



The Bulldog Bulletin



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

President: Priya Guha British Consul General

The Newsletter of The Royal British Legion
California Branch No 1

December 2012



West Glamorgan Coat
of Arms



Somerset Council
coat of Arms



North Hamptonshire
Coat of Arms



Norwich Coat of Arms



Oxfordshire
Coat of Arms



Norfolk Coat of Arms

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Merry Christmas

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that was involved in the arranging of the Festival of Remembrance, without your support and help this would never be possible.

Unfortunately the British Consul General Priya Guha , was unable to attend the Service as she had to be in London to attend meetings. Priya asked Flt. Lt. Jason Orr of the Royal Air Force, to represent her. We would like to thank Jason for doing an excellent job.

Many thanks to Pattie and Roger Farrow, Even and Jane McKechnie for all the work behind the scenes, but the shining stars have to be Sharon Ewing and Alan Ball who show up every year and disappear up into the rafters to drop the Poppy Petals, this has to be the most important part of the service, we cannot thank them enough for doing this job.



Sharon Ewing and Alan Ball

We would also like to welcome our new member Hugh Fisher who is from Bethesda, MD.

We will not have a meeting in December, so the next meeting will be January 15th. 2013 at the Veterans War Memorial Building, 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, in Room 219 at 6 p.m.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year



Remembrance Sunday in New Delhi, India

Julian Evans, former Consul-General in San Francisco and former Hon President of the California No 1 Branch, writes from New Delhi with a report on the Remembrance Day Service and on the Royal British Legion's 2012 tour to India.



Greetings from New Delhi to all our friends in the Royal British Legion in California. Pat thought you might be interested in reading about how we commemorated November 11th this year in New Delhi and also the RBL's 2012 tour of India which focused on the battlefields of Kohima and Imphal in North West India.

As is customary, the British High Commission's Defence Section (which now includes one Gayle Evans seen above), arranged a service of commemoration at the Delhi War Cemetery. The cemetery, which is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, was created in 1951 when graves from a number of cemeteries in northern India were moved there to ensure their permanent maintenance. They include graves from cantonment cemeteries in Allahabad, Cawnpore, Dehra Dun and Lucknow. There are now 1,022 Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War buried, or commemorated by special memorial, in this cemetery together with a number of war graves of other nationalities, mostly Dutch. The cemetery was augmented in 1966 when 99 First World War burials were moved into the cemetery from the Nicholson Cemetery at Kashmir Gate in Delhi, so that their permanent maintenance could be assured. The cemetery furthermore includes a 1939-1945 memorial to the more than 25,000 servicemen of the forces of undivided India who died during the Second World War in non-operational zones, for example while serving with regimental depots or with other static units. Their remains were accorded the last rites and disposal required by their various religions and their names are commemorated at memorials in the capital cities of India and Pakistan.

The Delhi 2012 ceremony was attended by High Commissioners, Ambassadors and Defence Attaches from a wide range of countries, by the Indian armed forces, by Indian veterans, and by a large number of members of the public. The British High Commissioner, Sir James Bevan, laid the wreath on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen and the Heads of State of other Commonwealth Countries, and the United States Ambassador the wreath on behalf of the other countries represented. The two photos below show Sir James laying the wreath, and the Indian Honour Guard. As one might expect in India, after the ceremony we adjourned to the British High Commission bar for a curry lunch.



The second, but earlier, commemoration took place in October when the Royal British Legion undertook its annual tour to the battlefields of North East India, focussed on the Commonwealth War Graves Cemeteries at Kohima and Imphal. The victories at these two locations between in mid 1944 stopped the Japanese U Go offensive, which was aimed at penetrating into India. It was, to that date, the largest Japanese defeat. But the cost to the Allies was heavy.

Both Kohima and Imphal have large cemeteries each of over 1,400 Allied war dead maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The epitaph carved on the memorial of the 2nd British Division in Kohima cemetery has become world-famous as the Kohima Epitaph. It reads:

“ When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say, ”
For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today

The tour party included several veterans of the war in India, including: Stanley Tullett, who lived in India and joined the Artillery as a trumpeter in the Artillery aged 14 (he did not see action during WW2); Tommy Webb who arrived in Imphal to see the fighting finished; and 89-year-old Alf Wragg who served with the Suffolk Regiment during the siege of Imphal and lost friends in the action.

