identified about 20 members who served in 45 Cdo RM. I am hoping to make contact through Graham Mottley with those of other units who served "up country" at that time.

Finally, at the end of February, your Committee met principally to confirm and give details of the events in which we intend to participate for the rest of this year. The details are shown in the minutes of the meeting. We hope that you will support and enjoy the events.

Michael Compton Branch Secretary

Treasurer's Report

At the end of last year, we received a generous donation of £2,000 from Grahame Harper. Graham's generosity has secured the long-term financial future of the Branch, and has given us a bank balance to cover all known future eventualities. Without this windfall, we would have likely broken even, although there may be some admin expenses in the weeks remaining in the current financial year. Excluding Grahame's donation, about half of our financial throughput is attributable to our Christmas lunch. The headline figures are:

Income:	£4,517.25
Expenditure:	£2,478.41
Bank Balance:	£3,230.62

David Gearing Branch Treasurer

Branch Social Secretary's Report

Another year well under way, but with lots of possibilities still to come. Our monthly lunches got off to a good start with 20 attending at the House in the Tree on 7/2/24. Their innovative system worked well. Instead of me collecting payment on the day and drinks paid for individually, we were all given a card on arrival. Bar staff had already entered your meal choices and any drinks were added to the card. Then each member just wandered over to the bar at the end, and paid whatever was clocked up on their card. Easy.

The second venue was a success too. I mentioned that the landlord was ex Navy (6 years apparently) and that after other jobs, he had taken over the Old Forge at Whitminster last April. It was great that 27 of you turned out to support him in this endeavour. I believe there is also discussion that he may be hosting a breakfast club soon. The landlord reduced all of the menu choices by £2 each, so an overall saving of £6 pp for a 3 course meal. With a Greek chef, I thought it was very good value for money and a nice ambience. George Ross, the landlord, is taking over another pub in April – The Star at Whiteshill.

I have booked The Red Hart pub at Blaisdon, Longhope for 1/5/24 at 12 for 12.30 pm. Cost is £18 = 2 courses & £22 = 3 courses. Looks a really nice menu.

For 5/6/24 I am in the process of booking the Hunters Inn, on the B4211 at Longdon, Tewkesbury. Their menu is £16.95 for 2 courses & £22.95 for 3 courses. (Longhope and Longdon – hope I remember which is which!)

Menu choices will be circulated at the Quarterly meetings, for May and June. They will also be listed on the AVA website when available.

I checked out 11 possible venues for the Christmas lunch. To give an indication of interest, these were circulated to the 29 diners at the Old Forge. The top two votes

were for the George at Frocester and Bowden Hall. Therefore at the April meeting, members will be asked to choose between The George at Frocester and Bowden Hall. Both have car parking and ground floor toilets, plus GF, veggie, etc options. We can celebrate at The George, or arrange a monthly lunch there as before, and keep the Christmas lunch slightly special by having the meal in an hotel. The George expect to charge £30 for 3 courses (which may include tea/coffee depending on prices at the time). Bowden Hall charge £27 for 3 courses which includes tea/coffee. Thank you for your continuing support in 2024.

Jean Stubleby Branch Social Secretary

Future Events

Wednesday 3rd April. AVA Gloucestershire Quarterly Meeting at the Stroud Conservative Club, 11.00 hours.

Saturday and Sunday, 20/21 April. Possible visit to the Jet Age Museum, Staverton with our display. Please check this out with Rick.

Sunday 28th April. ANZAC Day parade at Leighteron Cemetery. Assemble at 14.45 at the cemetery. No parade but Standards are welcomed.



Wednesday 1st May. First Wednesday lunch, 12 for 1230hrs. The Red Hart pub at Blaisdon, Longhope, GL17 0AH.

Wednesday 5th June. First Wednesday lunch, 12 for 1230 hours. Venue to be decided. Please ask Jan for information.

Wednesday 12th June. Earthcott Green Memorial Service. 10.00 hours for coffee before Service at 11.00 hours in the chapel the wreath laying at the War Memorial followed by a buffet lunch.

Friday 21st until Monday 24th June. Weymouth Veterans weekend. Further details from Sylvia Johnson, telephone 01305 833188.

Saturday 29th June. National Armed Forces Day.

Wednesday 3rd July. AVA Gloucestershire Branch Annual General meeting at the Stroud Conservative Club, 11.00 hours followed by a buffet lunch.

Wednesday 7th August. First Wednesday lunch, 12 for 1230 hours. Venue to be decided. Please ask Jan for information.

Monday 26th August. Dedication for aircrew of Halifax MZ311 at the crash site on Cleeve hill. Details of transport to follow.

