



Aden Veterans Association Gloucestershire Branch Volume 1, 2021

Chairman's Report

Happy New Year to you all. I do hope that you are managing through this challenging time, and that this Newsletter goes some way towards lifting your spirits. Although we are now in the third National lockdown, we can hopefully see a real positive as many of you will have now received your first vaccination. I trust that we will all be in that situation by the end of this month.



Despite Branch meetings, Wednesday lunches and large informal gatherings being forbidden your Branch has been represented in two important events on our calendar. As you will have seen in the November issue of the Dhow a number of us attended the Battle of Britain service at the Long Garden in Cheltenham. My thanks go to Jim Major, for laying our wreath, Robert Parrant, carrying our Standard, Chris Blick, for photographing the event and Michael Compton for arranging our attendance.

Michael also arranged, and organised, the Service to Remember the 53rd Anniversary of our Withdrawal from Aden, despite Gloucestershire being in Tier 3. This had to be done through Cheltenham Borough Council, who were unable to make it the usual formal Commemoration due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, the Service was well supported by members as well as the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and the MP for Cheltenham. Despite it being a shortened service, it was a fitting tribute to Commemorate the Anniversary. I know that those who attended were delighted that the Service was able to be held. Special thanks go to Sally Wetzel for laying our wreath, Robert Parrant, Standard bearer, Padre Brian Wollaston, Chris Price, President, Chris Blick for taking photographs, and of course to Michael Compton. I am hopeful that a short report, and some photographs will be published in the next edition of the Dhow. I am sure that you, as I am, are all looking forward to our formal, and social, events starting up again during the coming year. Let us hope that it is sooner rather than later. No doubt there will be lockdown stories to tell, along with our usual military stories. During our enforced confinement I came across a film about Britain's Small Wars, A Look at Aden. I believe that it was made by members of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, with photographs, live footage and recreated scenes of the 20th June 1967, especially about how John Storey survived the ambush in Crater. I

found it interesting. If you have not seen it just Google - Britain's Small Wars A Look at Aden.

Rick Rutter

Secretary's Report

Like most of you, I spent Christmas 2020 without the usual round of visiting children and grandchildren: so, I had plenty of time to ponder and remember some of my previous Christmases.

Yes you have probably guessed that one of the most memorable was Christmas 1966 – my mother had sent me a Christmas cake which did not arrive until mid-February, together with a box of After 8 chocolates which had melted and re-solidified into a brick, because they had come by sea! So there was little to celebrate on Christmas Day, and when one of the other unaccompanied officers suggested we go snorkelling with harpoon guns there was no stopping me. He had chosen that we dive from the rocks on the left of the BR Club Bay. It was a beautiful day and the sun was reflecting on the surface of the sea – an idyllic setting. My friend, with flippers headed out to the middle of the bay entrance; meanwhile, I was enjoying the underwater scenery and swimming more slowly, out in the same direction when my friend came back very quickly gesticulating to the rocks we had left. Not reacting immediately, I swam few yards out only to see the unmistakable sight of a barracuda with its mouth angled upwards. Discretion took the better part of valour and I returned to the rocks, stubbing my knee on a sea urchin in my haste. When we took another look from a different angle so that we were not blinded by the sun's reflection on the sea, we could see the shoal just below the surface. At the tender age of 20, I had learnt that better planning and some assessment of the risks are required if you are going to step out into the unknown.



Fast forward almost 53 years (like some annoying TV programmes), with the Covid-19 restrictions gradually increasing to level 3 in November, I had that feeling of stepping out into the unknown again during the preparations for the 53rd Anniversary service in Cheltenham. Luckily, the Remembrance Sunday Service in a drastically reduced form, (thanks to Jim Major for laying our wreath) had been allowed to proceed by agreement between RBL and Cheltenham Borough Council. So, there was precedent – RBL had the drawn up a very specific plan, after a

comprehensive risk assessment done by Gary Angove. With the agreement from both the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and the MP for Cheltenham, that they would attend the 53rd Commemoration of the Withdrawal from Aden, if the service went ahead, there was further incentive that we should be allowed to proceed. With Gary's assistance in drawing up a risk assessment, the agreement of the Committee and Brian Wollaston's efforts in designing a suitable service, we were able to proceed. So, this is

a special thank you to those who made the service possible, to the 20 members who attended and to Sally Welzel for the laying of the wreath. Despite all the negative thinking and concern about infection, and the host of cancellations of Branch events in 2020, Robert Parrant (another thank you), was able to carry our standard twice in one month, and we were able to publicly remember those lost in Aden on 29th November.

In the last newsletter I stated that my term of office as Secretary had expired and that any member could propose, if they so wished, some other member to carry out the position. To date there has been no other such proposal. I therefore suggest that we make this an agenda item for our next meeting, whenever that may be. Until then I am happy to continue "in post".

