



# *The Bulldog Bulletin*

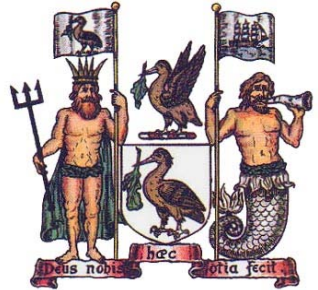


**Patron: Her Majesty The Queen**

**President: Priya Guha British Consul General**



BRISTOL



LIVERPOOL



MANCHESTER



COVENTRY



FINSBURY

**The Royal British Legion**

**California Branch No 1**

**2616 Snowy Egret Way  
Elk Grove, CA 95757**



STOKE-ON-TRENT

**E-Mail Address  
Web Page**

**[Sweetman@britishlegionusa.com](mailto:Sweetman@britishlegionusa.com)  
<http://www.britishlegionusa.com>**

## **RBL Chairman's March report,**



The next meeting will be an Executive meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup>. March, this will be with the War Memorial Commission Officers, and will be held at 6pm in Room 104 of the War Memorial Veterans Building. We will be discussing the Move Out and Relocation of all the Veteran's Groups. If any of our members would like to attend this meeting, they are more than welcome.

This will replace the regular meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

Right: Pictured here as a 14-year-old on the boys' training ship "Mercury", Claude Choules was the last surviving combat veteran of the First World War. He died in May 2011, aged 110.



British-born Claude Choules, 110, believed to be the last World War One combat veteran, died in his sleep in an Australian nursing home overnight, his family said on Thursday. "He always said that the old men make the decisions that send the young men into war," said his son Adrian Choules. "He used to say, if it was the other way around, and the old... were off fighting, then there would never be any wars," Adrian Choules told local media. Choules was born in 1901 and signed up with the British Navy for the Great War at just 15 years of age. After the war, he moved to Perth and joined the Australian Navy, working as a demolition officer at the Fremantle Harbour during World War II, making him the last veteran who served in both World Wars. The only other surviving World War I veteran is believed to be Britain's Florence Green, also 110, who served with the Royal Air Force in a non-combat role.

In 2009, Choules published a book about his life, The "Last of the Last".

(Reporting by [Michael Perry](#), editing by Miral Fahmy)

## **Benny hill wishing well**

**Click on the link below**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCYpk0ivqjo>

## **Irish Government confirms pardon for Irish deserters who fought Hitler**



**Minister for Justice Alan Shatter has confirmed that the 5,000 troops will be officially pardoned** by the State after fighting for the Allies.

He has also criticised the war-time government's attitude towards German Jews. Campaigners are now hopeful that the Irish parliament will issue an apology to the men as well, many of whom were blacklisted and denied state jobs when they returned home.

Attorney General Maire Whelan is to advise Minister Shatter on how to proceed with the pardon.

The Fine Gael deputy has told the [Irish Times](#) that he regards the dishonourable discharge of soldiers who left to fight for the Allies as 'untenable'.

Shatter also acknowledged that the soldiers who died have been honored in Ireland for the past decade for their War efforts despite their lack of state recognition.

He said: "Many who fought in British uniforms during that war returned to Ireland. For too many years, their contribution in preserving European and Irish democracy was ignored.

"Some of those include members of our Defence Forces who left this island during that time to fight for freedom and who were subsequently dishonourably discharged from the Defence Forces."

Minister Shatter told the Irish Times that is now 'appropriate' to review their treatment while also acknowledging that those who served in the Defence Forces throughout that time performed a crucial national duty.

He added: "It is untenable that we commemorate those who died whilst continuing to ignore the manner in which our State treated the living, in the period immediately after World War II, who returned to our State having fought for freedom and democracy."

A total of 4,983 Irish soldiers deserted from the Defence Forces to join the Allied armies during the Second World War.

Many of those who returned home were refused military pensions and were debarred from a range of State employment on the basis of an Emergency Powers Order passed by the Irish parliament in 1945.

Northern Ireland's Assembly, including Sinn Fein members, voted on Monday to back the campaign for pardons.

