THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

St James's Branch

PRESIDENT: HRH THE DUKE OF YORK KG KCVO ADC CHAIRMAN: SANDY DAVIE OBE SECRETARY: DAVID PAGE MBE

www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/stjames

Message from the Chairman

The unexpected death of Derek Howard-Budd (HB), a long-term member of the Branch Committee, on the 1st of January, knocked the wind out of the Committee over the Festive season. He will be sorely missed by not only your Committee but also by the many other organisations with which he was actively involved.

A most eventful 90th Year for the Legion succeeded in raising public awareness of the Legion's involvement in, and support for, the ex-Service community - every day of the year, not just at Poppy time. Our support to those currently serving continues to grow, often in partnership with the Ministry of Defence and other charities, to ensure that our servicemen and their families receive the best possible care. You will have seen details of these activities in Legion Magazine, so I have no intention of repeating them here, other than to highlight the Legion's success in changing Government plans to abolish the post of the Chief Coroner; thereby ensuring consistent standards of service throughout UK when dealing with the repatriation of servicemen killed on operations and providing for compassionate treatment of their families and next of kin at very difficult times.

So, while the efforts of the Legion community to increase its fundraising efforts over the 90th year have been very successful, the demands for the Legion's welfare assistance continue to grow. Something in the order of £1,400,000 is spent every week throughout the year on our beneficiaries. The Poppy Appeal brings in between £35M and £40M annually, so it is clear that the Legion's fundraising team is working hard to raise the balance of the monies required. Much of that money comes from a wide range of Legion supporters - many of whom are not Legion members - but who simply wish to support the objectives of the Legion. My understanding is that there are almost one million 'supporters' regularly contributing to appeals, buying raffle tickets etc. Between them, they contribute almost £30M annually.

Many of you will have been following efforts to revitalise Legion membership, through articles in Legion Magazine and on the Legion's website. In my view, there are two main reasons for this; firstly, to sustain the "comradeship" that has been re-introduced as a Royal British Legion objective; and, secondly, to comply with the Charity Commission direction that Legion membership should be self-funding and not subsidised by funds raised from the public for welfare purposes. Currently, the Legion charges Branches a £12 fee for each member on their books. Unfortunately, this fee does not cover the full cost of membership administration and is therefore set to increase by £1 annually, for the next 4 years. However, it is likely that proposals will be made at the Legion Annual Conference (in Scarborough 19/20 May 2012) to increase this membership fee to £16 from 1 Oct 2012. If such a proposal is accepted, then the combined St James's Branch/Legion membership fee will be increased accordingly.

As a Branch, in November, we were able to present a cheque for £50,000 to the Legion-sponsored National Memorial Arboretum Appeal as well as our annual donation of £40,000 to the Legion's Welfare programme, where it is utilised within the guidelines of our Benevolence scheme. We continue to work to our Branch target of raising £100,000, by the end of this year, for the Legion's Battle Back Centre. Progress has been slow, but I am sure you will be impressed when reading the continuing efforts made by Jeffrey Long to help achieve that target.

I make no apologies for concentrating on financial issues in this article. However, I hope it is clear that in order to provide the Legion's ongoing support to those who are serving, veterans and their dependants, a sound financial foundation is essential. I hope that St James's Branch and our 16,000 members will continue to contribute significantly to the Legion's enduring objectives over the coming year and beyond.

Editor's note: Sandy has now been elected onto the National District Committee.

Contacting the Branch

Can we please remind our members that if you need to make contact with the Branch, our address, telephone number and e-mail address can be found at the bottom of this newsletter. When sending any correspondence, please make sure that you clearly mark the envelope for the attention of the St James's Branch.

Legion Magazine

If there is more than one Legion member in your house, you will each receive your own copy of the Legion magazine. In the interests of economy, if you only wish to receive one copy per household, please contact the Branch Office.

Please address your correspondence to
The Secretary, St. James's Branch, The Royal British Legion, Haig House, 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA
Christine Martin email: cmartin@britishlegion.org.uk Tel: 020 3207 2335
Registered Charity No. 219297

SPRING 2012

EDITOR: JEFFREY LONG MBE

AGM 2011

The AGM was held on 24 November 2011 at the Union Jack Club where our Chairman, Sandy Davie conducted the members with his usual efficiency though the agenda.

Items of special interest included the Branch proposed charter motion, Branch Benevolent Scheme & potential Branch projects.

