

# POPPY AMBASSADORS 2011

THE ROYAL BRITISH  
LEGION



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## Raymond Frederick (Fred) Turner



“You only remember the good times”

**Regiment Royal Engineers.**

**Served from 13/09/1964 to 3/2/1991**

**Rank on Leaving Troop Sergeant.**

**Knickname “Fred the Bomb”**

### **Service Background**

Raymond joined the Army in 1964 as a Junior Leader at Old Park Barracks in Dover, Kent.

In 1967 Raymond was posted to Germany where in joined the Armoured Engineers, here he worked his way up through the Tank Trades, until when in 1977/78 he became an instructor at RAC Centre Bovington.

In 1982 I moved to Ripon and did a tour in the Falklands.

In 1986 (ish) I went to Bomb Disposal to finish my time in the Army, I actually stayed on longer! This was a post based in Rochester and saw me promoted to Troop Sergeant. I carried out Explosive displays, I was asked by the CO to stay on to help with my expertise and experience, I actually stayed on for an extra 3 years.

### **Good Times**

I remember eating a tin of beans between six of us, with 1 spoon, having cooked them on the engine of a Tank!

### **Civvi Street.**

I left the Army to work in the National Home Care, repairing washing machines; I left there to work on the Channel Tunnel security. I then worked at the Asylum Detention Centre.

### **RBL Help and Support.**

In 2009, a man was fitting our kitchen, we needed a new cooker, I knew what they did, but I never thought it would be for people like me. The repair man gave me a card for Cathy Ash; I was advised about the “Decent Homes Grant”. I couldn’t have done the house without it. The RBL also helped me in 1992; I secured a payment due to the loss of hearing.

### **Thoughts on the RBL?**

I always put a £1 in the tin, bought my poppy, went on parade, but I never thought about where the money went and never thought it had anything to do with me.

### **Would you encourage people to support the RBL Poppy Appeal?**

Yes, because there are lots of ex-squaddies that need help, they’re crying out for help, and often don’t know where it is.



## Lisa Booth

### Service: Royal Air Force.

Served from: 7/5/91 to 22/10/03

### Service Background.

I joined the RAF on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 1991, and completed my recruit training at RAF Swindon, and basic training at RAF Hereford. When I'd completed both, I was posted to the tri-National Tornado Establishment at RAF Cottesmore, arriving in 1991. I began my tour as PD Clerk in PSF, undertaking a number of roles which culminated in me working as a JNCO ic P1. I then had a posting for 4 months to Bahrain in support of operations in the Middle East. I got to fly with aircraft on various taskings, seeing my old Tornado colleagues from Cottesmore and Leeming.

I also met my future husband whilst here in Bahrain.

On returning to the UK in Dec 99 I went back to RAF Leeming. A few months later I exchanged to RAF Brieze Norton as a JNCO ic Discharges /P2. My last role before leaving on maternity leave in May 02 was that of acting Sgt, as PA to the Stn Cdr, this was the highlight of my career and I had a brilliant time whilst working for the Grp Capt.

I returned to work after the birth of my son, and joined 216 Sqn; I didn't like being separated from my 3 month old son, so left the RAF on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2003.

### Good Times

Definitely Bahrain, where I saw the bigger picture of what our Armed Forces do, and my time as PA to the Stn Cdr at Brieze Norton.

### Civvi Street

I didn't find the transfer from military to civilian life difficult. (I found the reason why I left the RAF difficult to deal with, and still feel slightly aggrieved about the whole thing.

### RBL Help and Support

My son and I needed support when my marriage collapsed and we needed to relocate and start to build our lives again. When we moved to our first home we received white goods and a grant by the way of vouchers, towards school uniform. However, the biggest assistance has been recently with rent, electric and car repair bills. As a result of not receiving tax credits for a few months, I needed to replace our car, we were beginning to drown financially, and I asked the RBL for support and guidance. We had fallen behind with our rent and needed help quickly. I had started my own business, and it was starting to show results, so I knew we would be better off financially moving forward this year, but we needed the help immediately. I have since received financial help for the rent arrears, vouchers for ASDA to help with food, and assistance towards the cost of repairs for the car.

### Thoughts on the RBL.

I have found everyone I've dealt with very helpful, considerate and non judgemental. As a whole "being" I believe that the RBL offer much needed support and welfare network, not only for veterans but for people like myself, who are in serious need of emotional support, financial help or pretty much anything else actually! You start with a voice at the end of a telephone, either Legion line or a local office, and literally go from there. ***I doubt I'd have got through the past few months without their continued support and guidance, so you could say that the RBL are lifesavers.***

### Would you encourage people to support the RBL Poppy Appeal?

The poppy appeal is a brilliant way to raise funds for the charity, which benefits veterans, service personal and their families. People need to be aware of the work that the RBL carry out, and they wouldn't be able to do this if people didn't support the Poppy Appeal. The annual appeal is also an ideal time to tell people about what the RBL do. The poppy is a symbol of remembrance, but also represents the possibility of a brighter future for service families and personal who need support and guidance. I think there needs to be a stronger message that the poppy Appeal helps everyone, echoing the information in the various leaflets. Without the funds raised by the Appeal, those who need help most simply wouldn't receive it.