Wednesday 2nd September. First Wednesday lunch, 12 for 1230 hours. Venue to be decided. Please ask Jan for information.

Friday 6th until Sunday 8th September. The National Aden Veterans Association Annual General Meeting and Reunion in Blackpool

Sunday 15th September. Battle of Britain Service, Cheltenham.

Wednesday 2nd October. Gloucestershire Branch quarterly meeting 11.00 hours at the Stroud Conservative Club.

Sunday 10th November. Remembrance Day Service in Cheltenham 11.00 hours.

Friday 29th November. 57th Anniversary of the Withdrawal of British Troops from Aden.

Wednesday 4th December. possible date for AVA Gloucestershire branch Christmas lunch.

Editor's Report

Aden Veterans Merchandise

Just a little reminder, the clock is ticking towards 2027 and the cupboard is becoming bare. Some small items like metal Lapel Badges, are out of stock. So, if you require any of the items listed on the National website, (link on the Home page), or displayed in the Dow, please contact: Malcolm Heron on telephone number-01482 879359, or email merchandiser@adenveterans.org.uk

Veterans' services

Op FORTITUDE is the pathway for veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness into supported housing or to keep them in their current home.



Op FORTITUDE is funded by The Armed Forces Covenant Fund to deliver a centralised referral pathway into veteran supported housing. The remit of the team will be to work with individual veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness, supporting them either into suitable accommodation, or supporting them to maintain their current home.

The approach involves creating a pathway from the veteran at risk or experiencing homelessness to veteran supported housing or organisation that can support them to keep their current home and avoid becoming homeless in the first place, as well as

other unsupported veteran housing. At the centre of this is a team dedicated to making that link.

The underlying issue causing the person to be at risk of homelessness could be one or more of a range of issues, including income maximisation, employment, mental or physical health, substance misuse etc.

The Veteran Charity Sector has a rich history of providing support to veterans in these and many other areas and have a vital role to play in preventing veteran homelessness. Op FORTITUDE will also prove to be a critical resource for these agencies and any veterans they are working with who may be homeless.

The Op FORITUDE Pathway opened for referrals on 3 July 2023, with an initial focus on tenancy sustainment and high-risk referrals.

Op FORTITUDE Service Design Overview

Referrals can come from a range of sources, including, but not limited to, the public, the homelessness sector, the veteran charity sector, Local Authorities, His Majesties Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), The Defence Transition Service (DTS), or directly from the veteran themselves.

Referrals can be made through a dedicated webpage, and telephone access, with referrals going to the team that will facilitate referrals.

On receipt of the referral, we will assess:

- The immediate safety of the veteran
- Their current housing situation and location
- Areas, levels, and complexity of need

From an assessment of need, and led by the veteran's own choice, we will match the veteran with the appropriate supported housing or engage in tenancy sustainment activities to prevent homelessness occurring.

As mentioned, moving into supported accommodation may not always represent the best outcome, and we will need to consider wider implications, such as the impact of losing a local connection to the area they are currently residing in.

From an assessment of need, and led by the veteran's own choice, there could be a range of supportive interventions taken, including, but not limited to:

- Tenancy sustainment, where is suitable and safe accommodation, through Local Authority Homelessness Reduction Act Duties
- Referral to Veteran Charity Sector Organisations to provide additional support
- You in peace

Referrals can be made to Op FORTITUDE: By our online referral form <https://riv.org.uk/opfortitude>

Or by Freephone **0800 952077**

Before I leave you a little humour from my Blind Veterans UK members':

A Nun was in the bath when there came a knock on the door.
She shouted 'who is there' the reply was 'The Blind Man'.
The Nun thinking he is ok he can't see, said', come in'.
In comes the Blind fitter who replies 'Nice pair of Legs, where do you want the Blinds'???

Till the next Newsletter, have an enjoyable Easter and I hope the weather is fine.

Emlyn Phennah Branch Newsletter Editor

Branch Contacts

Chairman: Rick Rutter 07756 259796 rickrutter72@gmail.com

Vice Chairlady Sheila Gibson: 07775 744389 hugh.gibson@btinternet.com

**Secretary Michael Compton: 01452 864467
michael.s.compton@btinternet.com**

Treasurer David Gearing: 01249 444495 davidgearingflogo@hotmail.com

Social Secretary Jean Stublely: 01452300878 jean.stublely@virginmedia.com

Editor Emlyn Phennah: 07958541637 taff.phennah@gmail.com

Webmaster Ray Bunnage: 01452 415064 ray.bunnage16@gmail.com