The Committee was elected as follows:

President:
HRH The Duke of York KG KCVO ADC

Vice Presidents:
Col. R R St J Barkshire CBE TD JP DL
Col. Sir Greville Spratt GBE TD JP
Col. Sir John Bradbeer OBE TD DL
Col. Alan Protheroe CBE FRICS JP DL
Sir Hugh Cubitt CBE FRICS JP DL
Mr Graham G Downing CBE

Chairman:
Group Captain Sandy Davie OBE RAF Rtd

Vice Chairman: Mr David C Page MBE

Secretary: Mr Jim Organ

Treasurer: Mr Jim Organ

Committee:

Mr Melvyn Corley	Herts
Mr Phillip Eddens	Kent
Mr Jeffrey Long MBE	W Yorks
Mr John Topping	N Yorks
Mr Alan Wanbon	RAF Rep
Mrs Nova Western	London

Standard Bearer:
Mr John Robson

Following the AGM a wine reception was held. Prior to dinner the RBL National President Lt Gen Sir John Kiszely was presented with a cheque for £50,000 for the National Memorial Arboretum Appeal.

St James's Branch Tie

The tie is in navy polyester with red and gold diagonal stripes. It shows the RBL crest with St James's Branch underneath. Cheques for £7.00 inc p&p should be made payable to RBL St James's Branch and your envelope should be clearly marked for the attention of the St James's Branch.

St James's Branch Annual Dinner 2011



The RBL's 90th Anniversary celebration was the theme of this year's dinner at the Union Jack Club. Jeffrey Long organised the dinner and a brilliant raffle that raised an extra £340 in donations. Always a friendly occasion, excellent value and an enjoyable evening, we were fortunate to have as our guest of honour the National President of the Legion, Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely KCB MC DL. Sandy Davie, our Chairman presented a St James's Branch cheque to him for £50,000 in aid of the National Memorial Arboretum appeal. Sir John presented a special Branch Certificate to Ursula Troke, 90 years 'young', for an exceptional contribution to fund-raising. She encouraged her friends not to give her 90th birthday gifts but give to the Legion instead and then in 2011 held a tea party that raised even more funds! Sir John also commented on the huge contribution our Branch makes to the Royal British Legion General Fund each year.

A special mention to all those who provided prizes for the Fund Raising draw. Most prizes came from the Bradford area, including Keith Webster, Bradford Central Branch. Others include Ursula Troke, RBL Bottisham, Hotter, The Times and Alan and Mary Wanbon who also provided the wine for the reception and not forgetting Betty's of Harrogate for the Yorkshire Tea samples.

Grateful thanks, once again, to Jeffrey Long for all his efforts to make this event a memorable one!

Alan Wanbon "Back in the Fold"

We are pleased to welcome Alan back to the UK after completing a tour in Ramstein, Germany. He is now based at RAF Marham, Norfolk, where he is Station Warrant Officer. As always he will be doing his bit to promote the RBL and to recruit new members.

Battle Back Appeal

A huge thank you to everyone who has already donated to this worthy cause, so far £1,148.50 has been raised in response to the appeal in the newsletter. As we go to print, Jeffrey Long has also raised £9,260.00 from his 90 mile Challenge and 90th Anniversary dinners, and continues to fund raise.

We are still looking to add to this amount, and if you would like to make a donation, please complete the form on the back of the newsletter.

Lapel Badge

Replacement badges are available at £4.00 inc p&p. Please send your request and payment to the Branch office and mark the envelope for the attention of the St James's Branch.

AGM & Dinner 2012

This will be held as normal at the Union Jack Club, and the provisional date this year will be Thursday 22 November. Further details will appear in the Autumn newsletter, and once we have the date confirmed, you will also be able to check it on our website.

Branch Website

For the latest news go to http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/stjames We welcome your news and views, please e-mail john.topping@btinternet.com

Obituary: Derek Howard-Budd

The St James's Branch Committee were shocked to learn of the sudden death of a much-loved Committee member Derek Howard-Budd on New Year's Day 2012.

HB, as he was known, had a long association with RBL working in the Club department for many years. He then moved to SSAFA and was Head of Welfare there, but joined us on the Branch Committee, where his extra input through SSAFA was very valuable. A charming and exuberant chap, always 'dapper', he had many strings to his bow. At a magnificent funeral service in St Margaret's Church, Westminster, attended by 750 people, we learned of the wide spectrum of activities that were his life. A strong faith, which sustained him as he learned of his terminal illness, his service life as Head of the Naafi, his work as a Samaritan, a Blue Badge Guide, a high-ranking Mason and a special usher in Westminster Abbey. The Dean of Westminster, a friend, took the service and spoke very movingly.

