



"SANDBAG"

WINCANTON AND DISTRICT ROYAL BRITISH LEGION NEWSLETTER

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NEWS FROM THE BRANCH

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Branch secretary Arthur Pickup 01963-32952

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Next branch meeting **TUESDAY 15th September at 7 p.m. Millers Inn**

AGM 2015

As a direct result of changes to the RBL accounting year the committee have decided to bring forward our branch AGM to the meeting on 19th October at the Memorial Hall at 7 p.m.. The branch accounts now need to be closed off at the end of June each year then audited and presented at the AGM for approval. It is too late this year to make a permanent change but it will be helpful to at least bring the AGM forward by a few weeks. Next year the AGM will be on the 3rd Monday of September replacing our usual branch meeting. Again we have had another good year and we would appreciate your support in attending the AGM. Any new person wishing to be nominated for the committee should contact Arthur, at this stage we are not aware of any of the committee wishing to stand down but if this does occur then I will advise everyone in the September Sandbag magazine of any vacancies.

Star of TV & Radio

As part of the commemorations for VJ Day Pat (Maddie) Bowler was interviewed on



BBC TV Points West about her experiences as a child in a Japanese internment camp. She was also interviewed on the radio and I understand her story will be in the national RBL magazine. You will remember that Pat's story was briefly covered in last months Sandbag. Although Pat must have been apprehensive I am pleased she was able to tell of her very interesting and moving childhood. *Tony*

Annual Dinner

As you already know we have set the date for our Annual Dinner for 9th October and I am very excited that we can return to our old venue of the Memorial Hall as it is not only convenient for all of us but has all the facilities we would like. As I mentioned before our caterers from previous years - who did an astounding job - now have established an outside catering section and they are very familiar with large events, such as weddings, they also have had functions already for clients using the Memorial Hall and are familiar and comfortable using it. This will enable us to go back to a concept we liked before, in that we can have a traditional carvery as the main course, choosing either the same type of meat or selection of all those available and below is a full list of the menu on offer. :-

Topside of Aberdeen Angus Beef with Yorkshire Pudding.
Breast of Turkey with Onion & Sage Stuffing
Loin of Pork with Apple Sauce
All served with roasted potatoes and seasonal vegetables

Desserts (choose one) available are :-

Lemon and Ginger Roulade
Classic Apple Pie and custard/cream
Banoffee Pie
Cheeseboard

Followed by tea or coffee and mints

I would be grateful if you could make a selection as soon as possible as the event does take quite a lot of planning. Start time is 6.30 p.m. for drinks and meal served 7 p.m. Cost this year is £20 each person.



(Lt. Col Lucy Giles)

(Lt. Col. Andrew Speed)

Wincanton RBL at Commandant's Parade Sandhurst 5th August 2015

What a fantastic day we all had on 5th August at Sandhurst, in fact it was a memorable “once in a lifetime experience”. Everything worked like clockwork, right from the start, when as we offloaded from the coach Lucy along with her family and colleague Andrew, were walking across the parking area to greet us. Then straight into the Officer's Mess for morning coffee before the parade. Both Lucy and Andrew escorted us to our seats and Andrew was spot on with his recommendation for the “best seats for the parade” as we had a spectacular view. The parade was excellent and made us so proud of our Army, with their faultless drill and smart turnout. It was nice to see the Adjutant on his horse leading the parade and riding into the college after the parade. The full compliment of cadets of the three Divisions (junior, intermediate and senior) were present

- over 500 cadets. The event we witnessed was the full dress rehearsal for the forthcoming graduation parade known as Sovereign's Parade which takes place a week later. After the parade we all went to the Officer's Mess for a delicious curry lunch and drinks followed by a tour given by Andrew which took in the all the main buildings and the chapel. We were all grateful for Lucy's kind hospitality in inviting us to her house for afternoon tea and refreshments at the end of the day.

Everyone remarked how wonderful the day was and how grateful we were to Lucy for “pulling the stops out !” and Andrew for his fantastic efforts.





The Officer's Mess at New College

The present Royal Military Academy Sandhurst was founded in 1947 with the merger of two institutions: the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.

The first Military Academy had been established in 1720 at Woolwich, a town later absorbed into south-east London, to train cadets for commissions in the Royal Artillery. Known as the "Shop", this academy moved to a permanent site at Woolwich Common in 1806 and was granted royal status in 1841. In 1806, the Military Academy took on the training of Royal Engineers officer cadets and, later, Royal Signals cadets. In 1799, a school for staff officers was

established at High Wycombe, and in 1801 this became the Senior Department of the newly established Royal Military College (RMC), the brainchild of Colonel John Le Marchant. He opened the Junior Department of the College at a large house in West Street in Great Marlow in 1802 to train "Gentleman Cadets" for the infantry and cavalry regiments of the British Army and of the Presidency armies of British India. Coincidentally, 1802 was also the year of foundation of Saint-Cyr in France and of West Point in the United States. In 1812 the Junior Department of the Royal Military College moved from Great Marlow into buildings designed by James Wyatt at Sandhurst. A few years later, the Junior Department was joined at Sandhurst from High Wycombe by the Senior Department, which in 1858 became a separate institution, the Staff College.

