



The Bulldog Bulletin

THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

President: Priya Guha British Consul General

**The Newsletter of The Royal British Legion
California Branch No 1**

March 2013



Bath



Aberdeen



Cardiff



Bristol



Cambridge

The Royal British Legion

California Branch No 1

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Coventry

RBL Chairman's March report,



For those members who are finding it difficult receiving the Legion Magazine from London, I thought it may be a useful link.



<http://www.legion-magazine.co.uk/>

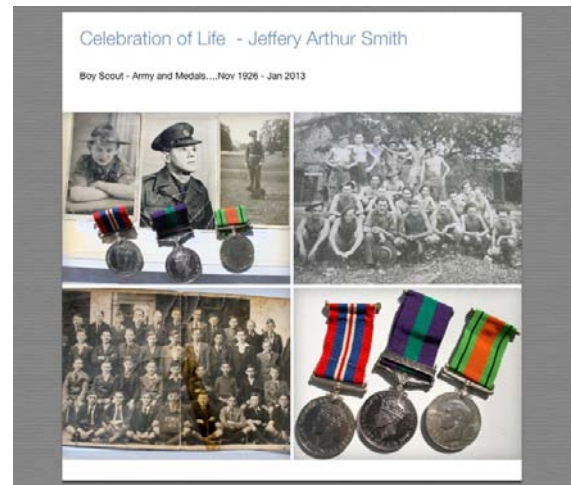


It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing of one of our longtime members **Jeffery Smith**, who passed away after a long illness.

Jeff and his wife Joan were very active members for many years in the Legion up until the time of his illness.

Pam and I attended a Celebration of his life on Saturday February 23rd. at the home of his son Stuart in San Jose.

There were also two very nice letters from British Legion members Edward Ward and Dr. John Lyon and his wife Kurley, these were read out by Pamela Sweetman, and there were many other tributes to Jeff.



As we said before **the War Memorial Building** will be closing down for renovations and will be closed for about two years. We have arranged to have some meetings at the San Rafael Yacht Club.

The next meeting will be **April 16th** and this will be at 6:00 pm at the San Rafael Yacht Club
200 Yacht Club Drive San Rafael Ca. 94901

This really is quite a story.

**This is quite a story about ‘another generation’ which will be missed for all time, and the term ‘till death do us part’ is not always applicable.
What a gentle soul.**

Click below

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/8TT1XFS1LA0>

Zonderwater P.O.W. Camp

In February, 1941, Italian prisoners-of-war began arriving in South Africa where the Zonderwater Camp had been established in the Transvaal, twenty-three miles from Pretoria.

These prisoners were captured during the Somaliland and Ethiopian campaigns.

Thousands more were brought in from the campaigns in Egypt, Libya and Tripolitania during the years up till 1943. Around 9,000 of these prisoners were illiterate and among the greatest and most lasting achievements at Zonderwater were that before the camp closed in February, 1947, all had learned to read and write their mother tongue during their six years confinement.

Some 5,000 learned a trade before returning home and another 4,000 were allowed to work outside the camp on neighbouring farms. A symphony orchestra of 86 musicians was formed and a brass band of 65 instrumentalists was welded together from the prisoners. Fifteen schools were established teaching a variety of subjects.

At its peak, on December 31, 1941, there were 63,000 prisoners in the camp. A total of 233 prisoners died from illness and 76 lost their lives through accidents.

What was done at Zonderwater represents a great achievement in the field of human relations in the treatment of prisoners-of-war. Their efforts were recognized by the post-war Italian Government when the Camp Commandant, Colonel Hendrik Prinsloo and three of his officers were invested with the 'Order of the Star of Italy'. Colonel Prinsloo was further recognized by the award of the 'Order of Good Merit' by His Holiness, the Pope.



