

BRITISH VETERANS NEWS

SUMMER 2011

Leading Article: Our Commitment to Defence

These are interesting times for defence, even for those of us watching from the sidelines with a vivid recollection of previous cuts and downsizing. Yes, we recognise that the MoD is duty bound to do its bit to help plug the gaping hole in the country's finances - it can't be immune. But, at the same time, we look with concern at where it will end.

We have lost HMS Ark Royal and her Harrier fleet, the very asset that would have suited our commitment to Libya. The Infantry, those bearing the brunt of action in Afghanistan, are once again in the firing line. And the RAF is being stretched at great distance to undertake all its tasks. So yet again, despite assurances, it seems to be the front line that is bearing the cost whilst the procurement system - the very area that seems to waste millions - seems to have escaped attention.

Very shortly, the last British troops will withdraw from Iraq having completed their training commitment to the Iraqi navy. No doubt we will see images of the Union Jack being lowered for the last time in Umm Qasr. But what is in store for the returning Navy and Royal Marine personnel? They will know that the Military Covenant is to be enshrined in Law, but I doubt that their feet will touch the ground before they deploy again.

And why do we care? Because we are proud to have served.



**BRITISH
VETERANS**

recognition card

News

Last of British Troops to withdraw from Iraq in June this year. The conflict in Iraq has seen 179 British Armed Forces Personnel and MOD Civilian casualties since the campaign began in March 2003. The Royal Navy and Royal Marines have been mentoring since 2009 providing training to the Iraqi Navy.

New Personnel Recovery Centres are on the way with construction of the first already started in Colchester, Essex. The £70million plan will provide additional care and support to 200 wounded, injured and sick soldiers per year, to help them successfully return to duties or civilian life.

Britain rethinks defence cuts in light of Libyan conflict. Prime Minister David Cameron is said to be "actively engaged" in the reassessment of Britain's military capabilities and plans to reduce the number of RAF Tornado fighter jets and scrap surveillance planes may be reversed given their role in patrolling the no-fly zone in Libya.

Europe alone in cutting military budget, being the only major region in the world to see a fall in total military spending in 2010, at 2.8%. The UK cut its budget by only 0.8%, France by 8.4% with the largest cut in the EU being a 28% reduction in Bulgaria. Global military expenditure is estimated to have increased 1.3% to \$1.6trillion with the US accounting for \$19.6bn of the \$20.6bn increase, their own military spending up 2.8% in 2010. This is according to figures released by top global think tank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

British Veterans Reading Club

- We have an ever-growing collection of beautiful
- military books in the British Veterans office, ranging
- from War Office Infantry Training - The National
- Serviceman's handbook, to Letters from the Trenches,
- showing at close quarters the life of the PBI - "poor
- bloody infantry"! We have books by a myriad of
- authors, spanning centuries of global military activity,
- there is a bit of everything in our library - right down
- to everybody's favourite pilot, Biggles!
- In light of this, we have decided to offer **free books**
- **to any members** that would be interested in having
- a read and sending us a review. For a full list of
- available books please email info@britishveterans.co.uk
- or call us on 01376 513215 and we will send you
- a full list of our current stock with a brief outline of
- each title for your perusal. Simply let us know which
- would be of interest to you and we will send it out
- free of charge. All we ask in return is for you to jot
- your name, contact details and some thoughts (good
- or bad!) down and we will post your review on the
- British Veterans
- website. We ask
- that all books
- are returned to
- British Veterans
- to allow the next
- person to have a
- read and maybe
- challenge your
- review!



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Reunite at the VSC

The Victory Services Club (VSC), the all-ranks, tri-service, family-friendly London based club, is running a fantastic competition for British veterans.

Any veteran that joins the VSC between 1st February and 31st July 2011 will have the chance to win a reunion party at the club for up to 20 of their closest military mates.

Given that VSC already offers **1 years free membership** to British Veterans members, it seems a no-brainer. The MD has already submitted his entry! The prize includes party room hire, food (and drinks more importantly!), a photographer and an event manager to help with the planning and ensure it is an event that nobody will forget.

FREE TICKETS for MVT Military Show

British Veterans Recognition Card is running a **Members Only Competition**. For a chance to win one of two pairs of tickets to the MVT Military Show in Cambridge simply submit your contact details to info@britishveterans.co.uk or call 01376 513215.

The Severnside Military Vehicle Trust will be displaying a variety of over 200 military vehicles. Further details



on this and other shows can be found on the British Veterans website. All monies raised at this event will help both national and regional military charities.

Farewell

British Veterans is sad to report the passing of Eric Evans. During the war Mr Evans proudly served in the Navy from 1943 - 1946 and sadly died of cancer on 11th April aged 85. Mr Evans was one of our longest standing members and our thoughts are with his family and friends at this difficult time.

Events

Saturday 11th - Sunday 12th June

The Severnside MVT Military Show.
DISCOUNT APPLIES FOR BVRC MEMBERS

Saturday 25th June

Armed Forces Day

Saturday 25th June

Against All Odds - Bomber Command Special Interest Day. Duxford Imperial War Museum

FREE ENTRY ON PRODUCTION OF BRITISH VETERANS RECOGNITION CARD

Saturday 25th - Sunday 26th June

Wiltshire British Armed Forces and Veterans Celebrations.

Please check the website for further details

A Note from the Membership Secretary

We have recently been contacted by BBC Researchers with regard to the new Remembrance Week Series, a five-part series of programmes commemorating Remembrance Day, scheduled to be aired on BBC1 in the week leading up to Memorial Day on November 14. They are partially concentrating on the North African Campaigns and, following our British Veterans' WWII trip to Libya last year, we were able to put them in touch with members who have recently returned from visiting the Battlefields of Libya, together with the details of other members who served in North Africa during the last World War.

Remembrance Week will include interviews with people from across the UK's armed forces who have fought in conflicts from the second World War through to the current campaign in Afghanistan as well as civilians and the families of those who have fought or are fighting in wars. If anyone has memories they would like to share, please contact us and we will forward you details to the BBC.