Finally, please note that I am in the final stages of updating the Branch address list. Currently I have a number of members who prefer to have the newsletters delivery by mail, rather than by e-mail. Should anyone wish to be added to the list please let me know please telephone me – details on the last page of this edition. I look forward to seeing you again when the current situation has changed.

Michael Compton

Treasurer's Report

I am delighted that once again our Branch Newsletter is keeping us all connected. I am somewhat isolated "down south" here in Wiltshire, and I regret not having been able to travel to those Covid-19 safe events that were able to go ahead. Hopefully, all of our Branch Members will soon be in the "I've been vaccinated club".

There has been minimal financial activity because of the continuing Coronavirus changes to our way of life. At the time of writing, our **bank balance is £1,420.57**, with just two transactions in the present financial year. One receipt, **a donation of £15**, and **one item of expenditure, £86.40** for our annual internet fees.

Let us hope that we will be able to re-convene sometime in 2021.

David Gearing

Social Secretary's Report

Weymouth Weekend Event

Bookings now being taken. Information can be found on the West Dorset Branch Website, which is :

www.adenveteransweymouth.co.uk

Saturday 19th June Gala Dinner

Sunday 20th June Veterans Parade

Monday 21st June Flag Raising at Weymouth Town Hall

We are not publishing any future events in this Newsletter because of the uncertain parameters of the pandemic and the lifting of the Government's restrictions. However, we hope to publish an event schedule in our Next Newsletter in the early Summer.

Jean Stubley

Editorial Comment Report

Hello everyone, A Happy New Year to all our Readers.

It looks like I have the Editorial job!!

My role on the Veterans Connections contract for AgeUK Gloucestershire ended on the 30th November. And for my troubles I was awarded a High Sherriff of Gloucestershire Award. However, I am still a Volunteer with SSAFA and still have connection with Age UK Gloucestershire. I am just at the end of the phone if you need help or information. I hope you are all in line for the jab?? I have had mine so, I think I am **FFI**. Joking apart, I hope we are heading towards the opening out of the woods, when we will be able to meet up and socialise again on our monthly get togethers or at Veterans Breakfast Clubs.

I am shortly going to set up a SSAFA Veterans Communications Hub.

SSAFA Veterans Comms Hub

This is a new initiative I am starting up soon, with a team of SSAFA Volunteers.

It entails contacting Veterans and families, including AVA Members, via phone or email to check on their welfare and needs or just to have a chat.

For contact initially use **My SSAFA Number 07808 073939**.

I also wish to resurrect the **Veterans Zoom Room**. This was where veterans and family members met up virtually every couple of weeks for good old chin wag, any subject would do, within guidelines of course. More details will appear on our website soon.

Sally Weizel also offers her support

Sally, has also offered to help. Sally can be contacted on her mobile.

07796 617499

If any members need a chat, or some support, please contact any of your committee, who should be able to help. The list of committee members is on the Branch website, and in this Newsletter.

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 and to date got no answers, plus a request for information I made with Veterans Gateway also, like Manuel they "no nothing"

Veterans Badge Application

To apply for medals, complete a medal application form found on MOD site or ask The Editor and return it to the address below: -

Address: *VeteransUK*, MOD Medal Office, Innsworth House, Imjin Barracks, Gloucester, GL3 1HW

Freephone (UK only): 0808 191 4

Telephone (from overseas): +44 (0)125 386 6043

Email: >DBS-Medals@mod.uk

Veterans Medals {New or Replacement}

To apply for medals, complete the [medal application form](#) on MOD website and return it to the address below.

Freephone (UK only): 0808 191 4218

Telephone (from overseas): +44 (0)125 386 6043

Email: >DBS-Medals@mod.uk

Veterans Rail Cards

A reminder that the launch special offer ends 31st March 2021

1 Year VRC costs £21 saving of £9 & a 3 Year VRC costs £61 saving £9.

So, if you haven't applied yet, get cracking.

Gloucester Older Veterans Information Guide{GOVIG}

I still have access to this booklet. Should you require a copy contact: - The Editor.



ARMED FORCES DAY
Saturday 26 June 2021

Armed Forces Day 2021 is on

More info will appear on our website.

A little frivolity from our former editor!!!!!!



Bereavements

I am pleased to announce, that to the best of my knowledge, we have not lost any members since the last News Letter. We Aden veterans must be a tough bunch of old buffers!!

Emlyn Phennah

Branch Contacts

Chairman Rick Rutter:	07756 259796	rickrutter72@gmail.com
Vice Chairman Chris Blick:	01453 751683	chris.blick@talktalk.net
Secretary Michael Crompton:	01452 864467	michael.s.compton@btinternet.com
Treasurer David Gearing:	01249 444495	davidgearingflogo@hotmail.com
Social Secretary Jean Stublely:	0145230087	jean.stublely@virginmedia.com
Webmaster Ray Bunnage:	01452 41506	ray.bunnage16@gmail.com
Editor Emlyn Phennah:	07808 973939	taff.phennah@gmail.com