On the outbreak of the Second World War, Sandhurst became the home of 161 Infantry Officer Cadet Training Unit (RMC), which moved to Mons Barracks, Aldershot in 1942; for the rest of the war Sandhurst was used as a Royal Armoured Corps Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU).

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst was formed in 1947 on the site of the former Royal Military College from a merger between it and the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich, which trained officers for the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers from 1741 to 1939. Following the ending of National Service in the UK and the closing of the Mons Officer Cadet School in Aldershot (which had trained Short Service Commissioned Officers) in 1972, the RMA became the sole establishment for male initial officer training in the British Army. In 1984, the Women's Officer Training College Bagshot moved to Sandhurst and in 1992 a new Commissioning Course finally unified the training of male, female and foreign cadets.

Our hosts Lt. Col. Lucy Giles Royal Logistics Corps is Commander New College and is in fact the first female Commander of a college in Sandhurst and Lt. Col. Andrew Speed MBE Scots Guards is Commander Old College.

The arduous course cadets must pass takes 44 weeks to complete to enable a commission in the British Army. There are over 70 Overseas Officer Cadets at Sandhurst at any one time. The first commissioning parade of the new RMA Sandhurst took place in 1948 in the presence of His Majesty King George VI and it was he who decreed that henceforth the Parade was to be known as Sovereign's Parade.

The College is undergoing major renovation and an image of the building covered the scaffolding during our visit so I thought we should see a photo (left) of the building in all its glory .



Trip to Oxford 22nd August

Places are available on the branch trip to Oxford on 22nd August cost £12 as usual. We will leave the Memorial Hall at 8.30 a.m. and with a brief stop on the way we should arrive in Oxford just after 11 a.m. I have been told that coaches and tour buses are not allowed into central Oxford because of city congestion and we will be parking in the park and ride area on the edge of the city. Cost of the shuttle is only £2 each but if you happen to have a bus pass bring it with you as the shuttle is completely free for bus pass holders. Many members have said they will take the "hop on hop off" open top bus as there is so much to see in Oxford on a day visit and this would be the most effective way to see everything. I have checked and found that the cheapest internet prices for the bus are adult £13 and seniors £10 (£3 more on the day). If you have not already booked the coach please contact me as soon as possible.

The second "Waterloo tree"

You may be interested to know that the second of the trees grown from chestnuts found at Hougemont Farm on the battlefield of Waterloo will be planted at Wellington College Berkshire on 13th October. The college publicity for the event states that "the Tree Planting ceremony - reminiscent of previous ceremonies in 1901, 1911 and 1915 - at which His Grace the Duke of Wellington and the newly appointed Master of Wellington College, Julian Thomas will preside. An oak sapling from Stratfield Saye, provided by His Grace and a chestnut sapling from Hougemont Farm, provided by Wincanton Royal British Legion will be planted, using a silver trowel with which Queen Victoria planted a tree on Mafeking Day 1901." It is a very exciting occasion and I have been sent an invitation to attend. *Tony*

And September we go to Teignmouth

On 19th September we will be going to Teignmouth, a place we have not been to before. The location is interesting in as much that it is not only within easy access to Torquay and Torbay but it is a very nice town in its own right. We will depart at 8.30 a.m. from the Memorial Hall cost £12.

Colonel Lenny Brown RM

I have just heard that Colonel Lenny Brown RM, who was one of our guests of honour at the Annual Dinner last year has now been promoted to full Colonel. As a Lieutenant Colonel he was Deputy Commander at the Commando Helicopter Force. I am sure like me you will be very pleased to hear this and we congratulate him on his promotion.

September meeting on TUESDAY 15th September

We are continuing with our social meetings at the Millers Inn on 15th September with a short branch affairs meeting at 7 p.m. followed by a social evening at around 7.30 p.m. We will have free use of the Skittle Alley and burgers etc., will be available for purchase at the bar. If the weather is nice we could use the beer garden too.

Donation to Somerset Legion House

A few months ago it was agreed at a branch meeting that we donate £500 to Somerset Legion House at Weston Super Mare. It has been a busy summer for everyone and we have not yet been able to make the presentation of a cheque to them.

Our vice president Steve Lee has agreed to go to Weston to present the donation in the near future. The Legion House purpose is to offer a comfortable break for those recovering from an illness, bereavement or other life affecting event. Somerset Legion House is situated on the sea front of Weston Super Mare with beautiful views over the Bristol Channel to Wales and Exmoor. The break services are available to serving or ex-Service men or women and/or their dependants who are in genuine need of a break.

VJ Day events

As we go to press, the town will be holding events commemorating VJ Day - the actual end of World War Two and the surrender of Japan. I covered this in the last Sandbag and it is pointless to go over them because it is too late. The events are being organised by Dawn Old and we do hope it is a great success as she has put so much effort into it. I will give everyone a follow up next month.