



## **Aden Veterans Association Gloucestershire Branch Newsletter**

### **No 2 Of 2020 for June, July, August & September**



#### **Chairman's Report:**

What a time to write a report!

Since our last newsletter, in January, how our lives have changed.

I write this report having moved from self-isolation to a little more freedom to enjoy the countryside, no doubt many of you will be in very similar circumstances. Due to Covid-19 we have only held two Wednesday lunches since our January Branch meeting. One at the Toby at Over, with plenty to eat from the self-service carvery, and the most recent at the Frocester George as long ago as February 4<sup>th</sup>. This was a superb venue, and an enjoyable meal. As always, the company was excellent, with plenty of conversation and some humour as well. I, personally, cannot wait until our social gatherings can recommence.

Many events, some significant ones included, have been cancelled. I certainly missed not attending the St George's Day service at Tewkesbury Abbey. Weymouth Veterans weekend has also, sadly, been cancelled. The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Aden Veterans Association on March 25<sup>th</sup> has past with little celebration. On the positive side I have been in regular touch with John Hotson, one of the original members, who founded the AVA. He is hoping that he can attend our AGM, details of which are in our secretary's report. We all had to celebrate VE Day in our own 'self-isolation' way. I do believe that many people, throughout the country, made a real effort to commemorate this momentous occasion. Hopefully we can get back to some form of normality, in September, when the National AVA Reunion Weekend and AGM are due from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13 of September. No doubt when we, as a Branch, can meet up again we will celebrate missed events since our enforced self-isolation.

When I **read** through my last report to you, I just realise how much we do as a Branch, and as an Association, and how much I miss the company, and companionship, of our members.

However, I do believe that our service backgrounds, either as members of the armed forces or of families of them, has taught us how to deal with adverse conditions and circumstances. We are an adaptable bunch and are able to make the best out of difficult times. Reminds me of the Monty Python song 'Worse things happen at Sea.' 'Always look on the bright side of life.'

**Rick Rutter**

## **Secretary's Report**

The last 4 months we have all experienced a massive contrast, with normal activity curtailed at the drop of a hat. Before lockdown, I was offered my workstation and a laptop to carry home, so I have been able to carry on working, albeit away from my work colleagues. I have been forced to learn how to do things that I previously had not needed, which is no bad thing. But for Judith and, I believe, for most of you, the physical cutting off from contact with family and friends has been especially tedious. For those with the necessary gadgetry the amount of screen-time has therefore rocketted, so for us the chance to skype, zoom, e-mail or text has provided the necessary contact and also a mass of amusing material, as well as the course the daily exercises for those feeling energetic enough. However, for those without the gadgetry and family not in regular contact, this last 9 weeks must seem especially tedious: it is to you that I direct the request please let us know about your situation. If we cannot do anything ourselves we know of many organisations that are able and willing to help.

As one of the "new boys" to the Association, I have been amazed how we have coped with the situation. We watched with interest and some pride the VE75 celebration on the TV. Having been brought up in the post-war period when life was somewhat more spartan than it is today, we can appreciate the privations endured by our parents and grandparents. It is small wonder that our exploits in Aden, only 20 years later, were not seen as significant, by comparison. Couple this with the fact that the government of the day had the mantra of removal of all the trappings of empire at all costs, no matter what the political circumstances for the country we were leaving, and you have recipe for disaster. Even in those days, South Arabia had a weak government and two strong terrorist organisations vying for supremacy. So, it is with sadness that we have seen the terrible plight of the ordinary Yemenis. They have to live with the calamity of fear and uncertainty, as well as disease, with seemingly no prospect of achieving normality; compared to our situation, theirs is far worse.

