



**"SANDBAG"**  
**WINCANTON AND DISTRICT**  
**ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER**  
Editor Tony Goddard 01963-824193



**NEWS FROM THE BRANCH**

Volume 10 Issue 7

Branch secretary Arthur Pickup 01963-32952

**August  
2013**

**Next branch meeting 16th September at 7 p.m.**

**New branch standard**

It has been decided to purchase a new branch standard which will be totally paid for from the bequest in lieu of flowers at Ray (Ticky) Judd's funeral. We have decided to purchase the highest quality standard in the hope that it will last as long as the existing one which is 53 years !  
Along with the bequest we have also received donations from members of £150 which will also cover a flag pole needed. We will dedicate the new standard during the Remembrance Sunday church service in November and display it our forthcoming branch Annual Dinner.

**Branch Annual Dinner**

We are now taking bookings for the branch Annual Dinner on 4th October at the Olive Bowl, Gillingham. We will be providing transport from Wincanton included in the price of £16 per person. As last year, we will arrange for convenient pick up points for those who wish. The menu is as follows:-

Choice of main course, either

Roast loin of Pork with a leek, Somerset cider & bacon sauce, or Roast Beef (cooked medium) with Yorkshire Pudding or Supreme of Chicken with a Wild Mushroom sauce. All served with roast potatoes and well cooked seasonal vegetables.

Choice of dessert, either

Raspberry cheesecake, or Lemon & Ginger Meringue Roulade or Classic Apple & Cinnamon Pie with Custard or Cheeseboard.

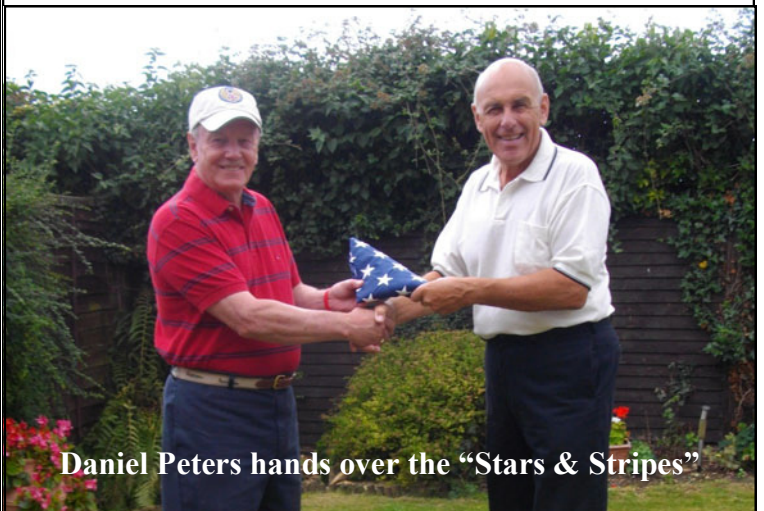
To finish

Coffee & mints

I have arranged to have suitable music played for dancing and relaxing and I will announce the details of the guests of honour next month. Closing date is 21st September.

**Donation of a new American flag**

A representative of the National Museum of the Mighty Eight Army Air Force, Savannah, Georgia was in Wincanton this month to present the Wincanton branch of the Royal British Legion with a new American flag in time for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration next year of the crash of the American Flying Fortress, "Old Faithful". Daniel Peters a veteran of both the United States Army and Air Force was in town to hand over the "Stars and Stripes" to chairman Tony Goddard. Tony visited the museum earlier in the year where he found that "Old Faithful" was commemorated there with a plaque and filled in detail of the crash to Dan. After contact with the Veterans group of which Dan is Vice Commander, it was agreed as a gesture of friendship and comradeship that the American veterans wished to supply the flag and it would be purchased and handed over when Dan was in Europe.



**Daniel Peters hands over the "Stars & Stripes"**

**Seats still available for Poole trip**

Our trip to Poole is on Saturday 24th August and there are still seats available. Please contact me as soon as possible if you wish to come. We will leave the Memorial Hall at 9 a.m. cost £12 (children £6).

