



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

January 2013



West Riding



West Yorkshire



Surrey



Worcestershire



West Glamorgan

The Royal British Legion

California Branch No 1

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Warwickshire

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RBL Chairman's January report,



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



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



*Happy New Year
To All*



We would like to welcome our new members Kevin Ledford, Hugh Fisher, James Somes, and Todd Wilkinson.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday January 15th at 6.00 p.m. in Room 219 at the Veterans War Memorial Bldg Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA

Members that have not paid their dues by the end of January will no longer be members, as the cards have to be returned to London, or we will be charged for them. So please send your dues in the amount of \$30.00 payable To the Royal British Legion, and mailed to Pamela Sweetman, Treasurer at 2616 Snowy Egret Way, Elk Grove CA 95757

Unfortunately, this year we have to move out of the War Memorial Building by April, I have to attend a meeting with the American Legion War Memorial Commission, with regards to a new meeting place.

The War Memorial Building will be closing down for a complete retro-fit, and will be closed for two-three years.

About the SAS Regiment

The SAS (Special Air Service) Regiment is a corps of the British Army and a part of the United Kingdom Special Forces (UKSF) commanded by the Director Special Forces.

The SAS Regiment actually refers to three regiments known as the 21st SAS Regiment, 22nd SAS Regiment and 23rd SAS Regiment.

The 22nd SAS Regiment is a part of the Regular Army, while the 21st and 23 regiments are a part of the reserve Territorial Army.

History of the SAS Regiment dates back to the Second World War when David Stirling founded the so-called L Detachment, Special Air Service Brigade which was used to operate behind the enemy lines in North Africa. It was not a paratroop regiment with a number of units like its name suggested but it was intentionally given a misleading name so that the Axis would think that they are dealing with a number of units rather than one commando unit.

For most of the war, the Stirling's unit operated in North Africa and the Greek islands although it also fought in Sicily and Italy, and later in Western Europe. However, it was reorganized several times by 1944 when it supported the Allied advance towards Germany and meanwhile got a new commander – Paddy Mayne. He replaced David Stirling who was captured by the Germans in Tunisia in 1943. Stirling was held prisoner by the end of the war although he escaped several times before the Germans moved him to an “escape-proof” castle in the town of Colditz, Germany.

After the end of the Second World War, the British government decided that there is no need for a special air service regiment any longer and disbanded the existing 1st and 2nd SAS regiments joined in the SAS Brigade. However, the government soon changed its mind and a new SAS regiment was raised in less than two years after the end of the war.

In 1952, the British government also decided to form a Regular Army SAS regiment and added the Squadron 2 (Malay Scouts) to the army list as the 22nd SAS Regiment. In 1959, another regiment – the 23rd SAS Regiment was formed and became a part of the reserve Territorial Army.

From its formal formation in 1952, the 22nd SAS Regiment carried out a number of operations in many parts of the world. But its best known action was the so-called Operation Nimrod which was carried out during the Iranian Embassy Siege in London in 1980. In a 17 minute action, the soldiers of the SAS Regiment rescued 24 from the remaining 25 hostages and killed 5 out of 6 terrorists without losing a single man.

The members of the 22nd SAS Regiment are recruited from the UK armed forces although most of the SAS soldiers come from the airborne forces. In order to be accepted to the Regiment, the candidates have to pass a number of tests and exercises during a five-week long selection process that is held twice per year in Sennybridge in Brecon Beacons.

From about 200 pre-selected candidates, only about 30 pass the selection process. The selection for the 21st and 23rd SAS regiments is less difficult although the standards for admission are quite high as well.



HMS CORNWALL and HMS DORSETSHIRE (April 5, 1942)

HMS Cornwall, (Capt. Manwaring) the 10,000 ton, 8-inch gun British cruiser sunk off the coast of Ceylon by bombs from 53 Japanese planes from the carriers Akagi, Soryu and Hiryu. From the Cornwall 198 men were lost, the ship sinking in 22 minutes at 1.40pm. (Capt. Agar) British cruiser sunk along with the Cornwall, lost 227 men, the ship taking at least nine direct hits and sinking in less than eight minutes. The cruiser Enterprise and two destroyers rescued 1,122 men from the water.



HMS Cornwall



HMS Dorsetshire,

HMS HERMES (April 9, 1942)

The 10,850 ton aircraft carrier (Capt. R. Onslow) was the first Royal Navy ship to be specially designed as such. This was the ninth ship to bear this name. The Hermes left the naval base of Trincomalee, Ceylon, escorted by the Australian destroyer Vampire, and while sailing south off Batticaloa on the east shore, the ships were attacked by carrier-borne aircraft from a Japanese force of three battleships and five carriers including the Akaga, Hiryu and Soryu, which had entered the Bay of Bengal a week before and were now attacking the naval base. Around seventy bombers were sent to dispatch the Hermes which sank within ten minutes, followed by the Vampire shortly after. Of the complement on the Hermes, nineteen officers and 283 ratings died. On the Vampire, nine men lost their lives. The hospital ship Vita rescued approximately 600 survivors from the two ships and took them to Colombo and later to Kandy for recuperation. The air attack on the base killed 85 civilians in addition to military losses. Thirty-six Japanese planes were shot down. The wreck of the Hermes was found sixty-three years later, in 2006, about five nautical miles from shore and fifty-seven meters down. Divers attached the White Ensign to the rusting hull. The wreck of the Vampire has never been found.