Notwithstanding the problems in Yemen, we still have this calamity at home – the bad genie has got out of the bottle and needs to be put back with the lid shut tight – so we are all having to be careful. Until a suitable vaccine is available there is not much chance of our achieving normality. So how do we proceed until then? So far we have had to make a rash of cancellations, and I cannot see that situation changing. We have therefore decided to postpone the AGM until Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October, and that this will be the first time we meet as a Branch, in Stroud at our normal venue, The Carlton Club, at 11.00am. It is possible that we will still be in social distancing mode, so we intend to make the necessary adjustments. Those who come as pairs will probably have to remain as pairs throughout. But despite these hindrances we do hope you will attend. So if you could let me know if you wish to attend, please let me know by phone or e-mail, that would be appreciated.

A safe summer to you all.

**Michael Compton**

## **Treasurer's Report**

Our last Branch Meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 seems a world away, but it marked the end of financial activity for 2019/20. Only four months earlier, I had concerns over longer term finances, but these were eased considerably when the General Election (remember that?) intervened, and reduced our Long Garden Commemorative event to a wreath laying ceremony. We had already planned to reduce anticipated expenditure by excluding lunch on that day, and with a very successful Christmas Lunch raffle, we have ended the year in a very good financial position. The headline numbers are :-

Income: £3342-05

Expenditure: £3197-49

Cash in Bank: £1491-97

I have prepared a Statement of Accounts for the AGM, and this will be audited as soon as I hear from the auditor who has, until recently, been shielding because of continuing medication associated with health issues.

**David Gearing**

## **Social Secretary's Report:**

We all have endured a disastrous Social calendar since the onset of Covid-19. However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel! Subject to current Government Advice we will hold our Annual General meeting at the Conservative Club in Stroud on October 7th 2020 at 11 am. Seating arrangements will comply with social distancing advice at the time. Nearer the time, buffet and raffle availability will become clearer.

Looking to the Social Calendar we have some brighter news on the horizon. With limited

time to arrange the AVA Christmas Lunch, I am delighted to have secured a firm booking for Wednesday 2 December 2020, at the Tortworth Court Hotel in the Orangery from 12 noon until 4 pm. Whilst last year there were unfortunately some issues with the beef option being tough, this year I have requested fish as an alternative choice to turkey or vegetarian main. The menu is not yet available but similar to last year I imagine.

AVA has agreed that I should sign a contract for this booking on the understanding that, if the hotel has to cancel due to Government Directions, we would not be financially at a loss. We need a minimum number of 40 guests for the Orangery to be available, but I hope we will be well above that number. Tortworth Orangery will accommodate up to 72 guests if one metre social distancing is still in place. However, If we reach that number, there will be a waiting list in case social distancing is eased by December, when up to 90 can be seated..

I am seeking information on any special offers the hotel has available in December, should anyone wish to stay overnight.

It would be appreciated if members could advise me of their intention to attend this function, as soon as possible. As per last year we plan to invite The Grenadier Guards Association to boost our numbers, but will of course, prioritise bookings for AVA members. So please let me know early if you are coming to give an indication of uptake.

I sincerely hope we can all sit down together and enjoy each other's company again soon.

### **Future Event Dates to note**

- 7<sup>th</sup> October AGM
- 29<sup>th</sup> October Remembrance Garden Dedication
- 8<sup>th</sup> November Remembrance Day
- 29<sup>th</sup> November Aden Withdrawal Day
- 2<sup>nd</sup> December Christmas Lunch

All of these dates will be to Government Covid-19 guidelines in place at the time.

### **Jean Stubley**

#### **Editorial Comment:**



Hello everyone may I introduce myself. I have been a member since 2017. I have not been very active on the branch attendance front because of other interests.

They were principally having a part-time job on the Joining Forces Project for AgeUK Gloucestershire and also being a Volunteer Case Worker with SSAFA Gloucestershire.

Also, I tried my best to keep away from the former editor of this newsletter because I knew one day, he would lumber me with this task!!

However, I never dreamt that he would invent the post of Branch Vice Chairman to escape editorship, and con me into taking on the position.

Anyway, fellow Aden Veterans, {can we use **fellow** in this strange world of Red Matters and PC} I am here for maybe only one edition, if you vote me off (brown envelopes are in the post!!) However, should you wish me to continue, I will do my very best, to keep up the high standard of editorship of Chris Blick, who did such a splendid job.