Eagle Squadron

Many American pilots served in the Royal Air Force and in order to circumvent the US Neutrality Act they assumed Canadian or South African nationality. They formed the Eagle Squadrons, approved by the British Air Ministry in September, 1940, and operated within the RAF Fighter Command. The first Eagle Squadron was No. 71 Squadron, formed with Hurricanes at RAF Station, Kirton-in-Lindsay, in Lincolnshire. The ultimate total of US pilots thus serving numbered 243 with additional squadrons Nos. 121 and 133 operating from Kirton-in-Lindsay and Coltishall respectively. On September 29, 1942, airmen of the three Eagle Squadrons of the RAF were transferred into the US 8th Air Force the first contingent of which arrived in England on May 12, 1942. Long before the USA entered the war, American volunteer pilots were already assisting the Chinese Nationalists in their war against the Japanese. Known as the 'Flying Tigers' they were led by Colonel (later General) Claire Chennault. Flying the P-40 fighter plane their insignia was the Shark's Mouth painted on the nose.



Felicity Edwards was 17 when war broke out in 1939. She worked for the Milk Marketing Board and lived with her family in Balham, London throughout The Blitz. On the day of the Balham Bombing, Felicity remembers sitting with her mother in the kitchen, listening to the noise from the waves of planes and anti-aircraft fire when suddenly the whole house felt as though it had been lifted up. They both knew then that something really powerful had gone off close by. A bomb had fallen in the High Road and then through the roof of the northbound line of the Underground, and on to the line. The explosion punctured sewage, water and gas pipes, so these were all affected in the Balham area. The power was off in the Tube station which led to general panic and then a stampede as people fought to get up the escalator and out of the station. Ironically no-one was directly killed by the bomb, but people were trampled and killed as they tried to escape from the Station. Walking to Balham High Road the next day Felicity could see the huge crater left after the explosion with a double-decker red London bus stuck in it. Apparently the bus had driven into it by accident late at night in the blackout, got stuck and was unable to be got out again.



[Click the link Below](#)

<http://ww2today.com/14th-october-1940-disaster-at-balham-tube-station>

Poles Escape

On September 17, 1939, the Soviet Union invaded the eastern part of Poland while Polish forces were fully engaged against the German onslaught in the West.

After the fall of Poland, remnants of the Polish Army (over 70,000 men) those not taken prisoner by the Soviets, made their way through Romania and Hungary to France where they regrouped as the Polish 1st Division under General Duch.

When Germany invaded that country, around 24,300 of these Polish soldiers escaped from France and finally to Britain and reformed in Scotland as the 1st Polish Army Corps. It was while in Scotland, in 1941, that Polish signals **officer, Lt. Jozef Kozacki, designed the first practical electronic mine-detector called the Mine Detector Polish Mark 1.**



It was soon mass-produced and 500 were issued to the British Army in time for use prior to the Battle of El Alamein in October, 1942. The all Polish RAF 303 Fighter Squadron began operations in Britain in 1940. At the end of the war the squadron was credited with 126 'kills' the highest score in Fighter Command. (Of the 17,000 Polish airmen who served in the RAF, 1,973 gave their lives.)

P.O.W. Escape attempt from Britain

During the war, no German prisoner of war escaped from Britain. Many believe that Franz von Werra was the most notable escapee but von Werra made his escape in Canada, where he was sent as a P.O.W.. (In Canada there were twenty-one Prisoner-Of-War camps set up during World War II.)

The most audacious attempt was made by Lt. Heinz Schnabel and Oblt. Harry Wappler on November 24, 1941. The two Luftwaffe officers were prisoners in Camp No.15 near Penrith, Northumbria (formally the Shap Wells Hotel). Forging papers that identified them as two Dutch officers serving in the RAF, they made their way to the RAF airfield at Kingstown near Carlisle. Without difficulty they entered the station and with the help of a ground mechanic started the engine of a Miles Magister, of which there were fifty parked around the airfield. Taking off, they headed for the sea and Holland, a distance of some 365 miles. Over the North Sea they realized they could not make it (the maximum range of a Magister was 367 miles on full tanks). Rather reluctantly they decided to turn back and landed in a field about five miles north of Great Yarmouth. Back at Camp No. 15 again, the two daring escapees were sentenced to 28 days solitary confinement.