Speaking at the opening of The Shoah in Europe exhibition in Dublin, Shatter also said: "It is of vital importance that this and future generations remember and learn from the horrors of the past.

"In the 1930s practically all visa requests from German Jews were refused by the Irish authorities.

"This position was maintained from 1939 to 1945 and we should no longer be in denial that, in the context of the Holocaust, Irish neutrality was a principle of moral bankruptcy. "This moral bankruptcy was compounded by the then Irish government who, after the war, only allowed an indefensibly small number who survived the concentration camps to settle permanently in Ireland and also by the visit of President de Valera to then German ambassador Edouard Hempel in 1945 to express his condolences on the death of Hitler.

Read more:

<http://www.irishcentral.com/news/Shatter-confirms-Second-World-War-soldiers-to-be-officially-pardoned-by-Irish-state-138031383.html#ixzz1I9gN5iqL>

[www.forthesakeofexample.com](http://www.forthesakeofexample.com)



## **Humiliating defeat in Singapore 70 years ago forced Australia to reassess its place in the world.**

Japanese soldiers cycled into the ambush, their rifles resting on handlebars. Australians hidden in well protected positions along the road opened fire with machineguns, rifles and grenades, and detonated explosives on a wooden bridge, sending timber, bicycles and bodies through the air.

But the Japanese "bicycle infantry" kept coming, taking devastating casualties as row after row of men were mowed down, according to the official version of what became known as the battle of Gemas on the Malayan (now Malaysian) peninsula. During two days of fierce fighting the Australians killed or wounded more than 1000 Japanese while taking minimal casualties, according to official records.



But today's 70th anniversary of the fall of Singapore has reignited controversy about one of the darkest periods in Australia's history, which destroyed the vestiges of its innocence as an outpost of the British empire and forced a shaken nation to reassess its place in the world.

Advertisement: Story continues below

The historian Dr Peter Stanley says there are several misconceptions about the Allied attempts to repel the Japanese during their nine-week, 1000-kilometre advance from Thailand to Singapore between December 1941 and February 1942, including the battle of Gemas.

Stanley says the Australian ambush at Gemas on January 14 and 15, which stopped the Japanese only briefly, forms part of the mystique surrounding the fighting and subsequent capitulation of the entire Eighth Division, which shocked Australians at home.

"Researchers looking at the campaign say there could not possibly have been 1000 Japanese casualties," says Stanley, head of the centre for historical research at the National Museum of Australia. "The battle of Gemas has been exaggerated."

Stanley, who was principal historian at the Australian War Memorial for 20 years, says the full story of Australia's troop involvement in Singapore has not been told.

"Stories of Australian deserters circulate but no one has nailed down the numbers. But there is evidence that up to a third of the Australian force became stragglers [deserters]," Stanley says. "Australians will probably continue to be sensitive about it until well after the last veterans are dead and possibly even after their children are dead."

[Read more just click on the link below](#)

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/the-day-the-empire-died-in-shame-20120214-1t462.html#ixzz1mfOHrjdC>

## Laurel and Hardy

**Laurel and Hardy** were one of the most popular and critically acclaimed comedy double acts of the early Classical Hollywood era of American cinema. Composed of thin Englishman (1890–1965) and heavy American [Oliver Hardy](#) (1892–1957) they became well known during the late 1920s to the mid-1940s for their slapstick comedy, with Laurel playing the clumsy and childlike friend of the pompous Hardy.<sup>[1]</sup> They made over 100 films together, initially two-reelers (short films) before expanding into feature length films in the 1930s. Their films include *Sons of the Desert* (1933), the Academy Award winning short film *The Music Box* (1932), *Babes in Toyland* (1934), and *Way Out West* (1937). Hardy's catchphrase "Well, here's another nice mess you've gotten me into!" is still widely recognized.



