



# THE KNOT UNITES

## North Staffordshire RBL



Registered Charity No 219279.

### April 2013



Ladies and Gentlemen:

The joint Special General Meeting of the County Conferences took place on Sunday 24 March at the Alrewas RBL Club. Delegates braved the inclement weather and the meeting was only slightly delayed.

Mr Martin Tighe, Chairman of the Membership Council, attended the meeting and had to inform the delegates that the elections for County Chairman & Vice-Chairman could not take place because CV's for the nominee's had not been circulated to delegate's

The nominee's for the County Committee & County Conference Committee were appointed unopposed.

The adjourned Special General Meeting of the County Conferences will reconvene as soon as possible to carry out the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

GET MONEYFIT WITH  
**MONEYFORCE**

**Delivered by The Royal British Legion,** MoneyForce provides independent, impartial financial information to serving personnel and their families with the aim of helping them manage their money better.

The project is a strategic collaboration between the Legion and the MOD, with finance provided by Standard Life Charitable Trust. Content has been sourced and adapted from the Money Advice Service and MOD, with specialist military Pensions content endorsed by the Forces Pension Society.

Built by award-winning digital agency Reading Room, the MoneyForce website has been developed in close consultation with the Legion and single service representatives. At every step of the process from conception, to prototype, to launch, the three single services have been active in inputting into and refining the site.

You can access the MoneyForce website at [www.moneyforce.org.uk](http://www.moneyforce.org.uk)

## Legion attends Brigade InterSports

**Competition** for the first time, showing continuous support for **Armed Forces' Sports**



The Legion made it's first ever presence at the annual "12th Mechanised Brigade" Festival of Sport on 11-12 March held in the Bulford and Tidworth Garrison areas in Wiltshire. We have never before received such a high profile at a festival of sport, with Legion representatives attending all sporting activities.

The 14 Unit's competed in a number of sports including: Football, Rugby, Hockey, Netball, Swimming, Cross-Country as well as a Tug-of-War competition.

Brigadier Doug Chalmers OBE, Commander of 12th Mechanised Brigade handed out the trophies to the winning teams, thanking the Legion for being present at the sports festival and for co-sponsoring the trophies.

The Competition provided an ideal opportunity for Regional Legion staff to show their support, engage with the military and to better inform and educate Service personnel about the relevance of the Legion to them.

Paul Osborne, Regional Publicity and Membership Officer South for the Legion said:

"The Legion recognises that sport makes a vital contribution to the morale and wellbeing of men and women in the Services and we continue to strengthen our awareness-raising role within the Armed Forces community through support for sport".

The Charity has been developing its connections with the military sporting community and there are likely to be an increasing number of similar regional events coming soon.

## Heroes Return WW2 Veteran Tour Funding Extended



Over £25 million has been awarded since 2004 to more than 52,000 Second World War veterans, widows, spouses and carers across the country for journeys in the UK, France, Germany, the Middle East, Far East and beyond.

The Legion's specialist travel division Remembrance Travel will be one of the main organisers of visits under this scheme, which will operate through to 2015.

Funds are available for WW2 veterans (including former prisoners of war) to visit the countries where they served between September 1939 and September 1945.

This grant scheme enables WW2 veterans, their spouse and a carer (where necessary) to return to where they served in the UK or overseas with substantial funds being made available towards the cost of travel and accommodation.

If you would like a Remembrance Travel 2013 Tour Programme phone 0843 316 1167, email [info@remembrancetravel.org.uk](mailto:info@remembrancetravel.org.uk) or visit [www.remembrancetravel.org.uk](http://www.remembrancetravel.org.uk).

For more information about grants from Heroes Return, call the advice line on 0845 00 00 121 or visit [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/heroesreturn](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/heroesreturn).

## Arctic Stars

The first Arctic Stars, to be worn by veterans of convoys to Russia during the Second World War, have been produced at the Royal Mint.



*Arctic Star medals being produced at the Royal Mint Cardiff*

Just hours after the government announced that Royal Navy and merchant sailors, airmen and soldiers who survived the 4-year campaign could apply for the medals, the first Arctic Stars went into production at the [Royal Mint](#).

Up to 120,000 veterans, or their next of kin, are believed to be eligible for the star, whose design mirrors similar Second World War campaign medals, such as the Atlantic Star.

The medal recognises service between 1941 and 1945 delivering vital aid to the Soviet Union, running the gauntlet of enemy submarine, air and surface ship attacks.

The campaign cost the lives of around 3,000 sailors and merchant seamen, and over 100 civilian and military ships were lost, with the nadir coming in the summer of 1942 when convoy PQ17 was mauled by the Luftwaffe and 9 U-boats.