There were also two tour members whose fathers are buried in Imphal cemetery, one tour member whose uncle is buried at Kohima, and two sisters whose father, Brigadier Shapland commanded the relief Brigade at Kohima, containing the Royal Berkshire and Dorset Regiment.

The photos show the irrepressible Alf Wragg (wearing his para beret) with RBL standard bearer in front of the grave of one of his fallen comrades at Imphal, and of the tour party at a reception at our house on the British High Commission compound, which was also attended by the Defence Section and by other members of the High Commission who had served in HM Armed Forces.



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THE BURMA ROAD

The 681 mile long winding road over the mountains from Burma into China was constructed by the British and thousands of Chinese coolies during the undeclared Sino-Japanese war of 1937-39. To enable the Chinese to continue the war against Japan, whose forces already occupied the coastal regions, allied ships crammed into the docks at Rangoon bringing lend-lease war supplies for the start of the long journey up the Burma Road to Kuming. A small US convoy reached Kuming on January 20, 1945, after a 16 day drive from Myodynia. The first full Allied convoy to reach China was on February 4, 1945. This enormous flow of supplies was protected from the air by famous American squadron the 'Flying Tigers' whose volunteer pilots were paid \$500 for every Japanese plane they shot down. These pilots first enrolled as civilians in the Chinese Air Force, American Volunteer Group-AVG, under the command of Colonel Claire Chennault and later incorporated into the US Army Air Force as the 23rd Pursuit Group. During a major attack by the Japanese on the port of Rangoon on February 25/26, the AVG claimed 217 kills for the loss of 16. The RAF claimed 74 kills for the loss of 22 aircraft. The Japanese then stopped trying to close the port by air effort. Rangoon was ultimately captured by the Japanese army on March 8.

A portion of the Burma Road in China. The winding road is 681 miles long and constructed through rough mountain country. Building it was a remarkable engineering achievement.

THE STILWELL ROAD



No English dictionary has been able to adequately explain

the difference between COMPLETE and FINISHED.

However, in a recent linguistic conference held in London, England, and attended by some of the best linguists in the world: Samsundar Balgobin, a Guyanese, was the clear winner.

His final challenge was this: Some say there is no difference between **COMPLETE and FINISHED.** Please explain the difference between **COMPLETE and FINISHED** in a way that is easy to understand. Here is his astute answer:

"When you marry the right woman, you are COMPLETE.

But, when you marry the wrong woman, you are FINISHED.

And when the right one catches you with the wrong one, you are COMPLETELY FINISHED!"

His answer was received with a standing ovation lasting over 5 minutes and it entitled him to receive an invitation to dine with the Queen, who decided to call him after the contest.

He won a trip to travel around the world in style and a case of 25 year old Eldorado rum for his answer.

Teaching Someone Proper Cell Phone Etiquette

After a very busy day, a commuter settled down in his seat and closed his eyes as the train departed Montreal for Hudson.

The train was rolling out of the station when the guy sitting next to him pulled out his cell phone and started talking in a loud voice:

"Hi, sweetheart. It's Eric. I'm on the train - yes, I know it's the six thirty train and not the four thirty but I had a long meeting."

"No, honey, not with that floozie from accounting - with the boss." "No, sweetheart, you're the only one in my life."

"Yes, I'm sure! Cross my heart, honest to God, no doubt about it, blah, blah, blah" etc., etc. "Ten minutes later, the guy was still talking loudly, when the young woman sitting across the aisle, and obviously angered by his continuous diatribe, yelled at the top of her voice:

"Hey, Eric, turn that stupid phone off and come back to bed!"

Eric doesn't bother people by using his cell phone in public any more.

What is Celibacy?

Celibacy can be a choice in life, or a condition imposed by circumstances.

While attending a Marriage Weekend, Frank and his wife Ann listened to the instructor declare, "It is essential that husbands and wives know the things that are important to each other."

He then addressed the men. "Can you name and describe your wife's favorite flower?"

