



CHAIRMANS CHAT

The Chairman welcomed the members with special thanks to the ladies who brightened the room. Captain 'Scotty' Mills RM joined us from RMR London and Jim thanked his for their continued support.

On welfare, he informed members that since our last meeting, we had lost yet another member, Peter HUGHES. Jim had spoken with his wife Anne who was well she had the family around her and would call us if there was anything she required. Mike Pinchen was improving and hoped to make it to the February meeting. It was good to see Alfie Bulgen at the meeting he had been in hospital after a fall in November.

It was approved in committee that we distribute postcard to every member pre-stamped and addressed to Norman Saints our Welfare Officer. The idea was that if any member was unwell, all his next of kin had to do was write on the message section, the name of the member and a telephone number to enable us to make contact.

Four WW2 member's names have been submitted for the trip to Holland in May. The Not Forgotten Association was having a stand at The War and Peace Show and we have again offered our services to help as before. The Paddock Wood chaps had been particularly helpful and were looking forward to the event.

The Chairman had visited Headley Court and had seen a great many injured men & women from all three services. He had spoken with a number of Royal Marines, one of whom had had 48 operations in 3 years. Jim mentioned it, as he wanted members to know that every one of the service personnel in there were in fine spirit and had formed a tri-service bond was a comforting sight. WO2 Bob Toomey RM was largely responsible for that and was doing a magnificent job there.

A new member, Miss Ann Marks, a former WREN was introduced and welcomed to the Branch. Jim then thanked our President for his attendance and support also Eve Green, who with the aid of Jo Briggs continued to help the Branch with some excellent raffles and those who contributed prizes each meeting, it really helps the Branch funds.

The next meeting is on February 9th, there would be no committee meeting taking place that night so members were asked to muster at 1900 in the Reserve Bar Lounge.

The Chairman then proposed the toast to 'Absent Comrades'

Jim Ellard.



SECRETARY'S JOTTINGS

The Royal Marines Charity Support Appeal - Friday 20th April to Sunday 06th May 2012

I would like members who wish to help the Appeal, to get in touch with me to discuss 'how they can help'

For example: at food supermarkets, shopping malls, train stations underground & South Eastern trains, etc. or have ideas that you, our members, will help us in our collections??

I have to inform RMA Central Office as to what type of Collections/Events we are going to get involved in so that they can send the the collection boxes and other items to assist us in our tasks, **MOST IMPORTANT**, I have to request permission from the Train Regions, Supermarkets etc., Regional Offices, to use their premises. So it is vital that we pull our fingers out and let me know ASAP as to who will help.

Harry Briggs.

JOIHN BEST WRITES:

I have been informed that the famous Jessie bar at St Andrews which 'Royals' use to visit on their day off has been sold, and new owners do not want any of the plaques or pictures that relate to the services left in the bar.

Gather Peter Bezzina co-owner of Jessie`s is moving the items across the road to an old farm building which he owns and is gradually turning it in to a Royals Marines museum. This is his intentions. Whether he will be allowed to get a licence to include a bar is another matter. It will never however be the same with Jessie`s gone

Jessie bar use to encourage Royals to come on holiday so they could remember the old days when they served at St Andrews and St Patricks barracks.

Maltese however do not look upon visiting Royals or any serviceman nowadays as special. Just something they know these people were stationed on the island back in HISTORY

Regards

HMS VINDICTIVE MEMORIAL 'MUST BE PRESERVED'

A former naval officer and author says a memorial from a daring WW1 raid must be saved soon or it will be lost forever.

Ernest Coleman's latest project is an account of the 1918 raids on Zeebrugge and Ostend. Churchill wrote that the raids "may well rank as the finest feat of arms in the Great War, and certainly as an episode unsurpassed in the history of the Royal Navy." A total of 11 Victoria Crosses were awarded, and at Zeebrugge, six decorations for bravery were won every minute.

