



THE BELTRING BUGLE

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FOR THOSE WHO SERVED—WE SALUTE YOU

The War and Peace Show would not be the same without the visits from veterans of many conflicts. We are delighted that each year many hundreds of them visit to share their experiences and to ensure that history is remembered. We will be eternally grateful for their service, their sacrifices and their loyalty. Without them this country would not be what it is and we should celebrate and honour them at every single opportunity.

The centre of operations for our cherished guests is the fabulous Veterans Marquee. A hive of activity, you never know who you will meet – from former SAS/SBS members to highly decorated Normandy or Arnhem veterans and even Womens Land Army. *The Beltring Bugle* had the great privilege of talking to just a handful of these amazing people.

Ron Maitland-Flanagan (aged 88) served as a deep sea diver in the Royal Navy. He joined the SAS when it wanted amphibious volunteers as the only RN diver. Working with both the SAS and the Long Range Desert Group in North Africa, Europe, the Mediterranean and the

Aegean Islands, Ron was brought in as a mine clearance specialist where he was deployed before each raid to render explosive devices safe in enemy waters. He then put the SAS



Ron Maitland-Flanagan

teams onto the rendezvous (RV) point on shore, often many hundreds of miles into enemy territory. Ron was equipped with the same kit as his SAS team mates in case of capture - including escape money in gold sovereigns, silk maps sewn into his beret and compasses disguised as buttons. An incredibly self-deprecating man, when asked about the danger of the role he simply said: "It was just a job". Ron comes to The War and Peace Show every year, for all five days and enjoys giving advice on vehicle recreation.

Jim Hutchinson (aged 88) is also a former Royal Navy diver – who only retired from diving a few years ago! Joining up in June 1937 he saw

action in many different places and served on many different ships – including Chief Diver on HMS Belfast that now rests at anchor in central London. He was also the youngest diver in the RN at the age of 16 and a half.

As all veterans, Jim has many stories but his favourite surrounds his belief that he is the only man in the world to have been saved by a shark! While on HMS Phoebe he was torpedoed by U161 off the coast of North Africa in an attack that saw 56 killed and 40 wounded. Thrown 60 feet into the air, Jim landed head first into the water with an injured leg. Ready to give up and no hope of rescue Jim saw something floating in the water. Swimming over to it he found a dead shark, which: "Had obviously been blown out of the water by the blast and retained air in its lungs". This gave it buoyancy and he held onto it for about 2 hours until finally rescued! On a stretcher at Point Nord a Dr visited him and asked how he was. His biggest complaint was that his feet hurt – so the Dr removed his boots and shoes to find them full of swollen split peas and tea bags.. The only

theory is that they flew into his boots as he was blown from the ship!

Ron was also part of the Pedestal convoy that saved Malta and was delighted to be made an honorary citizen in celebration. He enjoys coming to The War and Peace Show: "Simply to talk to people".



Jim Hutchinson

Another area of veterans very often overlooked is the people who worked at home while the troops were away. The Womens Land Army served the very important role of ensuring food was continued to be produced while the men were away fighting. The Veterans Marquee welcomed a group of 15 WLA members yesterday from the Eastbourne area who regularly meet up every fortnight. We didn't ask the ladies we talked to their ages out of courtesy; however they are in all their late 80s to early 90s.

Doris Baker (nee Mockford) volunteered at 17 as her father was a farmer, working in general

Cont. overleaf

MAC V SOG

During the long Viet Nam campaign, the MAC V SOG was a US Special Forces unit tasked with deniable covert missions into Laos, North Viet Nam and Cambodia. Teams of 2-3 Americans and 5-6 indigenous mercenaries went on a number of missions including reconnaissance, prisoner snatch -where they grabbed informants for information - and bright light; the latter being the portrayal here at The War and Peace Show. A bright light mission involved the team of volunteers rescuing either a team in trouble or a downed pilot – and when the man in trouble was being chased by around 1,500 North Vietnamese troops they needed help urgently.

