



Royal Navy



British Army



Royal Air Force

## Aden Veterans Association Gloucestershire Branch

Volume 3 2021

### Chairman's Report

I am writing my final report for 2021 just after returning from the National AGM and Reunion in Blackpool. It was an enjoyable long weekend catching up with old friends, and meeting some new ones, especially after Covid restrictions had curtailed so many face-to-face meetings for such a long time. At the AGM we were informed that the vote for the National Chairman will be by postal ballot, in accordance with the Constitution. The papers will be in the November Dhow. My thanks go to Robert Parrant for carrying the Branch Standard into the Gala dinner.

At last, I feel that we, as a Branch, are starting to return to some form of normality. Our Wednesday lunches, thanks to Jean Stublely, are once again an enjoyable occasion to meet up and chat, over good food, in some very pleasant venues. I am certainly looking forward to our final two meals of this year, at the Frocester George and, of course, our Christmas Lunch at Tortworth Court.



Not Forgotten Summer Garden Party

Members of your Branch have attended a range of events. Earthcott Green in June, our AGM in July, the Not Forgotten Summer Garden Party at Gatcombe Park in July and the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the founding of the RBL in Nailsworth in August.

I am looking forward to further commemorative events including the Battle of Britain Remembrance parade, and service, on September 19<sup>th</sup>, Remembrance Day on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Plus, of course, our own 54<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Withdrawal from Aden on 29<sup>th</sup> November. Your Branch will be represented at all of these events which will be held in Cheltenham. The Branch Standard will be carried by Robert Parrant, and our wreaths will be laid at the War Memorial, by a Branch member.

It was good to see Denis Sparrow's books, about Aden, being advertised in the July edition of the Dhow. These books cover the years from 1839 to 1967 and from 1967 to 2021. They detail the military history of Aden, covering all three services. I have certainly enjoyed reading them.

Finally, it is with great sadness we announce the loss of Ian Hone, one of our original members. Per ardua ad Astra.

Rick Rutter

## Branch Secretary's Report

I am sure that all of you have watched the international news with some dismay at the recent events in Afghanistan – the comment “History has a knack of repeating itself” springs to mind! The withdrawal from Aden took place in a situation of political disarray, and during the last few weeks we have witnessed a similar debacle in Afghanistan. The difference between the two events has been the improved communications of the present day; they have only served to remind us of what we felt and experienced more than 50 years ago.



Pandemic humour at its best

Closer to home, we are still coping with the consequences of the pandemic. The current question for veterans is, if and when will we get the booster jab. It is becoming evident that for those who have had two injections, the immunity level does start to drop off a few percent, after about 6 months. So, we will have to use our common sense and take care when making contact with others. The branch activities are still planned to take place in accordance with government recommendations.

Arrangements for the next meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October were completed and a separate instruction has been sent out. I have confirmed with the Cheltenham Mayor's Office that we wish to have the Act of Remembrance on 29<sup>th</sup> November. Both the Lord Lieutenant and the MP for Cheltenham (now promoted to Solicitor General) have been invited to attend.

The exact details of the event together with arrangements for Remembrance Sunday (14<sup>th</sup> November) will not be confirmed by Cheltenham Borough Council in October. I will send out an e-mail to you all when the details are known.

Meanwhile, please keep on your guard, keep well and I look forward to seeing you again.

Michael Compton

## Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to report that, despite the devastating effects that COVID has had on our national way of life, our Branch is in a stronger financial position than we were in October 2019. Whilst expenditure has been minimised, our members have supported the Branch magnificently; at the AGM in July 2021, donations of £290 were received. As a result, our bank balance is now £1,424.89. This places us a very robust position as Branch business returns to normal.

David Gearing

## Branch Social Secretary's Report

By the time you read this, our October Quarterly meeting will have taken place and hopefully you will have had chance to complete the Proforma and secure your attendance at the Christmas luncheon on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> December at Tortworth Court Hotel. About 60 have expressed an interest, including guest invitations to the Grenadier Guards Association, Weston super Mare Breakfast Club, and Royal British Legion.

If you didn't put your name down at the October meeting, but would like to go, the menu choices are on the AVA website, or contact me: [jean.stubley@virginmedia.com](mailto:jean.stubley@virginmedia.com) or telephone: 01452 300878 / 07970 707945.



Tudor Arms, Slimbridge

We had very good attendance for the three 2021 lunches arranged so far. There were 22 at both the Fleet Inn, Twynning and Carpenters Arms, Westrip in June and August respectively and 17 at the Tudor Arms, Slimbridge.

Our next meal is on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November at The George Inn, Peter's Street, Frocester, Stonehouse GL10 3TQ at 12 for 12.30pm. £10 for 2 courses & £15 for 3 courses.

Thank you all for the support you have given me in the past and I look forward to seeing you at future venues.

Jean Stubley

## Editor's Report

This newsletter, is a little shorter than the norm. However, I believe we are slowly but surely getting back to the Norm.

As Rick said earlier, Blackpool was good fun, never saw the lights!! and even a little Covid scare could not touch our Gloucestershire boys, we all came through A1 Z1.

A reminder was read out at the National AGM, concerning the current members renewal fees. Evidently some members have not updated their membership subscription following the increase approved at the National AGM in 2019.

Full membership is currently £15 per annum, with Associate members staying at £5.

Evidently the number of full members now stands at 857. Some full members, from all branches, have not amended their standing orders, or are still paying the old fee of £10 by cheque. This is causing concern for the Membership secretary, not to mention the National Treasurer.

Please may I respectfully request you check that you are paying the correct membership fee.

Jean has already mentioned Christmas lunch and the next big event to follow is:

## WEYMOUTH 2022

The West Dorset Branch are now taking bookings for the Weymouth Veterans weekend, 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> June. The venue is the Hotel Rembrandt, a three-star hotel not far from the seafront. The rate is £64 per person per night, the Gala Dinner on Saturday evening costs £35 pp. The latest date for booking is April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022. Please do not pay the Hotel direct. Further details can be provided by Rick Rutter or Chris Blick.

## Veterans NHS Mental Health Services

Mental health problems are common and affect anyone, including veterans and their families. Although it is completely normal to experience anxiety or depression after traumatic events, this can be tough to deal with. Symptoms or problems coping can happen at any time, including a few years after leaving the armed forces. Some people delay getting help for a number of reasons, such as trying to cope alone, fear of criticism, embarrassment, or feeling that the NHS will not understand.

## Op Courage, The veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service.

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health or wellbeing, expert help is available from Op Courage, the Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service.

It does not matter if you are due to leave the armed forces, just left the armed forces or left many years ago., Op Courage are here to help and understand the courage it takes to speak to someone.

When you contact Op Courage, you will talk to people who:

- understand the armed forces and military life.
- are either from the armed forces community or highly experienced in working with serving personnel, reservists, veterans and their families.
- will work with you to make sure you get the right type of specialist care, support and treatment.

For information on Unit specific help: contact Cobseo. Website: [www.Cobseo.org.uk](http://www.Cobseo.org.uk)

## Contacts

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## Recent photographs from around the branch



Branch stand at Nailsworth for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RBL

Gloucestershire and West Dorset standards at the National reunion and AGM



Battle of Britain Remembrance Service



Tudor Arms Lunch



## Humour from the Branch Vice-Chairman