## Aden

The Colony of Aden or Aden Colony was a British Crown Colony from 1937 to 1963. It consisted of the port of Aden and its immediate surroundings (an area of 192 km<sup>2</sup> (74 sq mi)). Prior to 1937, Aden had been governed as part of British India (originally as the Aden Settlement under the Bombay Presidency, and then as a "Chief Commissioner's province"). Under the Government of India Act 1935 the territory was detached from British India, and was established as a separate colony of the United Kingdom; this separation took effect on 1 April 1937. On 18 January 1963, the colony was reconstituted as the State of Aden within the new Federation of South Arabia. The federation in turn became the People's Republic of South Yemen on 30 November 1967, marking the end of British rule. The hinterland of the Colony of Aden was separately governed as the Aden Protectorate.

The Aden Emergency was an insurgency against the British Crown forces in the British controlled territories of South Arabia which now form part of the Yemen. Partly inspired by Nasser's pan Arab nationalism, it began on 10 December 1963 with the throwing of a grenade at a gathering of British officials at Aden Airport. A state of emergency was then declared in the British Crown colony of Aden and its hinterland, the Aden Protectorate. The emergency escalated in 1967 and hastened the end of British rule in the territory which had begun in 1839. On 30 November 1967, British forces withdrew and the independent People's Republic of South Yemen was proclaimed. But our member Les Crompton served in Aden prior to the emergency and end of colonial rule and here is his reminiscences.

### **“A” for Aden & Arabia by Les Crompton.**

Serving with “A” Squadron 15th/19th The King’s Royal Hussars in Malaya in 1957, we were informed we would be sent to Aden for operations in Arabia. Only “A” Squadron was to deploy with 113 personnel as the Regiment was due to return to UK in June 1957. Our main vehicles used in Malaya were Daimler Armoured Cars, Saracen Personnel Carriers and Dingo Scout Cars. Only four Scout Car Troops plus two Saracen Command Vehicles were required in Arabia. We changed to Ferret Scout Cars, in which a “crash” course was held in Ipoh. The vehicles had to be shipped from Singapore to Aden and all ranks travelled by air. All personnel and vehicles were established by mid April 1957, 3rd and 4th Troops in the Eastern Protectorate at Riyan and 1st (my own Troop) and 2nd Troop in Khormaksar, Aden.

Our first Operation carried out was the protection of the Dhala Convoy. Starting at midnight from Khormaksar to Dhala: a village and camp approximately 100 miles north of Aden, close to the Yemen border.

Passing through the narrow Arab streets of MA’ALA, Shiek Othman, then tracks through Lahej, Nobat Dakim to Fort Thumier for breakfast halt. Onward through Thumier Wadi Hills and over Khoraiba Pass to finish at Dhala Camp. The Ferret armament consisted of a .300

Browning machine gun in an all round traverse turret. Contact while on convoy was maintained by radio to H.Q. at Seedaseer