Operation Chariot, the name given to the raid by British forces on St Nazaire and specifically its huge dry dock, was one of the most daring, courageous episodes of World War II. Out of 611 Commandos who entered the Saint-Nazaire harbour, around only 200 succeeded in landing at the docks. All but 27 were either killed or captured, 22 escaped back to Britain in motor Torpedo Boats and five escaped to the Spanish border. Five Victoria Crosses were awarded to men involved, in what has become known as the greatest raid of all.

Germany was gaining the upper hand in the battle for control of the Atlantic and the new fleet of large German warships spearheaded by The Tirpitz, was causing concern within British ranks. Only the Normandie Dock at St Nazaire was capable of housing the huge warship if it needed repairs and thus an attack on the St Nazaire harbour would force such ships back to Germany thereby hampering their war effort. In addition, a new German submarine base had been built within the harbour.

HMS Campbeltown, the obsolete destroyer that was used for the St Nazaire raid

The ships left Falmouth on the 26th March 1942. The operation would rely heavily on surprise, with the obsolete HMS Campbeltown used and disguised for the purpose. She had been fitted with explosive charges that would detonate upon impact with the dry dock gate. Thanks to the disguise that included relaying German morse code to the enemy, enough time had been bought to allow the Campbeltown, who came under intense fire as she approached the harbour, to break through the German defences and strike the dry dock at over 20 knots.

Despite the heavy casualties suffered by the British raiders, the St. Nazaire raid was judged to be highly successful with the dock severely damaged and remaining unusable until 1947. A fitting memorial now exists on the Prince of Wales Pier in Falmouth and was unveiled by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall on 11 July 2008.



The Victoria Cross awards



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- 1) Lieutenant - Commander S.H Beattie
VC, RN Campbeltown [\(BIOGRAPHY\)](#)
- 2) Sergeant T.F (Tommy) Durrant
VC, 1 Commando
- 3) Lieutenant - Colonel A.C (Charles) Newman VC,
2 Commando
- 4) Commander R.E.D Ryder
VC, RN, MGB 314 [\(BIOGRAPHY\)](#)
- 5) Able Seaman W.A (Bill) Savage
VC, MGB 314 [\(BIOGRAPHY\)](#)

AT IMBER

The area around Imber on the Salisbury Plain in England, comprising of around 91,000 acres, is the traditional training ground for the British Army. On April 13, 1942, during a demonstration of fire-power from a squadron of Hurricanes, the pilot of the 6th plane to make the attack inadvertently fired into the crowd of invited military spectators. He had mistaken the spectators for the rows of dummy soldiers placed on the ground as if in marching order.

The demonstration was immediately cancelled and all aircraft ordered to return to base. Fifteen minutes later some thirty military and civilian ambulances arrived to convey the dead and injured to hospitals. Twenty five officers and men were killed and seventy one injured. The Hurricane pilot, just approaching his 21st birthday, was found guilty of an error of judgement by the Court of Inquiry. (On June 28, 1942, seventy-six days after the tragic incident, he was shot down and reported missing in a sortie over Cherbourg.)

LORD HAW HAW

Born in New York of an Irish father and an English mother, William Joyce lived in England from 1921. In 1933 he joined the British Union of Fascists led by Sir Oswald Mosley. Joyce made no effort to hide his admiration for Adolf Hitler and attracted by Hitler's ideology he and his wife Margaret moved to Germany in 1939 and began broadcasting Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda from a Berlin radio station in Charlottenburg. They lived in an apartment at 29, Kastanienalle, near the radio station. British troops dubbed him Lord Haw Haw after a statement by Professor Arthur Lloyd James of London University, an authority on English language pronunciation, who said that he thought some BBC announcers were too "haw, haw" in their diction. His broadcasts later from the Hamburg studios were listened to by millions in the UK. On September 1, 1944, Joyce was awarded the German War Cross of Merit by Dr Werner Naumann on behalf of Hitler whom the Joyces never met face to face.