The MAC V SOG were effectively triple volunteers – having signed up for the army, then for Viet Nam and finally for Special Operations. They had no knowledge of what they were volunteering for and had to sign a secrecy act which carried a penalty of \$10,000 or a lengthy prison stretch if broken.

The volunteers had total leeway to wear and carry whatever weapons they wanted and tended to use Russian or Chinese makes. Although an extremely dangerous situation, there was one tiny advantage in knowing that anyone they encountered was guaranteed to be an enemy, whereas the opposition did not instantly have the same information.

The MAC V SOG re-enactors have created the Command Control Centre (CCC), the launch base for operations. A team would be at the base for seven days at a time waiting for a call to come in with a mission. In what was already an extremely stressful situation, the man who ran the reconnaissance missions, Ed Wolcolf, was once on base for 36-months.

The SOG was the highest decorated unit in Viet Nam with 11 Medal of Honors – which of course didn't mention anything other than for the conflict. It was only in 1982 when information was released that the US finally admitted its existence. Past members include Billy Waugh who moved into "contracting" and, as a member of the CIA, captured Carlos the Jackal, then saw action in Afghanistan in 2003 – aged 73!

The group has been together for four years and were drawn to the SOG as it was so experimental and new and had a complete free reign with its own black budget to run missions as they chose. To find out more see the group's website: www.modernforces.com



RE-ENACTOR AWARDS



When over 400 entries poured in for a chance to win one of the eleven categories for the WWII Re-enactment Magazine 'Best of the Best' 2011 Awards, it was no surprise that competition was going to be fierce. Re-enactment has seen a tremendous amount of growth over the past ten years and the hobby has evolved to a point where it truly recognises the reason why we give so much of our time and energy into remembering those who lived and died in WWII.

Hosted at the Ginger Gammon Bar by Viv the Spiv - and kindly presented by Rex Cadman, The War and Peace show owner - this year's awards presentation saw a fantastic array of groups both large and small. To kick-start the proceedings, the first category was for best contribution working with schools, for which Bunty and Richard Bowring took the accolade. Other awards ranged from best event photographer and best group working with charity, to best group working with veterans, best junior re-enactor and best air-soft group. Best Female Re-enactor and Best Male Re-enactor were collected by Michaela Beardshaw and Alan Main, who both offer great passion, dedication and extensive knowledge within the hobby. One group stole a brace of awards, including Best

Display and Best Group: Battle for Europe, formed just five years ago to portray the 56th independent infantry brigade, 2nd Battalion Essex.



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WOMENS LAND ARMY



farming with her sister. After a couple of years she set up as an agricultural contractor with her father, who owned the first diesel tractor, going to different farms around Eastbourne and ploughing with her Fordson. She enjoyed doing the general farming as it meant she didn't have to work on a Sunday – something the milkmaids had to do!

Doris' uncle was Frederick Stanley Mockford who was a pioneer of radio and originator of the Mayday distress call.

Gladys Marshall (nee Jackson) worked at Great Dunmow in Essex. She worked initially as a general farm worker doing ditching – which had to be 2 spits (spades) deep in the freezing cold – of course something that is done by machine these days. She was then asked to be the milk girl and delivered milk around Stebbing and Braintree and milked every second Sunday.

Gladys was then asked to work directly for a farm owned by Crittalls – as in the windows – when she moved to live in a private billet with five other girls. They worked together as a team, when Gladys was doing early milking duties she would then go home to prepare meals for her room mates after her chores were finished.

When asked for a memory, Gladys quickly volunteered one which provoked a fit of giggles: "I was painting the pig sties one day with creosote when I fell into it! I had to go home to change; it was very sticky and smelly!"

Hilda Brooker worked on the Isle of Wight picking up potatoes then moving onto tomatoes and

swedes. She was thankful she arrived after the sugar beet harvest had finished as it was extremely difficult: "We had to take one beet in each hand and pull both out at the same time! I was very lucky not to be involved in this!" She recalls digging in the frozen mud and shudders at the thought of bagging cabbage which was very difficult. Apparently the knack was to put one in each corner to start with! Hilda also remembers what she calls: "A couple of nice jobs; taking cattle to market – driving them on with a stick and doing hedging and ditching."