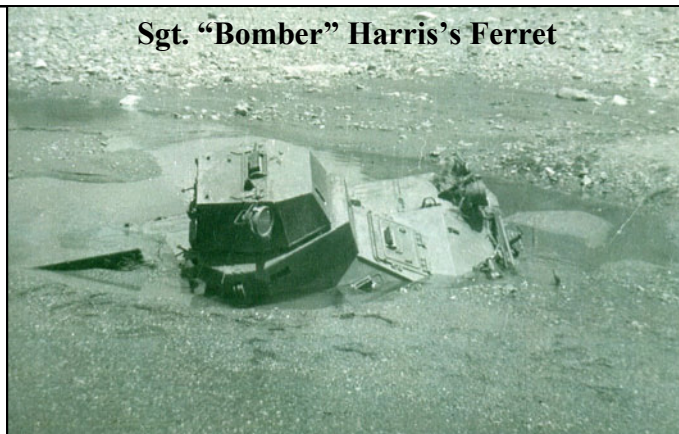
**Les in his Ferret**

Lines Aden. Problems experienced whilst on convoy included being stoned by the Sheikh Othman population, shot at by dissidents on the Wadi sides and at the Khoraiba Pass and also the midnight start ! The convoy was accompanied by pickets of the Cameron Highlanders and Aden Protectorate Levies (local Arab troops) who were in turn protected and supported by firing of our Ferret Brownings. We continued on several Dhala convoys all similar to the one described. North of Fort Thumier the Wadi becomes much narrower, more stonier and rocky.

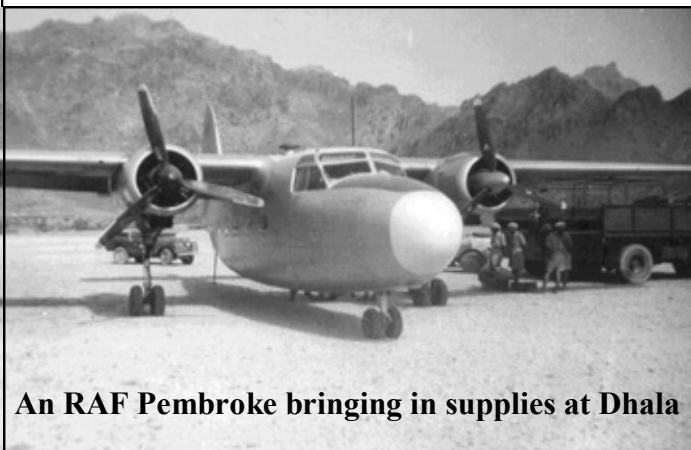
### **Ferret Armoured Cars of the 15th/19th King’s Royal Hussars**



On one of the convoys we experience a flash flood caused by a monsoon. Instructed by radio to make for high ground—all managed to do so apart from Sgt. “Bomber” Harris and Trooper Marshall’s Ferret. A wall of water swept through the Wadi and receded almost as quickly as it had risen. The Ferret was carried many meters along the Wadi bed, buried in sand, rocks and gravel. The Ferret was retrieved by a Scammel recovery vehicle from Aden, fully cleaned, serviced, new radio fitted and returned to Aden.



**Sgt. “Bomber” Harris’s Ferret**



**An RAF Pembroke bringing in supplies at Dhala**

Moving from Khormaksar to Dhala Camp we carried out south bound convoys and protection duties at a small dirt track air strip close to the camp. The strip with hills all around was a difficult landing for the small Pembroke aircraft carrying supplies and ammunition etc., it was however an ideal position for dissidents firing shots at the aircraft. We attempted to cut them off, with very little success, owing to the terrain and the Ferretts driving problems—although they quickly dispersed with a few rounds of Browning fired in their direction. After spending ten months in Arabia “A”

Squadron sailed back to the U.K. on the troopship “Oxfordshire” and I with 1st Troop, rejoined the Regiment in Northern Ireland.

### **Normandy revisited**

It does not seem 6 six years since 10 members of the branch visited the Normandy Beaches and battlefields. Since that time sadly some of those who took part have passed away and it became a very moving and poignant experience to travel over the same area and memories of them came flooding back. The trip in 2007 focused on the three veterans, Paddy Smyth MM, Ron Peet and Fenton Rutter , all of whom actually took part in the D-Day Landings and their words and experiences will stay with me for ever. Naturally the most talked about person is Paddy Smyth who at the time of the visit told us modestly, that “he was ONE of the first



**Graves of Paddy’s comrades**

British tanks to land on Sword Beach”. Since then I have irrefutable proof he was in fact THE first tank on the beach. In 2007 Paddy describe how his friend and tank crew member John Hogg was killed on the beach (too horrific to describe here) and he also told of his friends Nat Turner and Bobby Aird being shot by enemy snipers. All three soldiers are buried side by side in the Bayeux British Cemetery and I placed a wreath and crosses at their grave on Paddy’s behalf. To my great surprise I also found that just 3 rows immediately in front of their graves in the cemetery was the grave of Captain Terrence Cousins of 47

Royal Marine Commando, hero of the assault on the bunker at Port en Bassin (see story in earlier Sandbag) and Jill Carswell’s uncle. I took the opportunity not only to visit the bunker but having found his grave placed crosses at both places for Jill.