HMS HERMES



A Platoon Sergeant and his Platoon Leader are bunking down in the field for the night. The Platoon Sergeant looks up and says, "When you see all the stars in the sky, what do you think, sir?"

The LT replies, "Well, I think of how insignificant we really are in the universe; how small a piece of such a grand design. I can't help but wonder if what we do truly means anything or makes any difference.

What do you think of, Sergeant?"

"I think somebody stole the damn tent."

Hermann Wilhelm Göring (12 January 1893 – 15 October 1946), was a German politician, military leader, and leading member of the Nazi Party (NSDAP). A veteran of World War I as an ace fighter pilot, he was a recipient of the coveted *Pour le Mérite*, also known as "the Blue Max". He was the last commander of *Jagdgeschwader 1*, the fighter wing once led by Manfred von Richthofen, "the Red Baron".



A member of the NSDAP from its early days, Göring was wounded in 1923 during the failed coup known as the Beer Hall Putsch. He became permanently addicted to morphine after being treated with the drug for his injuries. He founded the Gestapo in 1933. Göring was appointed commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe (air force) in 1935, a position he held until the final days of World War II. By 1940 he was at the peak of his power and influence; as minister in charge of the Four Year Plan, he was responsible for much of the functioning of the German economy in the build-up to World War II. Adolf Hitler promoted him to the rank of *Reichsmarschall*, a rank senior to all other *Wehrmacht* commanders, and in 1941 Hitler designated him as his successor and deputy in all his offices.

Göring's standing with Hitler was greatly reduced by 1942, with the Luftwaffe unable to fulfill its commitments and the German war effort stumbling on both fronts. Göring largely withdrew from the military and political scene and focused on the acquisition of property and artwork, much of which was confiscated from Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Informed on 22 April 1945 that Hitler intended to commit suicide, Göring sent a telegram to Hitler asking to assume control of the Reich. Hitler then removed Göring from all his positions, expelled him from the party, and ordered his arrest. After World War II, Göring was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity at the Nuremberg Trials. He was sentenced to death by hanging, but committed suicide by ingesting cyanide the night before the sentence was to be carried out.

Read more click below

[Hermann Göring - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

Bill and his wife Blanche go to the Yorkshire Show every year,
And every year Bill would say, " Blanche, I'd like to ride in that there 'elicopter "
Blanche always replied, " I know Bill, but that 'elicopter ride is twenty quid,
And twenty quid is twenty quid! "
One year Bill and Blanche went to the fair, and Bill said, " Blanche, I'm 75 years old.
If I don't ride that there 'elicopter, I might never get another chance To this, Blanche replied,
" Bill that 'elicopter ride is twenty quid, and twenty quid is twenty quid "

The pilot overheard the couple and said, " I'll make you a deal. I'll take the both of you for a ride.
If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and don't say a word I won't charge you a penny!
But if you say one word it's twenty quid. "
Bill and Blanche agreed and up they went.

The pilot did all kinds of fancy manoeuvres, but not a word was heard.
He did his daredevil tricks over and over again,
But still not a word... When they landed, the pilot turned to Bill and said,
" By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't..I'm impressed! "
Bill replied, " Well, to tell you t'truth
I almost said summat when Blanche fell out, But tha' knows,
twenty quid is twenty quid! "

San Francisco: Footage from 1905.

<http://www.wimp.com/santadad/>

Ghost Fighter

Photograph by Jakub Perka, BNPS

Recently discovered in Egypt by an oil-exploration team, a World War II fighter plane called "the aviation equivalent of Tutankhamun's tomb" bears the scars of 70 years in the Sahara desert—but is nevertheless considered to be in "time capsule" condition.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Ian Thirsk, head of collections at the Royal Air Force (RAF) Museum in London. The Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk is "the best preserved example of a Second World War aircraft I've seen for many, many years."



The plane's pilot is thought to have been Flt. Sgt. Dennis Copping, though no trace of his body has been found at the crash site.

—James Owen in London

An elderly lady was invited to an old friend's home for dinner one evening.

She was impressed by the way her lady friend preceded every request to her husband with endearing terms such as: **Honey, My Love, Darling, Sweetheart, etc.**

The couple had been married almost 70 years and, clearly, they were still very much in love.

While the husband was in the living room, her lady friend leaned over to her hostess to say,

"I think it's wonderful that, after all these years, you still call your husband all those loving names."

The elderly lady hung her head, "I have to tell you the truth," she said, "his name slipped my mind about 10 years ago, and I'm scared to death to ask the cranky old git what his name is."



Thirty-nine years ago, an Italian submarine was sold for a paltry \$100,000 as scrap. The submarine, given to the Italian Navy in 1953 . . . was originally the USS Barb . . . an incredible veteran of World War II service . . . with a heritage that should not have been melted away without any recognition.