Prior to the double act both were established actors with Laurel appearing in over 50 films and Hardy in over 250 films. Although the two comedians first worked together on the film *The Lucky Dog* (1921), this was a chance pairing and it was not until 1926, when both separately signed contracts with the Hal Roach film studio, that they began appearing in movie shorts together.<sup>[2]</sup> Laurel and Hardy officially became a team the following year in the silent short film *Putting Pants on Philip* (1927). The pair remained with the Roach studio until 1940, then appeared in eight "B" comedies for 20th Century Fox and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer from 1941 to 1945.<sup>[3]</sup> After finishing their movie commitments at the end of 1944, they concentrated on stage shows, embarking on a music hall tour of England, Ireland, and Scotland.<sup>[3]</sup> In 1950 they made their last film, a French/Italian co-production called *Atoll K*, before retiring from the screen. In total they appeared together in 107 films. They starred in 40 short sound films, 32 short silent films and 23 full-length feature films, and made 12 guest or cameo appearances, including the recently discovered *Galaxy of Stars* promotional film (1936).

A common comedy routine was a tit-for-tat fight. Their silent film *Big Business* (1929), which includes one of these routines, was added to the Library of Congress as a national treasure in 1992. Notable Laurel traits included crying like a baby while being berated and scratching his hair when in shock. On December 1, 1954, the team made their only American television appearance, surprised by Ralph Edwards on his live NBC-TV program, [This Is Your Life](#).

The works of Laurel and Hardy have been re-released in numerous theatrical reissues, television revivals, 16mm and 8mm home movies, feature-film compilations, and home video since the 1930s. They were voted the seventh greatest comedy act in a 2005 UK poll by fellow comedians. The duo's signature tune, known variously as "The Cuckoo Song", "Ku-Ku", or "The Dance of the Cuckoos", played on the opening credits of their films. The official Laurel and Hardy appreciation society is known as The Sons of the Desert, after a fraternal society in their film of the same name.

Arthur Stanley Jefferson ( **Stan Laurel** ) was born in his grandparents' house on 16 June 1890 at 3 Argyle Street, Ulverston, Lancashire

Click below

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3cvUuRQtSc>



[Stan Laurel](#)

## **Surprise ending, so stay to the end.**

Guess this is a factual story - that most of us did not know. History is rarely 'over'.

Sit back and strap on your parachute harness ..... it is the Summer of 1940 over the skies of England. Listen to the perfect 'purr' of the Rolls Royce Merlin ...

Click on the link below - **full screen, sound up:**

### **The German**

---

#### **Subject: Airplane crash**

As an airplane is about to crash, a female passenger jumps up frantically and announces, "If I'm going to die, I want to die feeling like a woman."

She removes all her clothing and asks, "Is there someone on this plane who is man enough to make me feel like a woman?"

A Irish man stands up, removes his shirt and says, "Here, iron this!"

---

**British film director Sir Ridley Scott** launched a global film making contest for aspiring directors.

**It's titled "Tell It Your Way". There were over 600 entries.**

**The film could be no longer than three minutes, contain only 6 lines of narrative & be a compelling story.  
The winner was "Porcelain Unicorn" from American director Keegan Wilcox.**

**It's a story of the lifetimes of two people who are totally opposite, yet, very much the same - all told in less than 3 minutes.**

**You'll see why it won.**

Click here: Porcelain Unicorn

**Full screen**

[" target=" blank"<http://www.porcelainunicorn.com/>](http://www.porcelainunicorn.com/)

LONDON — Florence Green never saw the front line. Her war was spent serving food, not dodging bullets.

But Green, who has died at age 110, was the last known surviving veteran of World War I. She was serving with the Women's Royal Air Force as a waitress at an air base in eastern England when the guns fell silent on Nov. 11, 1918.



It was not until 2010 that she was officially recognized as a veteran after a researcher found her service record in Britain's National Archives.

Green died Saturday at the Briar House Care Home in King's Lynn, eastern England, two weeks before her 111th birthday, the home said. Retired Air Vice-Marshall Peter Dye, director-general of the RAF Museum, said it was fitting that the last survivor of the first global war was someone who had served on the home front.

"In a way, that the last veteran should be a lady and someone who served on the home front is something that reminds me that warfare is not confined to the trenches," Dye said.

