

BOROUGH OF BURY VETERANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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THE BIRMINGHAM 2018 INTERNATIONAL TATTOO

25th November. Enthusiasts of everything military turned out for what is now becoming an annual event for the Association. Organised by Army Sec. **Owen Dykes** the partially funded trip to Birmingham proved once again to be a very popular outing. The day went to plan and members who attended the previous tattoo trip were more aware of the surroundings and what was on offer. As usual the show was packed with music and displays from around the globe, the RAF taking centre stage to take the salute on their 100 Anniversary. BOBVA member **Kevin Rowe** ex Royal Navy took part in the two day event carrying the Standard for the HMS Antrim Association, unfortunately the arena was so full no one could spot him, he will have to wear a big hat next time. Hopefully Owen will be organising another trip for 2019.



L—R Roy Baker, Peter Lees, Gary Best, Keith and Elaine Beckley.

ASSOCIATION CHRISTMAS DINNER BAY HORSE, UNSWORTH. 15th December

Members of the Association gathered at the Bay Horse for our second Christmas get together. **Roy and Christine** who were our hosts this year did all the hard work organising the meal and entertainment. Formal dress and posh frocks was the dress of the day and a very smart turn out it was. No mean feat trying to serve out two courses to fifty or so members and keeping everyone happy. The meal over and dress code relaxed it was time to get the dancing shoes on. Everyone seemed to enjoy the evening which was followed up by a raffle (nothing like last years epic) which raised £72 for Association funds. Thanks once again **Roy and Christine** for all your hard work and not forgetting **Baz Phillips** who did his bit waiting on, he only spilt the soup twice.

Autotrader Christmas meal Saturday 8th December.

After funding our Association trip to the National Arboretum the Autotrader team kindly invited us to their headquarters for a Christmas party that will be very difficult to better. Collecting the revellers from Bury and shipping us to their Manchester HQ on a very upmarket coach (we can't afford it) met by the meet and greet team, all with big smiles I might add, even though they were giving up their weekend to look after us. An excellent meal and an open bar (silly thing to do with ex forces) with entertainment, singer and magic man thrown in for good measure. Only one thing that spoilt it was Baz our Army Chairman just had to go and sing. Some members had the good fortune to have a tour of some of the classic cars on show to boot. An excellent day out. Big thanks to everyone at Autotrader who made the day the success it was.



Who is Father Christmas? (It might be the Pres)

Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

RAF Coningsby was the destination for the Association members interested in everything aeronautical. A very smart 20 seater coach provided by ABC Coaches of Swinton took us on a cross country trip to Lincolnshire and the home of the BBMF. Stopping for lunch at the Black Swan in Coningsby village. We then proceeded to the RAF base to meet **Clive (Goosey) Gander** who had flown down under his



own steam. The RAF contingent were getting very excited at this time, Nikki had to be restrained from running through the gate arms outstretched Lancaster bomber style. We were met by a very informative guide who proceeded to give us all the information needed, even the pongos and mate-lots knew when the next engine service was needed for each aircraft when he had finished. Joking aside we couldn't have had a better visit and then to cap it all we were invited into the Mess for tea and coffee, VIP guests indeed, we were very well looked after. Seeing the flying jackets and other memorabilia kick started our oldest RAF veteran **Bob Walsh** into telling the tale of his own WWII exploits in Coastal Command when he flew in Liberators over the Bay of Biscay and down to Gibraltar searching for U-Boats. Big respect to Robert. Well all good things come to an end and we were duly escorted to the door to make our way back to Bury, thankfully no singing from Baz. All the thanks must go to our RAF Chairperson **Nikki Grey** for making the day so special and for doing all the organising and the extra toilet stop at Birch services (she just couldn't make it). Oh and by the way the coach driver is ex Royal Navy so we may have another recruit.



INTERESTING FACTS

1. During World War II, the RAF had the largest casualty rate, in part due to Britain's bombing campaign against Germany. With 55,000 air crewman dying on these bombing missions, the RAF's loss rate was the highest of any of the British armed forces during the war.
2. During World War II, the RAF counted some 1,208,000 members, with 185,000 serving as aircrew.
3. Perhaps the most famous plane of all time in the RAF's possession is the Supermarine 300, more famously known as the Supermarine Spitfire. Its first flight was 5 March 1936 and after flying it, the test pilot, "Mutt" Summers, reportedly told the designers "Don't touch anything."
4. The first female jet pilot in the RAF was Flight Lieutenant Jo Salter in 1994, flying a Panavia Tornado. Now it is a common sight for both men and women to take to the skies for Britain.



Hartshead. 4th February 2019 was the 45th anniversary of the M62 coach bomb atrocity. The Association meeting was delayed by a week so members could attend the annual service of remembrance held on the service area at Hartshead Moor. One of our members Paul Andrews (pictured 2nd left) was a young 21 year old fusilier returning to Catterick camp and was on the coach at the time of the attack. 12 people died and over 50 others injured in what is believed to be the worst terrorist attack by the IRA on the British mainland. The west bound service area was used as a first aid post for the injured and a memorial plaque was erected on the site as a dedication to the terrible event.