"We were beginning to drown financially"



## Eddie Holness

**Regiment Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. REME**

**Served from 1984 to 1990**

**Rank on Leaving Chief Clerk**



### Service Background

I joined the REME as an avionics technician in 1984, I changed trades on completion of basic training to clerk. I was posted to 29 CDO Regt RA in 1985. Promoted to Full Corporal in 1986. I was commando trained and also parachute trained. I was promoted to Chief Clerk when posted to the Army Recruitment Centre Sutton Coldfield. I took part in an organised sailing event; it was during this that I suffered a severe back injury which led to my medical discharge in 1990.

### Good Times

I loved every minute, best time of my life.

### Civi Street

Transferring to Civi Street was very difficult, I felt lonely, isolated and forgotten. I received no support, no companionship and no assistance.

### RBL Help and Support

I needed help constantly, and found about the RBL through SSAFA. The RBL enabled me to have a new cooker, washing machine, TV and food vouchers. I also had counselling and a person to talk to. The RBL has enabled me to be here and write this.

### Thoughts on RBL

I cannot express in words my thanks or gratitude for all they have done for me.

### Would you encourage people to support the RBL Poppy Appeal?

For people like me, their work is a life saver literally.

"For people like me, their work is a life saver literally."

## Brad Russell

### Regiment “ PWRR

Served from 1997 - 2002

Rank on Leaving Private

### Service Background

I joined the Army in 1997, to prove to myself and others I had what it takes. I joined my Battalion in 1998 after training and soon after went on my first tour of Northern Ireland. I spent six months there before being transferred to Aldershot. Unfortunately I got into trouble with the Police and was discharged, this still haunts me to this day, as being a soldier is all I ever wanted to do.



### Good Times

Laughs with good friends.

### Civi Street

On leaving the Army I found it impossible to adapt and turned to drink to fill in the void, this in turn led to me destroying my life and everyone I came in contact with. I suffered from depression and made numerous suicide attempts, which led me to being sectioned under the mental health act. I also battled alcoholism.

### RBL Help and Support

The RBL have helped me financially and given me and my two daughters a “Poppy Break”. After also attending AA meetings, I am now in control of my life. I am studying to become a fitness trainer and trying to secure funds for a sports massage therapy course. I have rediscovered myself thanks to the Legion. Friends are currently sparse, during to being a bit of a loner, I intend to change this, and hope to complete my first half marathon in September, in aid of the Royal British Legion. I hope to be a fitness trainer and sports therapist running my own business.

### Thoughts on the RBL

The RBL have given me inspiration to turn my life around, as I was so humbled by the help I received and the kind understanding which was shown. The RBL has also helped me in so many ways, not just financially, but gave me the strength to finally combat alcoholism. The holiday I had with my children will stay in our memories forever.

### Would you encourage people to support the RBL Poppy Appeal?

To help others less fortunate who have given so much for so little.

Ps

Brad is a 31 father of two girls, one 2 the other 4, he lives in Folkestone and is currently unemployed hoping to return to college to become a gym instructor and sports injury therapist.

“The holiday I had with my children will stay in our memories forever”.

## William Noble



### Service Background

I joined the Scots Guards as a boy soldier in 1975, this was to broaden my horizons and travel as I had never been further than my home town until then!

I have guarded the Royal Palaces, seen service in Britain, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Falkland Islands, Kenya and the USA.

I accompanied the Queen when she visited Northern Ireland in 1977 as part of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

### Good Times

The most proud moment was when I received my Falklands Medal from the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

### Civi Street

I expected to fall flat on my face but didn't, kept busy only recently having more time to myself that I have become insular.

### RBL Help and Support

The RBL have given me an interest in giving something back, possibly as a caseworker.

### Thoughts on the RBL

The RBL is underfunded, unique in as much as every ex-serviceman and woman unlike others. H4H.

### Would you encourage people to support the RBL Poppy Appeal?

Yes, it is a valuable service to ex servicemen and woman.

Ps

William is divorced with three children, he sees his daughters occasionally. He likes computers and the internet and used to run his own Chauffeur Company. He worked for the White House and President of the USA, and toured with the Red Hot Chilli Peppers. He also has a certificate from the white house which is framed and kept by his mum.