The Cost was high – 240 died during the raid or as a result of wounds, while 412 were injured.

Towards the end of last year Mr Coleman visited Ostend to photograph the bows of HMS Vindictive, set up by the Belgians in the 1920s as a memorial to the raids. Vindictive was a late – Victorian protected cruiser which was converted in 1918 to launch a raid by Royal Marines on the mole at Zeebrugge, neutralising the port and bottling up the small warships and submarines based inland at Bruges.



The raid was only partially successful, and the cruiser was so badly damaged that she was sacrificed just weeks later in the follow-up raid on Ostend, at which she was sunk as a blockship – though this operation was even less effective than Zeebrugge. Mr Coleman had last visited the memorial at Ostend around 30 years ago, "and at the time, found the memorial to be in an immaculate state surrounded by well-tended gardens," said Mr Coleman. "On my recent visit, however, the condition of the memorial and its surroundings, was truly appalling. Rust is everywhere, grass is growing out of the anchors, parts are falling off, and the gardens have long left to the weeds. The masts of the Iphigenia and the Intrepid – which were originally placed to the rear of the bows – have gone and have been replaced by rusting scaffold poles. The War Memorial Trust is unable to help as they only



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deal with memorials in this country. Equally, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cannot help as the memorial belongs to the Belgians.”

Mr Coleman has been in touch with the granddaughter of Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, who masterminded the raids, and she has given her support to any attempts to preserve the memorial, as did Admiral the Lord Boyce, former First Sea Lord, Chief of Defence Staff and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

Mr Coleman said: “I believe that, if the Belgians have lost interest in maintaining the memorial, it should be brought back to this country and re-erected at a suitable site – for example, at Dover, on Horse Guards Parade – It is no bigger than the Royal Naval Division memorial which was recently restored to the Parade – or at a Naval base. “Even as the only surviving portion of a Victorian Cruiser, it is worth saving – as a memorial to extraordinary courage, we would fail in our duty if we did not ensure its continued survival

ROYAL MARINES ASSOCIATION REPORTING NETWORK.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have had an email and a call from a BBC radio producer who is running out of time to get his programme about the Falklands campaign off the ground. Please read below and if you can help at all then please contact the gentleman directly.

Dear Sir,

I am contacting all the regimental associations who have members who served in the South Atlantic in 1982 to ask if they would kindly circulate the message below on message boards etc.

Any help would be appreciated so I can get in touch with people who want to tell me their stories in the coming weeks and months.

Here's the message:-

'Fathers and Sons, Falkland's to Helmand'

I am making a documentary for BBC Radio Four to mark the anniversary of the Falkland's war. I'll be looking at recent conflicts through generations of the same families. I would like to contact men who served in the South Atlantic in '82 and have had sons who have since served in other theatres of war. If you are interested, please email me at gareth.jones-cf@bbc.co.uk or call me on 07712 137298.

Gareth Jones, producer.



Programme of Interest starting 30th Jan 2012 on Channel 5 @2100

Last Summer, award winning director/cameraman Chris Terrill, the only civilian to have won a Royal Marines green beret by passing all the commando tests, embedded with the marines of 42 Commando Company during their 6 month deployment to Afghanistan. Much of the time he spent with Lima Company posted to Checkpoint Toki, nicknamed “Rorke’s Drift”, where they had to patrol one of the most dangerous square miles in the world – riddled with IED’s and crawling with insurgents. The marines’ job was to attract the Taliban to them, actually to invite attack in order to draw the insurgents into the open. It was an incredibly dangerous operation that left L Company with a 20% casualty rate.

Programme One: Deadly Underfoot.

Last summer Lima Company of the Royal Marines (42 Commando) was posted to Checkpoint Toki in the Nad e Ali (North) in Helmand Province in Afghanistan. This small British outpost, nicknamed “Rorke’s Drift”, was right in the middle of one of the most heavily contested areas of Afghanistan - one of the most dangerous square miles in the world at the time.