February 10th Fishpool HQ. The Association meeting took place with a special guest. Gary Bridson-Daley, author of a book entitled “The Last Heroes” Voices of British & Commonwealth Veterans. Gary came along to meet the crew and gave a short address to inform us about his book. Having interviewed over a hundred WWII veterans over the recent years he has used forty two of the stories related to him to chronicle tales of heroism during those dark days of war. Gary would like to thank all members for the warm welcome he received at the meeting and enjoyed chatting with some of our veterans. I’m sure we will see him again in the future. If members would like more information on Gary’s work he has a Facebook page— A Debt of Gratitude to The Last Heroes. His book is available at any good bookshop or online priced £20.

THE PITCH

Saturday 2nd March. Members of BOBVA turned up to All Saints Church near Brandlesholme dressed to impress in a bid to acquire funds on offer from Bury council’s generous grant scheme for good causes in the Borough. After a heart wrenching appeal by **Owen Dykes** to the assembled audience the Association was awarded the princely sum of £1500 after being voted a truly worthy cause. The cash will I’m sure be used to fund outings for the benefit of all members and families. Thanks must go to Bury Council and this worthwhile initiative to fund local groups.

The new army recruitment adverts which target “snowflakes” phone zombies, binge gamers, selfie addicts, and me, me, millennials trapped in “boring jobs” have reportedly seen the number of applications to join the army almost double. Posters pay tribute to the famous Lord Kitchener “your country needs you” First World War recruitment campaign, while TV adverts target those unhappy in their work.

The controversial advertising campaign, which aimed to tackle a slump in recruitment, has been a “resounding success” after applications to join doubled in the first month.



Photo courtesy of Anthony Dalton-Hughes



THE NEW ARMY RECRUIT

FISHPOOL HQ 3rd March 2019

The Annual General Meeting of the Association took place after the scheduled meeting in March. We saw the biggest turn out of members since its inception two years ago, filling the concert room of HMS FISHPOOL (we may have to find a bigger ship). Member **Neil Bergmeier** took the stage to conduct proceedings. New faces on the committee are as follows; Treasurer **Steve Collins**, RN Chair **Leanne Rothwell**, RN Sec **Kevin Rowe**, RAF Chair **Paul Newton**.

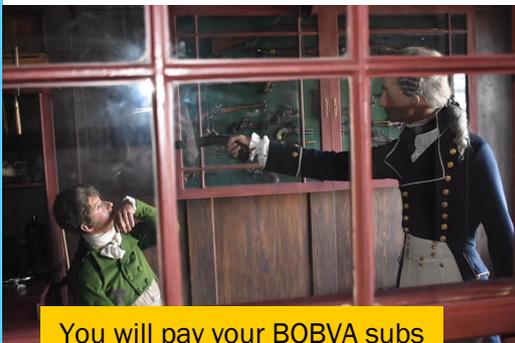
Standing down were **Terry White**, **Jackie White** and **Nikki Grey** who have all given a tremendous amount of time and effort over the past two years and were thanked by the President **Chris Harness** for all their hard work. We hope the new committee members enjoy their time working for the good of all the Association.

One of our latest members is **Neville Foote** ex Royal Artillery. His last birthday made him the grand old age of 99 so making him our oldest member, though his birthday is the 29th February so really he is our youngest member at the age of 24. You're as old as you feel they say and it's great to see you at the meetings Neville you've probably got a few tales to tell.

UP COMING EVENTS

6th June – 75th Anniversary of D-Day
9th June - RAF COSFORD air show
22nd June— Armed forces day Heywood
29th June— Armed forces day parade
Manchester
6th July— Yorkshire wartime experience

The National Museum of the Royal Navy situated in Hartlepool was visited by 40 of our members in April. Home of Europe's oldest floating warship, HMS Trincomalee, built in India in 1817 (46 guns), the quayside and surrounds reconstruct an authentic creation of the seaport of the 1800's . Historical re-enactments from the guides who



You will pay your BOBVA subs

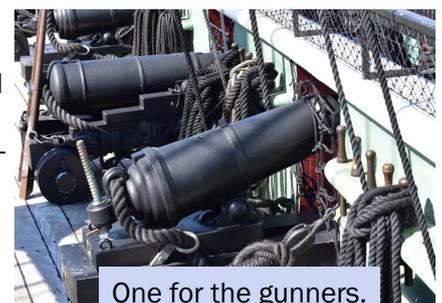
were dressed in period costume took place on the quayside, firing of muskets and a cannon, rope making and an array of emporia and merchants of the time. The interactive 'Fighting ships' experience was certainly worth a visit as you were taken on a journey through the draughty decks of HMS Prosperity around the time of Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar. A young crew member explaining how his shipmates prepared to do battle with the dastardly 'frogs' (I blame Brexit), with sound effects and smells to match. We did advise our photographer **Anthony**



Dalton-Hughes that the best shots were to be had from the top of the mast (see below) but for some reason he declined. Our Navy boys and girls threw themselves wholeheartedly into the experience by constantly 'Splicing the Mainbrace' - there were more flasks being passed around than at a football match on a cold day. Everyone I think had an enjoyable day and word has it that it could happen again next year for the people that couldn't make it this time. We rounded the day off with a stop at Heathfield Farm Carvery for a late afternoon meal on the way back to Bury (on reflection we could have stayed locally but this being our first visit, you learn by your mistakes). I'm sure it will be a big hit next year. Thanks must go to our coach operator ABC Coaches of Swinton who looked after



us superbly especially our driver Stuart who just happened to take us to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight earlier in the year and of course he is ex Royal Navy, so obviously a really good egg. Arriving back in Bury at about 7pm a good day was had by all.



One for the gunners.