



THE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2017

BR0753



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Brigadier Malcolm B Page MBE we salute you!

Our President, Brigadier Malcolm Page appointed a Member of the British Empire (MBE)

Malcolm's nomination was submitted by the Secretary General of the Royal Commonwealth ex-Services League .

On Thursday 2 March Malcolm was presented with his medal by RHR Prince William, Duke of Cambridge at Buckingham Palace.

The ceremony was witnessed by his Sister Yvonne and John and Elizabeth Green.

Editorial (John Green)

There can be no doubt that the most significant events to report in this editorial are the announcements in the New Year's Honours that Brian Hughes, our county and branch Standard Bearer has been awarded the British Empire Medal and our President, Brigadier Malcolm Page appointed a Member of the British Empire (MBE)

We congratulate both recipients on this well-deserved recognition. It is expected that Brian will be presented with this medal by the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire during May. The precise date will be communicated to you all when known.

In the meantime I take this opportunity to share with you some details of the background to Malcolm's award. Of course we are all familiar with this outstanding service to our branch for over 20 years and his work establishing and leading the town's friendship link with Boroma.

Malcolm's nomination was submitted by the Secretary General of the Royal Commonwealth ex-Services League and included the following extracts:

" for his unique and outstanding commitment for almost 70 years to the veterans and widows from Somaliland who once served the British Crown".

At the end of WWII Malcolm was posted to the British Protectorate of Somaliland as a junior officer with the Somaliland Scouts. It was during this time that his long and deep association with the veterans began.

"There is absolutely no doubt that he has single-handedly brought comfort, and in many cases the chance to live, to thousands"

In 2007 Malcolm was appointed to the honorary position of Grand President's Appointee of the Royal Commonwealth ex-Services league. This role was granted personally by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.

Before and after the devastating Civil War in Somalia, Malcolm visited the country frequently, at his own expense, to try to ensure help reached those most in need, especially elderly soldiers who had put their life on the line during WWII and whose very survival in one of the world's poorest countries was at risk.



On return to Henley a most convivial celebration lunch was enjoyed in the Portuguese restaurant, The Square in Market Place.

Dates for Your Diary

Meetings are held on 3rd Monday of the month unless otherwise advised
(eg 24 April to avoid Easter and School Holidays)

Venue – The Christ Church Centre

Talk 11.30 (please be seated by 11.20)

Lunch 12 for 12.30 - Please book for lunch to Colin Davies

Email c.w.davies70@btinternet - phone 01189 722527 by the Thursday before

Past Events

- 16 January - Cynthia Morey, gave an fascinating talk about her life as a former actress and soprano and how since she retired she has become President of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, written several books and made her debut on the silver screen in 'Quartet'.
- 20 February – We would like to thank Malcolm Lewis for a most interesting and detailed account of Nelson's 'Victory' and her story from 1758 to 1804.
- 20 March - Ian Wheeler 'Fairmile - A Victorian Asylum' - once the preconceived notion that he would speak on the subject of the Fairmile Hospital in Henley was put to rest, Ian gave us a fascinating and insightful talk on a subject many of us know so little about. His extensive knowledge of his subject was evident and communicated to us all with humour and kindness. He personalised the talk by introducing family members who worked and grew on the site. Thank you Ian, and we hope you will visit us again soon.

2017

Diary of Events

24 April – David Lees '**The Fall of Singapore**'

15 May - Milton Gordon '**Levelling the playing field**'

Military service as a force for social engineering

19 June - David MacLeod '**The Toastmaster**' *history, traditions and amusing encounters!*

17 July - Tony Boffin - '**William Morris (Lord Nuffield)**- *his cars and philanthropy*'

21 August - Alex Manning '**Gallipoli - Could It Have Worked?**' *In keeping with WW1's centenary commemorations, Alex Manning will give an illustrated talk in which he will describe and examine the 1915 operation against the Turks that was meant to promise everything but delivered nothing".*

18 September - Helen Barnett - '**Henley Town Manager** - *A Varied Role*'

16 October - John Green '**Further letters from the Front**'

12 November – **Remembrance Sunday Lunch** - 1pm

08 December - **Christmas lunch**

County Conference 2017

On the 11th February the 92nd Annual County Conference was held at Islip Village Hall, and was well attended with 9 Standards on parade including County Standard - Brian Hughes, Peppard Branch Standard - Colin Davies, and Henley Branch Standard - John Green.

Brian was appointed County Standard Bearer for the 12th consecutive year.