As it is the 70th anniversary of D-Day next year I have collected material for an article next year. I felt so privileged and pleased that I could at least pay my respects this year too.



**The bunker at Port en Bassin**

**September trip to Paignton  
21st September**

In an attempt to prolong the beautiful summer we are having, a trip to Paignton for a day at the seaside on **Saturday 21st September** has been planned. The coach will leave the Memorial Hall at **8.30 a.m.** so that we can get a full day. As usual the price is £12 for adults and £6 for children. The booking list is now open.

**Somerset Military Tattoo—14th September**

The first Somerset Military Tattoo is to be held at Taunton Racecourse on Saturday 14 September. The Tattoo will be a fundraising event for military charities. The Somerset Legion marquee will be there with a number of Branch Standards. If any member would like to help out please let me know. As is usual at such events, even though volunteers do run the Legion stand there is lots of free time to see parts of the event and it sounds like a good day out.

For those who wish to buy tickets and spend the day there, the price is £7 for adults and children are free. Gates open at 10.30 a.m. and parking is free. As well as the original Military Wives Choir, there will be military bands and arena events. To buy tickets phone 01392-492650 or [www.somersetmilitarytattoo.com](http://www.somersetmilitarytattoo.com)

**Salute the British Soldier  
30th September**

“Salute The British Soldier” is an evening of music and readings to honour The British Soldier which takes place at Sherborne Abbey on Monday 30th September starting at 7 p.m.

Participants include the Salisbury Cathedral Choir, HMS Heron Volunteer Band, The Pipes & Drums of the Royal Corps of Signals, Kate Adie, Trevor Peacock and Isla St. Clair,

Reserved seats in the nave cost £20, in the Digby Chapel £15 and unreserved seats in the side aisles are £10 each. All proceeds go to the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) The Soldiers Charity and are obtainable by phoning 01392-492650 or online at [www.soldierscharity.org](http://www.soldierscharity.org)

***I have just heard that Dennis Thomas has passed away. Funeral will be at Cucklington Church at 2 p.m. on 29th August. Dennis was at the Para assault on the Merville Battery on D-Day. Full Legion honours will be observed, please attend.***

**The future of coach trips**

The future of coach of trips was discussed at our meeting last month, but nothing conclusive emerged. I did explain that this year due to lesser numbers of people attending the trips the situation could become critical financially. As I keep explaining all these trips must be self financing and the float we started with at the beginning of the year has dropped to one third of that with which we started. This is due to several trips making a big loss and others just barely breaking even. I have discussed the situation with our operator, South West Coaches, who have been very helpful and I will attempt to put together new and interesting trips for next year that are within our budget. I know people enjoy these trips so I will work hard not to discontinue having trips.

**Gloucester trip a great success !**

Unknown to me when I set the date for the Gloucester trip for 20th July was that Gloucester was hosting a major event which included a large food festival and lots of street entertainment and free events. As well as enjoying the atmosphere most members took a river trip too. It was all tremendous fun.

**Gloucester was really “buzzing”**



**Poppy Appeal 2012/13**

Arthur has just received the credit for Gift Aid from RBL HQ of £253. This finalises our branch Poppy Appeal for the year at £12,186, including the £400 raised on Armed Forces Day. Thanks to everyone for a fantastic effort.

**Welcome to another new member Pat Bowler who join the branch during the last month.**

**Gurkha Rifles Tattoo at Hazlegrove is 31st August as shown in Sandbag last month**