Beyond the threat of the enemy, the men endured terrible weather conditions, the darkness of the polar winter and 24-hour daylight at the height of summer. If ships were sunk, sailors perished in minutes in waters barely above freezing.

Given the horrors they faced, Gavin Elliott, Commemorative Coin Head of Production at the Royal Mint, said his colleagues were treating each Arctic Star struck with great care:

Each medal is individual - it's important that the quality of the medal is right. Each one is handled with great care and attention.

We take great pride in what we are doing. We're very conscious that this is very important to those who will be receiving the medal.

Although nearly 7 decades have passed since the last Second World War campaign medals were produced, Mr Elliott said the manner of striking the bronze awards had not changed. He explained:

They are made in exactly the same way as the 1939 to 1945 stars. Bronze is our traditional metal and we are producing these new stars in the traditional manner.

It is thought between 200 and 400 sailors, all now in their late 80s at their youngest, survive from the 4-year-long campaign, a mission Churchill acknowledged was 'the

worst journey in the world'. The families of those no longer alive will also be able to apply for the Arctic Star in recognition of their loved ones' bravery.

Whilst the aim is to recognise those who served on the Arctic Convoys, all who served north of the Arctic Circle during the Second World War are eligible, including members of all 3 Services as well as the Merchant Navy who crewed the ships taking the vital supplies to Russia.

The Arctic Stars are produced by the same team responsible for providing MOD with up to 40,000 medals a year, such as the Afghanistan operational service award - upholding a tradition of campaign medals going back to the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

Applications for the medal can be made via [www.veterans-uk.info/arctic\\_star\\_index.htm](http://www.veterans-uk.info/arctic_star_index.htm) or write to: The Arctic Star, MOD Medal Office, Imjin Barracks, Innsworth, Gloucester, GL3 1HW.

Veterans of Bomber Command will also begin receiving new awards in recognition of their heroic service within the next few weeks.

## Legion Funds Six Flats for London's Homeless Ex-Service People



A Legion grant of £25,000 has helped transform the lives of six homeless ex-Servicemen, by paying to refurbish Big House Clapham, a block of six new flats providing secure and independent housing.

Big House Clapham was officially opened by the Legion's National Vice Chairman John Crisford and Superintendent of West London Mission Rev. Sue Keegan von Allmen in a ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February, followed by an informal reception to show guests the completed work.

The grant to the West London Mission, a Christian charity supporting homeless people, has paid for essential repairs to Big House Clapham and the cost of a Housing Support Officer to help residents move back to permanent housing. It will also fund the maintenance and running costs for the first six months.

One of the residents, Brian Daly who saw active Service in the Falklands while serving with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The Welsh Guards, before being stationed in Germany with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, said:

“My life before coming to Big House was chaotic, my marriage broke down, and I wasn't going anywhere. I was living in the bottle and was happy to stay in this situation. At Big House, I started to cut back on my drinking and had to face my problems and grow up because there they treated me like an adult with personal responsibilities.

“I liked the idea of moving into Big House Clapham. The accommodation offered me more space and a nicer flat. So far it has been a good decision, and I've enjoyed living alongside ex-Servicemen who understand me and I understand them.”

Superintendent of West London Mission Rev. Sue Keegan von Allmen said:

“Ex-Servicemen can often be among the forgotten casualties of war and we are delighted to see the expansion of our work with the opening of Big House Clapham which will provide high quality move-on accommodation for ex-Servicemen who have experienced homelessness – helping them on the journey of transformation.

## The Staffordshire Great War Trail

The Staffordshire Great War Trail is being developed as part of the county's commemoration of the centenary of the Great War, and Staffordshire County Council are looking to find out about people's interest in the Great War and the themes they would like to see for the commemoration.

Completing the survey via the link to the online survey below will greatly assist this worthwhile effort.

The survey is live until Monday 8 April:  
[www.staffordshiregreatwar.com](http://www.staffordshiregreatwar.com)

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## Diary of Events

Annual Conference, Llandudno  
– Sat/Sun 18/19 May 2013  
Festival of Remembrance, Stafford  
– 2 November 2013

### Standard Bearer Training The Polish Club, Stafford

10 April 2013  
8 May 2013  
12 June 2013  
10 July 2013  
14 August 2013  
Standard Bearers Competition 8 September 2013  
11 September 2013  
9 October 2013  
13 November 2013  
11 December 2013



### Poppy Shop

Using our Poppy Shop is easy. Just browse our online store and make your purchases. You will be asked to register so return shopping is even quicker - just login and make your purchases. Buying from the Poppy Shop provides funding for The Royal British Legion to continue their work helping the Armed Forces family.

[www.poppysshop.org.uk](http://www.poppysshop.org.uk)  
**0300 123 9110**