- **County President MR D Mason DL** expressed satisfaction that finally the outrageous legal action against Iraq/Afghanistan veterans has been brought to a halt. One of the leading solicitors now struck-off!
- **Col D Bower - County Commandant Oxfordshire Army Cadet Force** spoke of the importance of links with RBL. Alex Manning, our Cadet Liaison Officer, reviewed the progress made specifically with the Henley Army Cadets and the Airforce Cadets.
- **Terry Whittles - RBL National Chairman** spoke at length of his intention to improve HQ administration. He also stressed that importance of members wearing their RBL Badge. (NB Those of us who always do this know it can spark a conversation and can sometimes lead to recruiting new members!)

A letter from the community

May we congratulate Mr Brian Hughes on his British Empire Medal, it has been a long time coming.

His steadfastness and dedication to the service of the charities is unequalled. To see that gentleman out in all weathers and for so many years unperturbed, defies belief. I have done British Legion fundraising myself, and to work alongside Brian is inspirational.

Hats off to Brian, enjoy you're fame and may we see you for many more years to come, standing outside Starbucks and proudly marching with the standard of the Royal British Legion. If you see Brian, bid him well, a true gentleman and a loyal patron to the cause.

Many thanks

David and Joshua Thatcher
Gainsborough Crescent

Nettlebed and District Branch Royal British Legion

Nettlebed Royal British Legion have organised a Guided Tour of The Poppy Factory in Richmond, Surrey on Thursday 13th July. The cost is £15.00.

We will leave Nettlebed Bus Shelter at 11.00 am, returning at approximately 6.00 pm.

If you would like to reserve your place, please contact Colin Malcolmson on 01491 641 260 or e-mail malco.northend@gmail.com.

Alternatively send your details and your cheque made payable to Nettlebed RBL to "Little Green", The Green, Nettlebed, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon, RG9 5AX

Henley Branch Community Support

Introduction

There are people living in the avenues, streets and roads near us who need our help. The Royal British Legion is keen to encourage branches to continue to share in this mission.

This approach builds on the foundations already created by our hard work in the past and reinforces the delivery of a range of activities to meet the current and predicted needs of the Armed Forces community, including veterans and their families. The Legion's Branch Community Support project is divided into the following five areas:

- **Legion Awareness Events**
- **Telephone Buddies**
- **Home & Hospital Visitors**
- **Bereavement Support**
- **Local Touch Points**

All Branches have been invited to take part in all or some of these areas. Henley Branch Committee have carefully considered these options and for the time being we will be undertaking: 'Telephone Buddies', 'Home & Hospital Visiting', and 'Bereavement Support'. We do of course try to raise awareness of the needs of the Armed Forces Community and the Legion's work and it is good to be present at local events where we can organise 'Touch Points' for a short time. The manpower required for both frequent large scale events and manned touch points to deal with the public on a sustained basis is not yet available. There may be opportunities to work with related local charities to achieve these more ambitious objectives in the future. The following pages describe the other three projects.



Loneliness is not always a choice. There are 370,000 ex-Service men, women and their families who are socially isolated or feeling lonely. This can be for many reasons: such as disability, bereavement, short or long-term ill-health or because they live alone.

Some people have no family, or are unable to speak to or see their family often enough. Others can have social contact, be in a relationship or part of a family but they still feel lonely. Either way, loneliness can lead to physical and mental illness.

Through Telephone Buddies, you can give individuals an opportunity to talk to someone, experience companionship and be part of the community. This routine can help provide support directly to those who need it, and contribute to improving someone's well being and happiness on a weekly basis. If you are not already experienced or confident, guidance and training is available at every level.



Become a Telephone Buddy, your friendship could be their lifeline. Contact Nick Lauanders <mailto:nicklauanders@gmail.com> (ctrl and click to follow link or phone 01491 628 243) for more information.

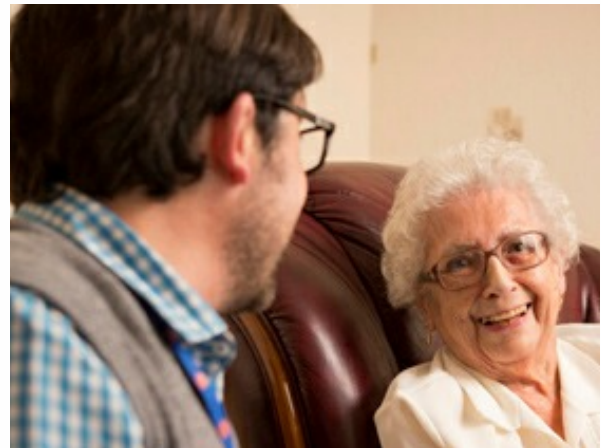
Home and Hospital Visiting

Some people are unable to go out alone to meet people or continue with social activities they enjoy. Others may have no one to visit them in hospital following ill health.