Riddled with IED’s (Improvised Explosive Devices) and crawling with Taliban insurgents L Company faced a tough challenge especially as their job was to attract the enemy and draw them into battle. In short, the marines were the bait to provoke the insurgents to attack.

This was all for one purpose: To keep the enemy away from a small village to the north – Loymanda – recently cleared of insurgents by L Company itself. Most of the village population had fled years ago and now the place lay deserted and in ruins. The British plan was to rebuild the village and return it to its former prosperity but first that required the Royal Engineers to come in and rid the old bazaar of hundreds of IED’s and also for local contractors to start cleaning the place up. To do that it was essential to keep the Taliban at bay who would have done all they could to disrupt the progress. That is why L Company were posted to Toki – to act as a magnet for trouble.

“It’s as dangerous here as anywhere I have been”, confides Cpl Paul Vice, a veteran of four Afghan tours. “It’s like going out in a car with a driver, a front seat passenger and three in the back knowing that one is going to be killed, two are going to lose their legs and two are going to be slightly injured but you don’t know who or in what order. It’s not a matter of “if” just “when”.

In “Deadly Underfoot” - Director/cameraman Chris Terrill, joins the men of L Company as they hunt down a group of Taliban spies or “Dickers” who have been watching and reporting on the Marine’s movements as well as laying IED’s. They have to be hunted down, captured or killed as soon as possible.



Programme 2: Venus Fly Trap

Programme 3: Dogs of War

Programme 4: Kill or Capture

Programme 5: Brothers in Arms

Programme 6: The Final Tally

Andrew Parks (son of Lieutenant Colonel Eddie Parks Royal Marines) is one of the two-man TEAM Jackal who are in training to kayak for charity around UK in 2013.

As one of their many preliminary training events, TEAM Jackal is competing in the 2012 Devizes to Westminster Canoe Marathon (125 miles over 4 days) over the Easter weekend. The team will be raising money for the **Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund** and would very much appreciate it if you could make a donation. Donations may be made at www.justgiving.com/TEAMJackalDW.

It would be a great motivator for all the training/capsizing that the team is going through (especially in these winter months) to know that they are raising money for this very worthwhile cause.

Here is a short video showing some of their training:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjiGEBTpA4M&feature=related>

If you are able to help – very many thanks.

Of interest to M Company Group 42 Commando 1982 — Back to South Georgia

Just to let you know that Lt Col Chris Nunn, OBE and his wife Siobhan are on their way to the Falkland Islands and then to South Georgia. He intends to visit the San Carlos cemetery where his brother is buried and also the cairn which marks where his brother's aircraft came to rest. The plaque on the cairn which tells what happened there was badly worn when he last visited so he has had a bronze replacement cast and will mount that instead.

He will voyage from Stanley to Grytviken and then return on the Patrol Vessel PHAROS (Now captained by John Adams who was Nick Vaux's signaller in 1982). Chris has found out that in the Grytviken museum there is not a 42 Commando shield amongst all the others presented over the years so he will present one annotated 'from all ranks of M Company Group 1982'

He understands that KEP is much changed but hopes to have time to visit the places M Company Group became so familiar with during that testing time 30 years ago. He will of course write about what he finds and relate their experiences when they return.



ROYAL MARINE BEN BAKER OPERATION SOUTH AFRICA 2012

Mne Ben Baker was injured in Afghanistan and has recently been discharged from the Corps. The RMA helped him with an adapted bike and he now wants to take part in a motorbike ride from Victoria Falls to Johannesburg with Charlie Boorman of “Long Way Round” and “Long Way Down” motorbike expedition fame. Ben is hoping to raise £20,000 for the RMA and I am sure that many of you may want to help him or just send him a message of support. You can find out more about Ben and his mission, as well as make a donation by following the link here.

<http://www.justgiving.com/Ben-Baker-africa2012>

As Ever

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