Hilda and her friends were also required to lift heavy loads, moving around half-hundredweights of vegetables by just throwing them over their shoulders. For the hundred-weight sacks they had a little help: the men threw them onto the ladies' backs for them! Hilda talked avidly and excitedly about what were obviously tough but enjoyable days. She talked of the: "Carter's half-barmy daughter who used to run around scaring birds" on one of the farms and the smell of rotten beetroot still came back easily to her when describing having to sort a pile of rotting beetroot that had been water damaged.

MAKE DO AND MEND

There are many female re-enactors at The War and Peace Show and they all happily talk about their fashion secrets. Original 1940s patterns can still be purchased, from boot fairs, jumble sales, military shows and the internet. Unsurprisingly the spirit of make do and mend is still alive and kicking. It can be time consuming and expensive to find authentic fabrics. One lady we spoke to was extremely pleased to have tracked down two original lengths of fabric today at the Show. Another had been given fabric



but didn't have enough to complete her garment so had managed to find a toning piece to finish her fetching outfit. And don't forget the importance of the button box! Buttons would be removed from no longer wearable clothes and saved in the button box, meaning that matches for lost buttons would be available, or buttons to complete a new outfit could be chosen.

Mainly only natural fabrics were in the shops, although Rayon and Tricelene (a woven mix of cotton and silk) were becoming popular – not only because they were easier to care for – but also because they could be cut and would drape in different ways from the natural fabrics.

Of course nowadays if you don't want to make

your own outfit it is possible to buy either original vintage pieces or replicas that are made up from original patterns. There are several stalls to be found at the Show, with fine examples to try and to buy. However, no outfit would be complete without some jewellery. Bakelite earrings and necklaces were popular. Typical of what was on offer today, were some bright orange earrings and also a striking Scotty dog brooch. Marcasite was often worn in the evening with some very ornate examples to be found around the Show.

Co-respondent or correspondent shoes? There are two schools of thought about this unusual name. Either that this type of footwear got the name because American war correspondents wore two-coloured shoes, or more interestingly, that they were worn by a certain type of male who, for a payment, would provide you with evidence for your divorce!!



HAVE YOU SEEN THIS VEHICLE?

This Panzer IV was built in 1944 in St Valentin, Austria. Found three years ago on the Estonia/Latvia border, half-buried in dense forest, it was bought by Steve Lamonby of Plusfilm.

A massive renovation project, the Panzer had suffered an internal explosion and its turret blown off. Having been sent a photo of the tank in situ, Steve had said: "Yes" immediately, not realising quite how extensive the damage

actually was!

The tank was rebuilt with almost entirely original parts during a 2.5 year project, which was funded by The Royal Jordanian Tank Museum. It has an original transmission but is currently running with a modern diesel engine until an original Maybach can be sourced – if you know of one please get in touch through *The Beltring Bugle*.



THE AVIATION & MILITARY VEHICLE DRAWINGS OF

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DAILY RATIONS

No. 98 Semolina cushions with jam sauce

Officers' Mess Catering, Middle East Land Forces, Egypt, 1947

Ingredients

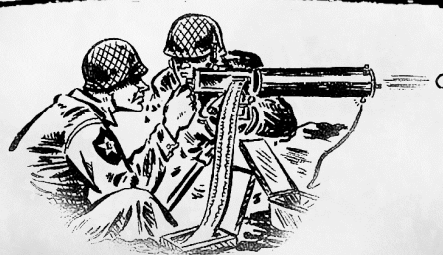
Half a pound of Semolina
3ozs Sugar
Breadcrumbs
One and a half pints of milk
Frying batter
Vanilla essence

Method

Bring the milk to the boil, rain in the semolina, stirring well, add the sugar, cover with a lid and cook slowly for half an hour; pour out on to a greased tray to get cold. Turn out on to a table, cut into small squares, dust with flour, pass through batter and crumbs, and fry to a golden colour in deep fat. Serve with hot jam sauce.

Just what you want in the desert!

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