Sometimes their family and friends have commitments such as work, or they don't live nearby so are unable to visit. Whatever the case, this situation can cause isolation and loneliness - a serious condition which can be enormously damaging, both mentally and physically.

As a Home & Hospital Visitor, you can give individuals an opportunity to talk to someone, experience companionship and be part of the community. This consistency can bring routine into the person's life and give them something to look forward to, at a vulnerable time.

Be someone's companion. Become a Home & Hospital Visitor. Contact Nick Launders <mailto:nicklaunders@gmail.com> (ctrl and click to follow link) or phone 01491 628 243 for more information.



Bereavement Support



There are 350,000 ex-Service men, women and their families recently bereaved. Bereavement can affect people in different ways, and there is no right or wrong way to cope with the loss of a loved one.

Some may have lost someone in service and others out of service. Either way, bereavement is a distressing time for our Armed Forces families, and dealing with grief can affect people emotionally, physically and mentally. It is a time when someone's world can feel upside down, and seems to have fallen apart.

As a member of the Legion you can be a bereavement representative. This vital role can make a huge difference to our bereaved Armed Forces families: including helping with requests for Legion representation and Standard Bearers from your branch, showing support by being present at a funeral, and providing a sense of comradeship in what is already a painful time. Support families during a difficult time by offering bereavement representation. Many of us already do what we can, especially our Standard Bearers but we would like to seek your help so that we are always responsive to this need, which often arises unexpectedly.

Contact Nick Launders <mailto:nicklaunders@gmail.com> (ctrl and click to follow link) or phone 01491 628 243) for more information.

Stop Press

It is sad to advise that Ann Turner died shortly after being admitted to Acacia Lodge.

She was for many years a dedicated Chairman of the Branch Welfare Committee and we extend our sympathy to her family.

Iraq & Afghanistan Memorial unveiled by the Queen



The new memorial honours both military personnel and civilians involved in the Middle Eastern conflicts.

Victoria Embankment Gardens, London

Our patron, Her Majesty The Queen, has unveiled a new memorial honouring UK Armed Forces personnel and civilians involved in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts from 1990-2015.

The new memorial was unveiled in Victoria Embankment Gardens in Westminster, following a service of dedication on Horse Guards Parade attended by around 2,500 invited guests.

The guests were representatives of the many groups – military and civilian - whose efforts over a 25-year period in Iraq and Afghanistan are recognised, including current Service personnel, veterans, civil servants and charity workers.

Recent Conflicts

Since the Second World War, the United Kingdom's Armed Forces have fought in numerous conflicts around the world, from colonial unrest to the fight against terrorism.

The British Armed Forces have undergone major changes since 1945. National Service (compulsory enlistment in the Armed Forces) ended in 1963 following a reduction of Britain's colonial commitments and the development of a nuclear deterrent.

Britain's membership of the United Nations and NATO, together with rapid technological advances, has resulted in a smaller but better-equipped force able to deal with a variety of tasks.