"It reminds us of the Great War, and all warfare since then has been something that involved everyone. It's a collective experience ... Sadly, whether you are in New York, in London, or in Kandahar, warfare touches all of our lives."

She was born Florence Beatrice Patterson in London on Feb. 19, 1901, and joined the newly formed Women's Royal Air Force in September 1918 at the age of 17.

The service trained women to work as mechanics, drivers and in other jobs to free men for front-line duty. Green went to work as a steward in the officers' mess, first at the Narborough airdrome and then at RAF Marham in eastern England, and was serving there when the war ended.

Decades later, Green remembered her wartime service with affection.

"I met dozens of pilots and would go on dates," she said in an interview in 2008. "I had the opportunity to go up in one of the planes but I was scared of flying. I would work every hour God sent. But I had dozens of friends on the base and we had a great deal of fun in our spare time. In many ways, I had the time of my life."

After the war she stayed in the area, raising three children with her husband Walter Green. Once her service record was rediscovered, the RAF embraced the centenarian veteran, marking her 110th birthday in February 2011 with a cake.

Asked what it was like to be 110, Green said "It's not much different to being 109." She praised the officers she had served during the war as perfect gentlemen.

"It was very pleasant and they were lovely," she said. "Not a bit of bother. They kept us on our toes and there was no slacking."

A delegation from the air base had been due to visit Green on Feb. 19 to celebrate her 111th birthday. "When we heard the news there was a palpable silence, because we all hoped she would make it," said Squadron Leader Paula Willmot.

RAF Marham's station commander, Group Captain David Cooper, said Green "will be sorely missed and our thoughts are now with her friends and family."

World War I — "the war to end all wars" — killed about 20 million people in four years of fighting between the Allied powers — including Britain, France and the United States — and Germany and its allies.

The last known soldier to have fought in the brutal trench warfare that has become the enduring image of the conflict was Britain's Harry Patch, who died in 2009 aged 111. The last American veteran of the conflict was Frank Buckles of Charles Town, West Virginia, who drove ambulances in France for the U.S. Army. He died in February 2011. The war's last known combatant, Royal Navy veteran Claude Choules, died in Australia in May.

There are no known French or German veterans of the war left alive. After Choules' death, Green became the war's last known surviving service member, according to the Order of the First World War, a U.S.-based group that tracks veterans.

Andrew Holmes of the Gerontology Research Group, the researcher who found Green's service record, also said she was the last known survivor of the conflict — and the sixth oldest person in Britain.

Green's husband died in 1970. She is survived by two daughters, a son and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The date of her funeral was not immediately known, but Willmot said air force personnel would attend, and the RAF Association would provide a bugler and a Union Jack to drape on the coffin

"It will be a real send-off for her," Willmot said.

---

### Military Humor

Boudreaux, the smoothest-talking Cajun in the Louisiana National Guard, got called up to active duty. Boudreaux's first assignment was in a military induction center. Because he was a good talker, they assigned him the duty of advising new recruits about government benefits, especially the GI insurance to which they were entitled.

The officer in charge soon noticed that Boudreaux was getting a 99% sign-up rate for the more expensive supplemental form of GI insurance. This was remarkable, because it cost these low-income recruits \$30.00 per month for the higher coverage, compared to what the government was already providing at no charge. The officer decided he'd sit in the back of the room at the next briefing and observe Boudreaux's sales pitch.

Boudreaux stood up before the latest group of inductees and said, "If you has da normal GI insurans an' you goes to Afghanistan an' gets youself killed, da government' pays you beneficiary \$20,000. If you take s out da supplemental insurans, which cost you only t'irty dollars a mons, den da government' gots ta pay you beneficiary \$400,000! "Now," Boudreaux concluded, "which bunch you tink dey gonna send ta Afghanistan first?"

---

My wife and I walked past a swanky new restaurant last night.

"Did you smell that food?" she asked. "Incredible!"

Being the nice guy I am, I thought, "What the heck, I'll treat her!"

So we walked past it again.