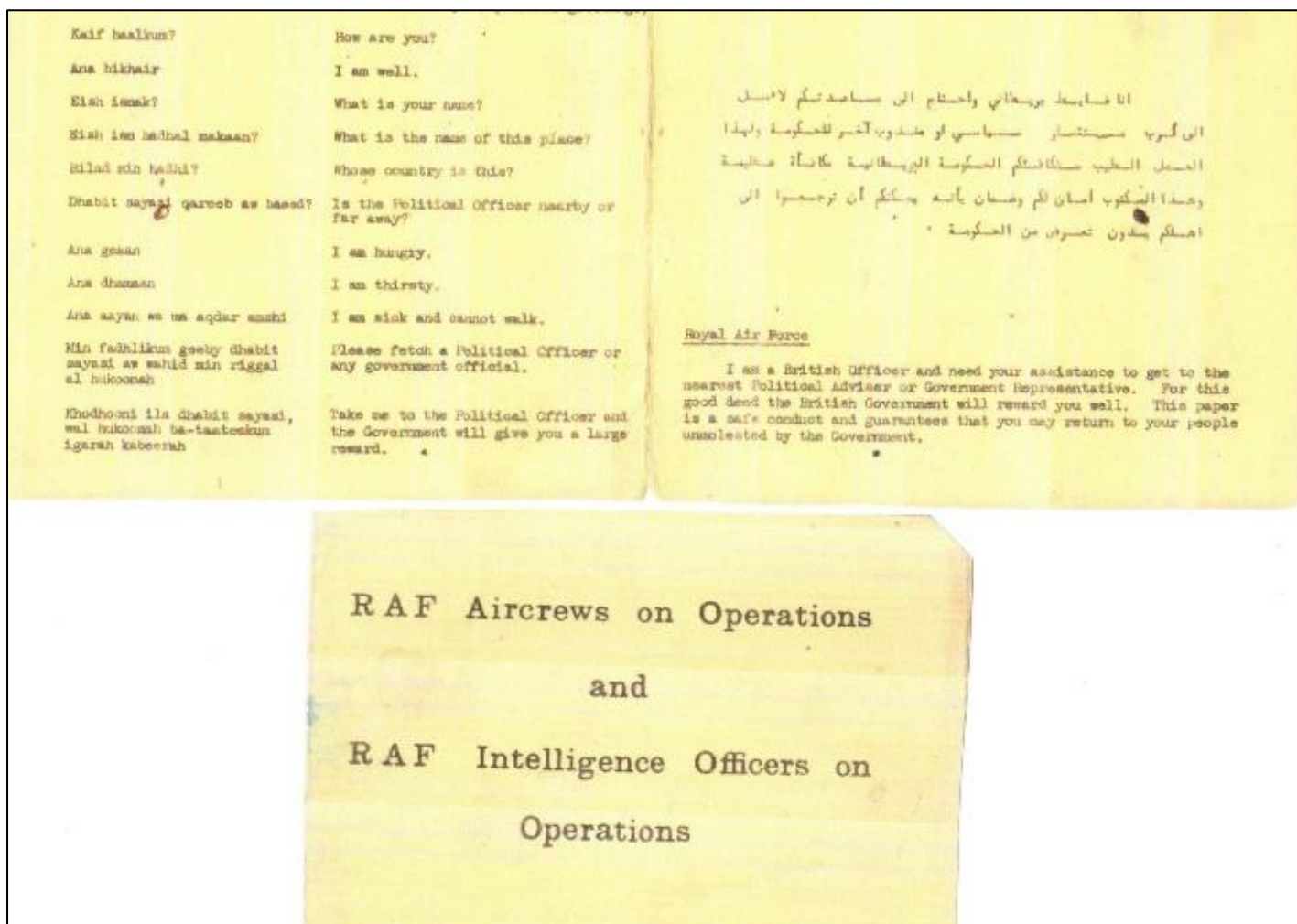


I was in Aden for a short period compared to some. Mid-April to the end. I was a crewman on 78 Squadron, (helicopters) based at RAF Khormaksar when at home and anywhere up country when not. My chariot was a Wessex Mk 2 HC, which was an endearing chopper because it had 2 donks. (engines) I would like to tell you about one experience when flying in home territory inside the wire. The operation was called Night IS which stood for Internal Security.