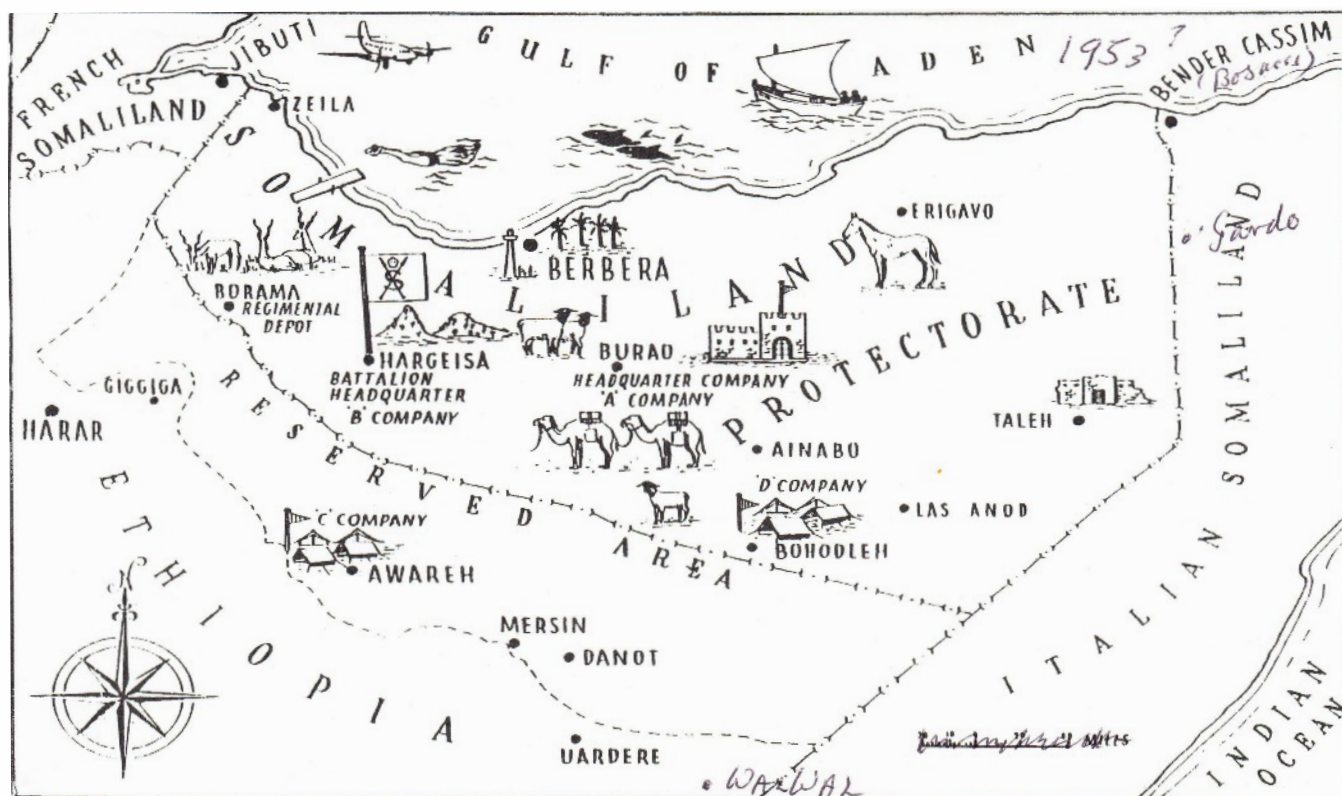
Since the Second World War, the British military has fought in numerous conflicts with only one year (1968) in which a British Service person has not been killed.

This & That

A propos Malcolm's MBE - here is a small snapshot from his early days with the Somaliland Scouts taken from his article in the Journal and Family History of The King's African Rifles and entitled 'Somaliland Scouts - Infantry, but with Cavalry affectations'

'The one vestige of British responsibility retained in the area was the protection of the grazing rights of the clans who migrated there with the flocks for the rainy season and for a while thereafter, until grazing became close to exhaustion. The grazing area was then pronounced 'closed' and the British protected stocks departed northwards, over the protectorate border. Similarly, the Ethiopian protected people withdrew southwards. Inevitably, the order to close the grazing areas was very unpopular, but was essential if permanent damage to the grazing was to be avoided. It was our job to ensure that the 'closure' order was complied with and that access to the water in the wells continued for those entitled to it''.

The political stage was complicated. When the Italians captured Ethiopia in 1935 they had detached the Ogaden Province from Ethiopia and placed it under direct rule from Mogadishu, but by 1948 the Ethiopians had decided that there was oil under the ground in the Ogaden and pressed for the return of the Province to Ethiopia. Not popular as most Somalis of the region had no great desire to pass back under Ethiopian tutelage again.



'we were suddenly involved in a 'camel snatch' a form of collective punishment which the District Commissioner could order in extreme cases. In this instance I was well aware of the incidents that had given rise to the order, as I had been on a patrol in the area of the 'boundary cut' - a strip of bush had been cleared to de-mark the Ethiopian/Somaliland boundary. This happened in about 1933. It was the dispute between Ethiopia and the Italian government of Somaliland that had resulted in the 'Wal Wal Incident' over demarcation in that area that gave Mussolini the excuse to invade Ethiopia in 1935'.

But on this occasion I came on a group of Somalis, I cannot recall their clan, who had suffered in the hands of a raiding party. Among the injured was a woman with a badly broken arm who insisted in demonstrating the abnormal mobility brought about by a fractured upper arm bone. I was horrified and wanted to get her to hospital as quickly as possible but both the men and the soldiers demurred. I gathered that in her damaged state she was worth 50 camels by way of reparation.. The women seemed to accept this philosophically! This was typical of the brutality that existed between the clans at confronted each other in this highly contentious region''