William Joyce was arrested on the Danish border and charged with high treason. Convicted at the Old Bailey in London he was hanged in Wandsworth Prison on January 3, 1946 and buried in an unmarked grave. His wife, Margaret, was never convicted and settled in Hamburg until 1962 then moved to London where she died an alcoholic in 1972 aged 60. Joyce's eldest daughter, Heather, finally secured permission from the Home Office to have her father's remains exhumed and flown to Ireland for burial in the New Cemetery at Bohermere Road in Galway.





Earl and Bubba were quietly sitting in a boat fishing, Chewing tobacco and drinking beer when suddenly Bubba says, "Think I'm gonna divorce the wife - she Ain't spoke to me in over 2 months."

Earl spits overboard, takes a long, slow sip of beer and says,
"Better think it over ...women like that are hard to find."

YOU WILL NEVER SEE THIS ON NORTH AMERICAN TV

Click on the link below:

Kilt Roulette

This is the Norwegian Royal Guard Regiment (equivalent to the British and Canadian Guards regiments). These guys give the USMC Band and Honor Guard and the Army's 1 BN 3d Infantry (The Old Guard) a run for their money. It is interesting how a cheesy Hollywood theme (from "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly") can sound impressive when played by an elite military band.

Those are US made Garand M-1 rifles (WWII), and they are heavy weapons

(9 POUNDS EACH)... also, known for its balance!!

**When that one fellow goes on his own - YOU'VE NEVER SEEN A RIFLE
SPUN THAT FAST!**

<http://sorisomail.com/email/16993/exibicao-de-banda-militar--um-espectaculo-imperdivel.html> <<http://sorisomail.com/email/16993/exibicao-de-banda-militar--um-espectaculo-imperdivel.html>>

Wartime memorial to Britain's worst maritime disaster unveiled

The Lancastria sunk off the coast of France in less than 20 minutes.© STV

Victims of the worst disaster in British maritime history more than 71 years ago were honoured on Saturday as a memorial was unveiled.



The Cunard liner Lancastria, which was built on the River Clyde, was attacked by a German bomber on June 17, 1940, receiving three direct hits.

It sunk off the coast of France in less than 20 minutes, taking at least 4000 people with it, making it the largest single loss of life for British forces throughout the whole of the Second World War.

First Minister Alex Salmond unveiled the memorial in Clydebank, near the site of the former William Beardmore and Sons shipyard where the Lancastria was constructed.

Mr. Salmond declared it a place of pilgrimage for people to remember the victims and survivors of the disaster.

He added: "With the unveiling of this beautiful memorial, we will acknowledge it has been a long journey but finally the victims and the survivors of that terrible day are recognised."

The memorial is a bronze sculpture, set on a granite block with a commemorative text, and was created by Fife artist Marion Smith. The bronze represents the early steel sheet construction of the Lancastria.

Fiona Symon, vice chairperson of the Lancastria Association of Scotland, said: "For the last six years we have been determined to achieve the right and proper acknowledgement for the thousands of men who died, including my father, Andrew T Richardson, when the Lancastria was sunk off the coast of St Nazaire 70 years ago.

"Today's ceremony gives the Association a sense of great satisfaction and fulfils the hope of a lifetime for many of us. Now, for all time, there is a major memorial in Scotland to remember and honour, both those who died, and the survivors who had to live with the lasting memories." Jacqueline Tanner, 73, from Worcester, who is the youngest known survivor of the disaster, attended the unveiling. She was aged just two when the ship sank, and her parents are said to have held her up out of the water for over two hours before they were rescued.

It is claimed that the bombing of the ship was "buried" by the government at the time due to the low morale of the country during the war, and this is said to be the reason why it has taken so long to have a memorial put in place.

Mark Hirst, whose grandfather Walter Hirst, from Dundee, survived the disaster when he was 25, is the founder of the Lancastria Association and secured the site for the memorial in the ground of the Golden Jubilee Hospital.

Mr Hirst, 42, from Jedburgh in the Borders, said: "The memorial to the victims of the Lancastria is a fitting and lasting tribute to the thousands who died in what remains Britain's worst ever maritime disaster.

"The unveiling of this memorial brings the story full circle and I am certain it will be a place of pilgrimage and remembrance in the years to come."