This involved strapping on the Wessex 3 great big flood lights under the step, a great big moveable searchlight in the door, a

GPMG out of each window, an infantry man on one and generally a para on the other both with rifles and me with my Sterling and John Wayne accessory, Smith & Weston 38. We were armed to the teeth.

The Para was also equipped with a Radio tuned to his mates wondering around the Mansura roundabout area looking for dissies. After take-off we would be over the Paras in about 5 minutes, we would get a call to brighten up some of the Mansura Residents' lives. Now I don't know about you, but I know, if I was sleeping on the roof of my abode and someone flew above me and switched on a bloody great light, whilst my wife and I were enjoying ourselves and I had the means, I would definitely extinguish that light. Fortunately, the majority of residence who resided inside the wire did not possess firearms. The exception being the ones Mad Mitch sorted, who lived in Crater. Night IS was fun chasing dingos along the wire, but I am glad no irate hubby had a gun.



Goolly Chit

Type & Mk.	No.	Pilot	Aircrew Duty	Flight Details	Day (1)	Night (2)
WASSOP	NIGHT	XR500	PER KERRY	CREW	17:35	21
"	"	XS 18	(KERRY) KERRY	Air TEST	:35	
"	"	XS 076	SNEEDON	VAN GUARD	1:25	
"	"	XR 509	RIGBY	VAN GUARD	2:20	
"	"	XR 508	RIGBY	NIGHT I.S.		
"	"	XR 508	RIGBY	"		
"	"	XR 527	CRAMP	"		
"	"	XR 527	CRAMP	NIGHT I.S.		
"	"	XR 527	CRAMP	"		
"	"	XR 527	GEORGE	"		
"	"	XR 523	BLAIR	KSAN - MADRAN. & KETA	2:05	
"	"	XR 522	RIGBY	VAN GUARD	2:40	
"	"	XR 508	SNEEDON	AIRTEST & HAB - KSAN	1:00	
"	"	YT 602	SNEEDON	KSAN - HAB	:45	
"	"	XT 602	BLAIR	86 KP - OPS	1:10	
				86 KP - OPS	2:05	
Summary for May & June 1967					14:25	5
A/C Type Wessex DAY						
Unit 78 SQN RAF						
Lt Comd No 78 SQN <i>Abner</i> OC 78						
Totals carried forward						
					185:00	250

Logbook Night IS Entry

**If you have an anecdote you would like to share with us please send them in by early September for the next edition.**

### About the Editor

I am still a Volunteer for SSAFA plus, I now have another position with AgeUK looking out for older Veterans. The Project is called Veterans Connections. Here is a bit about it: -

Age UK Gloucestershire's new Veterans Connections Gloucestershire provides support, during this Covid-19 pandemic, specifically to veterans aged 65 and over, living in the county.

Veterans Connections Gloucestershire offers support in the following areas:

- Information and advice from the Help Team on a range of issues affecting older people at this time and beyond
- Signposting to other organisations who can provide specific help to meet veterans needs
- Social support, with access to our new Veterans Facebook Group and other social opportunities, plus telephone friendship calls from our project worker, Emlyn, himself a veteran Emlyn's Contact Number is 07808 073939

Veterans Connections Gloucestershire project worker, Emlyn Phennah

Plus, support with laptop, tablet or smartphone, volunteers are able to provide over-the-phone guidance to access online social activities if required.

### **Older Veterans Information Guide**

Age UK Gloucestershire have also produced a very useful Older Veterans Information Guide. It is in PDF Format. Download your own copy from the website or contact Emlyn or the Help Team on 01452 422660 to find out more about the project or be sent your own Information Guide.