Frank leaned over, touched Ann's arm gently, and whispered, "Gold Medal-All-Purpose, isn't it?"

And thus began Frank's life of celibacy.

Call for Bletchley Park codebreakers to crack the D-Day pigeon cipher

Friday November 23 2012

HISTORIANS are appealing for the veteran codebreakers of Bletchley Park to volunteer for one last act of service for their country: cracking the D-Day carrier pigeon cipher that has stumped [Britain's](#) finest minds.

The coded message had been carefully filed in a small red capsule and attached to a carrier pigeon to be delivered 70 years ago.

But instead of arriving safely at its destination, the unfortunate bird got stuck in a chimney en-route and lost.

The message was found by homeowner [David Martin](#), who ripped out a fireplace to find the skeleton while renovating his house in Bletchingley, Surrey.

Historians believe the bird was almost certainly dispatched from Nazi-occupied France on June 6, 1944, during the D-Day invasions.

The mysterious message, which was written in unfamiliar code, was passed to Government Communications Headquarter (GCHQ) in Cheltenham, Glos, in the hope a contemporary professional codebreaker could decipher the words.

Today, experts have admitted they have been unable to unravel the puzzle without knowing more about the cryptographic context in which it was sent.

They have now appealed to retired codebreakers who worked at GCHQ's predecessor, Bletchley Park, and others who may have worked in military signals, during the war to come forward to offer their expertise.

Those who are still alive are likely to be in their nineties but their memories may be sharp enough to recognise the type of code used, and explain how it could be deciphered.

Amongst their number is Baroness Trumpington, 90, a Conservative life peer who worked in Naval Intelligence at Bletchley Park.

A GCHQ historian, known only as Tony for security reasons, told BBC Radio 4's Today Programme it would be easier to identify the code if anyone could provide further information.

"We know in other contexts that there are still quite a lot of people alive who worked in communication centres during the war," he said.

"It would be very interesting if people did have any information if they could put it in the pot and we could see if we can get any further with it.

" He explained modern codebreakers had so far been stumped by the secret message, with no clues as to who sent it or who was intended to receive it.

He added: "The sort of codes that were constructed to be used during operations were designed only to be read by the senders and the recipients.

Unless you get rather more idea than we have about who actually sent the message and who it was sent to we are not going to be able to find out what the underlying code was.

" The message in full reads:

AOAKN HVPKD FNFJW YIDDC

RQXSR DJHFP GOVFN MIAPX

PABUZ WYYNP CMPNW HJRZH

NLXKG MEMKK ONOIB AKEEQ

WAOTA RBQRH DJOFM TPZEH

LKXGH RGGHT JRZCQ FNKTQ

KLDT5 FQIRW AOAKN 27 1525/6



It is believed to have been dispatched by British forces during the D-Day invasion to relay secret messages back across the Channel, after a radio blackout left them reliant on homing pigeons.

The Royal Pigeon Racing Association believe the bird probably either got lost, disorientated in bad weather, or was simply exhausted after its trip across the Channel.

Due to [Winston Churchill](#)'s radio blackout, homing pigeons were taken on the D-Day invasion and released by Allied Forces to inform military Generals back on English soil how the operation was going.

Speaking earlier this month, Mr Martin said: "It's a real mystery and I cannot wait for the secret message to be decoded. It really is unbelievable."

It is thought that the bird was destined for the top secret Bletchley Park, which was just 80 miles from Mr Martin's home.

The message was sent to XO2 at 16:45.

The destination X02 was believed to be Bomber Command, while the sender's signature at the bottom of the message read Serjeant W Stot.

Experts said the spelling of Serjeant was significant, because the RAF used J, while the Army used G.

Pigeon enthusiasts - commonly known as "fanciers" - have called for Mr Martin's mysterious military bird to be posthumously decorated with the Dickin Medal; the highest possible decoration for valour given to animals.

The dead pigeon was likely to be a member of the secret [wing](#) of the National Pigeon Service - which had a squadron of 250,000 birds during the [Second World War](#).

They can reach speeds of 80mph, cover distances of more than 1,000 miles and are thought to use the Earth's magnetic fields to navigate.