The U.S.S. Barb was a pioneer, paving the way for the first submarine to launch missiles and it flew a battle flag unlike that of any other ship.

In addition to the Medal of Honor ribbon at the top of the flag identifying the heroism of its Captain, Commander Eugene 'Lucky' Fluckey. And the bottom border of the flag bore the image of a Japanese train locomotive.



The U.S.S. Barb was indeed, the submarine that “ SANK A TRAIN ! ”

July 18, 1945 In Patience Bay, off the coast of Karafuto, Japan.

It was after 4 A.M. and Commander Fluckey rubbed his eyes as he peered over the map spread before him. It was the twelfth war patrol of the Barb, the fifth under Commander Fluckey. He should have turned the submarine's command over to another skipper after four patrols, but had managed to strike a deal with Admiral Lockwood to make a fifth trip with the men he cared for like a father.

Of course, no one suspected when he had struck that deal prior to his fourth and should have been his final war patrol, that Commander Fluckey's success would be so great he would be awarded the Medal of Honor.

Commander Fluckey smiled as he remembered that patrol. “ Lucky ” Fluckey they called him. On January 8th the Barb had emerged victorious from a running two-hour night battle after sinking a large enemy ammunition ship. Two weeks later in Mamkwan Harbor he found the “mother-lode”... more than 30 enemy ships.

In only 5 fathoms (30 feet) of water his crew had unleashed the sub's forward torpedoes, then turned and fired four from the stern. As he pushed the Barb to the full limit of its speed through the dangerous waters in a daring withdrawal to the open sea, he recorded eight direct hits on six enemy ships.

What could possibly be left for the Commander to accomplish who, just three months earlier had been in Washington, DC to receive the Medal of Honor? He smiled to himself as he looked again at the map showing the rail line that ran along the enemy coastline. Now his crew was buzzing excitedly about bagging a train! The rail line itself wouldn't be a problem. A shore patrol could go ashore under cover of darkness to plant the explosives... one of the sub's 55-pound scuttling charges. But this early morning Lucky Fluckey and his officers were puzzling over how they could blow not only the rails, but also one of the frequent trains that shuttled supplies to equip the Japanese war machine. But no matter how crazy the idea might have sounded, the Barb's skipper would not risk the lives of his men.

Thus the problem... how to detonate the explosives at the moment the train passed, without endangering the life of a shore party.

PROBLEM ?

If you don't search your brain looking for them, you'll never find them. And even then, sometimes they arrive in the most unusual fashion. Cruising slowly beneath the surface to evade the enemy plane now circling overhead, the monotony was broken with an exciting new idea : Instead of having a crewman on shore to trigger explosives to blow both rail and a passing train, why not let the train BLOW ITSELF up ?

Billy Hatfield was excitedly explaining how he had cracked nuts on the railroad tracks as a kid, placing the nuts between two ties so the sagging of the rail under the weight of a train would break them open. “ Just like

cracking walnuts,” he explained. “ To complete the circuit [detonating the 55-pound charge] we hook in a micro switch... and mounted it between two ties, directly under the steel rail.

" We don't set it off . . the TRAIN will." Not only did Hatfield have the plan, he wanted to go along with the volunteer shore party.

After the solution was found, there was no shortage of volunteers; all that was needed was the proper weather... a little cloud cover to darken the moon for the sabotage mission ashore.

Lucky Fluckey established his criteria for the volunteer party :

- [1] No married men would be included, except for Hatfield,
- [2] The party would include members from each department,
- [3] The opportunity would be split evenly between regular Navy and Navy Reserve sailors,
- [4] At least half of the men had to have been Boy Scouts, experienced in handling medical emergencies and tuned into woods lore.

FINALLY, “ Lucky ” Fluckey would lead the saboteurs himself.

When the names of the 8 selected sailors was announced it was greeted with a mixture of excitement and disappointment.

Among the disappointed was Commander Fluckey who surrendered his opportunity at the insistence of his officers that “ as commander he belonged with the Barb,” coupled with the threat from one that “ I swear I'll send a message to ComSubPac if the Commander attempted to join the demolition shore party.”

In the meantime, there would be no harassing of Japanese shipping or shore operations by the Barb until the train mission

had been accomplished. The crew would ' lay low ' to prepare their equipment, practice and plan and wait for the weather.

July 22, 1945 Patience Bay [Off the coast of Karafuto, Japan]

Waiting in 30 feet of water in Patience Bay was wearing thin the patience of Commander Fluckey and his innovative crew. Everything was ready. In the four days the saboteurs had anxiously watched the skies for cloud cover, the inventive crew of the Barb had crafted and tested their micro switch.

When the need was proposed for a pick and shovel to bury the explosive charge and batteries, the Barb's engineers had cut up steel plates in the lower flats of an engine room, then bent and welded them to create the needed digging tools.

The only things beyond their control were the weather.... and the limited time. Only five days remained in the Barb's patrol.

Anxiously watching the skies, Commander Fluckey noticed plumes of cirrus clouds, then white stratus capping the mountain peaks ashore. A cloud cover was building to hide the three-quarters moon. So, this would be the night.

Click the link for the full story

<http://www.ncamlegionpost532.org/ussbarb.htm>