"RBL have given me an interest in giving something back"

## Vackacegh Nicholas Bennion

### Regiment 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion PWRR

Served from 4/2/2000 to 7/2/2007

Rank on Leaving

### Service Background

I joined the Armed Forces from Fiji, as it was an opportunity that does not come often, joining a Foreign Army. I trained in Aldershot, Pirbright, I then got shifted to Bassingbourne to begin my 12 week course as introduction to army life. Once completed I then moved to Catterick to further my training to become a fully trained Infantry man. During these courses, I was not even aware of other branches Upon completion of my training in August, I joined my unit in Tidworth just in time for my first tour in the Balkans. I took part in a lot of events during my time in the Army; one major event was going to Iraq in 2004. We took over camp Abunaji in Alamarch, we lost two of our comrades, and few received honours such as the Victorian Cross.

I left the Army in 2007 after a second Operational Tour to Iraq.

### Good Times

Operation Telic. One of the best tours, although we lost two men, it was an experience that makes a soldier fully understand the meaning of being a soldier.

### Civvi Street

Transferring to civilian life was a bit of a challenge, as the briefing was totally different to actually experiencing it. There were a few difficulties I encountered. Financially money was difficult, finding work, understanding the laws and system that entitles you to certain benefits and many more.

### RBL Help and Support.

I found out about the RBL in 2010 through the Internet. We received financial support and moral support from the RBL. We were blessed to have dedicated staff at the legion that supported us by settling us into our new flat. They helped financially through vouchers in which we bought some household items, buggy for the kids. They also provided us with electrical appliances, and furniture. The case worker that helped us was really helpful and so are the staff at the main office. We believed that without the RBL help, we wouldn't be where we are today.

### Would you encourage people to support the RBL Poppy Appeal?

Because the help they are giving is beneficial, not only to those who left the service being in the Army, Marines and Navy, but also to those who are still serving. The little help they give during the Poppy Appeal will mean so much more to those whom the Royal British Legion will be assisting in the future.

Ps.

Is married with 3 children, one who is still in Fiji. He is currently working as a warehouse assistant in Rochester. His main interests are helping others, rugby, socialising and reading. Part of what I aspire to is to help unprivileged kids, the homeless and most importantly I would like to be part of those who would advise those who are still in the Army, on what to expect when they come into Civilian life.



"We were blessed to have dedicated staff at the legion"

## Paul Anthony Grieve



### Regiment Royal Air Force

Served from 1974 to 1980

### Service Background

I joined the Royal Air Force in 1974, I was interested in Aircraft, a job full of excitement and a chance to travel.

### Good Times

Mostly had a good time, mistake leaving when I did.

### Civi Street

I found the first year difficult, mainly due to the very different humour and what was acceptable in civilian life.

### RBL Help and Support.

In 2011 I received a training grant and some food vouchers. I am still on the course that I received the grant for, my confidence has improved and I'm sure that when I complete my course it will turn my life around.

### Thoughts on the RBL

I have found that the legion runs an excellent service, and I'm sure if they were not doing their sterling work, many ex service personal would not be here now.

### Would you encourage people to support the RBL Poppy Appeal?

With what is happening in the middle east, the legion is needed more now that it has been for some years.

"I have found that the legion runs an excellent service"



## Lee Wickham

### Regiment 23 Pioneer Regiment PLC

Served from 6/1/1999 to 6/6/2004



### Service Background

I joined the Army in January 1999, because I had a limited education, and my brother was in the Army and he really enjoyed it.

I began training at Pirbright before going to Catterick for Infantry Training. I joined the regiment in Oxfordshire, Bicester. After a year I took my PTI 3 course and passed, I started working in gym training the entire regiment. I went on to pass the PTI 2 course and became 2IC in gym and continued there until 2003.

I was then deployed to Iraq. Whilst on Patrol one night, I took a bad fall and ruptured my Quadriceps Tendons. They were unable to be repaired and I was discharged in June 2004.



### Good Times

My main lasting memories will be all the amazing committed people I met whilst serving. I feel as though and serving personal are the bravest most honourable people you could ever wish to work alongside.

### Civvi Street

The difficulties I had would be that I felt lost with no direction in life, I didn't know what I could do as I had no real qualifications and a disability, and I found I started drinking heavily.

### RBL Help and Support.

I found out about the RBL through Mr Payne of SSAFA, we needed our house adapting, so that a downstairs could be adapted into a bedroom and a wet room. With the help from the RBL, my life has been made more comfortable, as I no longer have the agonising attempts of going upstairs to use the toilet and bath, and my wife no longer has to ponder to almost every need.

### Thoughts on RBL

The Royal British Legion to me is a fantastic organisation, who really does strive to help those in need, and do an amazing job in doing so. But what I will also say is that I do feel a lot of younger people who could benefit from what the RBL offer, have a perception that the RBL is only for the elder generation. It could maybe make itself more aware that the RBL is there for all ages.

The Royal British Legion to me is a fantastic organisation, who really does strive to help those in need,

### Would you encourage people to support the RBL Poppy Appeal?

I would encourage people because without the support of the Great British public, the RBL would not be able to help all the brave men and woman who have dedicated so much for their Country, and because they do this they deserve to be helped in anything possible.



CONTACT US

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