**And now a piece of History providing assistance Today.**



Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families association was formed in 1885 by a Major Guildea who was on military operations in the Sudan. The Major wrote to the Times in London, to set up a fund to help wives and kids, of military personnel fighting away from the family, to enable them to access cash to house, feed and clothe themselves. This being the age of none internet banking and such fancy means we have to day. It was originally called SSFA, the additional A was added in 1918 after the Royal Air Force was formed.

SSAFA Gloucestershire contact number is: - 01452 520255

Address 5, Carne Place, Eastern Avenue, Gloucester, GL4 3BD.

Or call Emlyn

### **Older Veterans share their stories**

Some of you may also have heard about some Aden Vets being involved with Joining Forces telling their stories about when they were in the mob Below is what that was all about: -



Published on 19 June 2020 02:13 PM

Veterans' Voices was a two-year project led by Age UK Gloucestershire and The University of Gloucestershire, which saw veterans from across Gloucestershire work with students and technicians to co-produce their own digital stories of their memories of being in the armed forces. Veterans of the Korean War, Aden and more recently, Bosnia collected photographs and memorabilia over a series of workshops. They scripted a story to accompany the images and the results were their own 'digital story'.

A digital story is a little different to a film; it is a 2 – 5-minute piece of media containing both photographs and audio. The veterans scripted or told stories, which were recorded. For some of them it was the first time they had heard their recorded voice. There are no moving images and the veterans themselves were in charge of editing the material, helped by students from the university's Media School and its technicians. Everyone has a story to tell. These stories tell of new adventures, new experiences, the reality of war, the loss of friends and above all, an affection for their time in the armed forces. The discipline, friendship, camaraderie and continued support shines through many of these veterans' voices.

[Listen to veterans voices on the AgeUK Glos Website](#)

## **Veterans Breakfast Clubs**

Lydney VBC had a Breakfast in a Marque Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July. They had social distancing rules applied, Waiter Service and all thoroughly enjoyed it. I have been in touch with various VBC champions and they are investigating the possibilities of opening Stroud, Cirencester, Over, Gloucester and Cheltenham. I hope sincerely that by the time I have to edit another AVA Newsletter, we are all enjoying these facilities fully opened. Fingers Crossed.

## **Bereavements**

***It is with great sadness we announce the loss of two of our flock: -***

Janet Harper wife of Grahame Harper passed away on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Sandra Flamson wife of Dennis Flamson passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020

***Both were stalwart supporters of our Association and will be sadly missed.***

**Finally, Chris said to leave with a joke.**

Before I joined 78 in Aden, whilst at the Wessex Conversion Unit in RAF Odiham I was seconded to accompany an ancient Polish Master pilot on a sortie to RAF Saint Mawgan in Cornwall. We were carrying detergent drums to help the clean-up of the beaches after the Tory Canyon Disaster. My pilot was so old, he knew Pontius when he was on Pilot Training.  
Sorry folks

## **Emlyn Phennah**

### **Branch Contacts**

Chairman Rick Rutter	07756 259796	<a href="mailto:rickrutter72@gmail.com">rickrutter72@gmail.com</a>
Vice Chairman Chris Blick	01453 751683	<a href="mailto:chris.blick@talktalk.net">chris.blick@talktalk.net</a>
Secretary Michael Crompton	01452 864467	<a href="mailto:michael.s.compton@btinternet.com">michael.s.compton@btinternet.com</a>
Treasurer David Gearing	01249 444495	<a href="mailto:davidgearingflogo@hotmail.com">davidgearingflogo@hotmail.com</a>
Social Secretary Jean Stublely	01452300878	<a href="mailto:jean.stublely@virginmedia.com">jean.stublely@virginmedia.com</a>
Webmaster Ray Bunnage	01452 300878	<a href="mailto:ray.bunnage16@gmail.com">ray.bunnage16@gmail.com</a>
Newsletter Editor Emlyn Phennah	07808 973939	<a href="mailto:taff.phennah@gmail.com">taff.phennah@gmail.com</a>