One story however, related by HB's best friend, was of HB's time in the first Gulf War where he was in command of the Naafi. Charged with making a rendez-vous with the rest of the troops, he and his men got hopelessly lost in the desert. In typical HB style, he got his men to get the tea urn going and make a cuppa. In the distance he saw some soldiers so thought he wasn't too far from his rendez-vous. These turned out to be Iraqi soldiers! However they surrendered to HB, having seen the tea urn from a distance, and mistaking it for a missile! A story that became legendary.

He will be sorely missed.

Nova Western
St James's Branch Committee

Gold Badge Award



Congratulations to Branch Members John and Tiggy Underhill who were recently presented with Gold Badges by the President of the RBL Lt Gen Sir John Kiszely. For many years they have been involved with the Legion's Pedal to Paris ride, providing a sweeper van for support when needed, conveying the participants baggage, and bringing the bikes back to the UK. The 2011 ride raised £548,000.

It was their idea to have the Cathedral Concerts around the UK as part of the 90th Anniversary Celebration, from which over £100,000 was raised.

Festival of Remembrance Tickets

The application form for tickets to the **evening performance** is printed on the back page of this newsletter. We are sorry but we will not be able to issue tickets to all those who apply. We will only accept applications via this form, and the form must be returned back to the **Branch Office** and **should not** be sent to the Royal Albert Hall. Please do not send a self-addressed envelope with your application.

You can however apply for tickets for the **afternoon performance** direct from the Royal Albert Hall from **1st July**. Applications can either be made by telephone: 020 7589 8212, on-line **www.royalalberthall.com** in person or by post to: Box Office, Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London W7 2AP. Members of the Branch may use their personal address details, but the Branch name and your membership number must be clearly printed on the letterhead for easy and correct identification. All requests will be dealt with in strict order of receipt.

E-Mail address

If you have an e-mail address, we would like to add it to your membership record. We are now looking to the future where we will be able to start sending you information via the web.

Please send your details to: cmartin@britishlegion.org.uk

Spring Luncheon

Lunch will comprise of a set two course meal plus tea/coffee - cost £16.00 - and it will be held this year on Thursday 17th May at the Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, Waterloo, London SE1 8UJ 12.30 for 1pm. Please complete the application on the back of the newsletter.

Committee Members Wanted

We are looking for more members to be part of the Branch Committee which meet four times a year in London, and also once a year at the Bottisham & St James's Club. If you feel you have the time and commitment to join our committee, please send a letter and CV to the Branch Chairman here at the Branch Office. Serving members especially welcome.

Annual Conference

The Annual Conference will be held in the Scarborough Spa Complex, South Bay, Scarborough on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 May 2012. Conference will open at 9.30am Saturday and end (subject to completion of business) by 5.30pm on Sunday. This year the Branch will be sending four delegates who are Sandy Davie, Jim Organ, David Page and John Robson our Standard Bearer.

The Defence Discount Directory 2012

If you are a serving or ex-service member of the Forces, then you are eligible for discounts and special deals available from thousands of companies.

For a free copy of the directory, contact 01604 495495 or go to the website at www.forcesdiscounts-mod.co.uk

'Poppy Day' by Amanda Prowse

Poppy Day is a compelling love story that sees Poppy, the young wife of a soldier serving in Afghanistan set off on a journey to try and save the man she loves. Along the way, she faces an impossible dilemma that results in huge personal sacrifice to get what she wants and with no guarantee of success. The book is both moving and funny, taking the reader through the full range of emotions as they follow Poppy's progress.

Amanda is married to Major Simeon Prowse MBE, who is a member of our Branch, and has been serving for 26 years. Simeon has been deployed on eight operational tours including the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Copies can be bought from the Poppy Shop - RRP £8.99, but can also be obtained from other outlets (prices may vary) Please visit the website at: www.poppyday.co.uk

All proceeds will go directly to the RBL to help fund the Battle Back Centre.

Tedworth House

Based in Tidworth Wiltshire, it is one of the new Personnel Recovery & Assessment Centres (PRAC) for the wounded, injured and sick. Courses provided for veterans, families & carers, include personal wellbeing, identifying your skills and the hidden job market. Some are evening workshops others being residential. If anyone is interested please e-mail: courses@h4h-tedworthhouse.org.uk

A word of warning - Hotel Scam

This is scary if only because of how simple it is. I'll bet this works all too often.

You arrive at your hotel and check in at the front desk. When checking in, you give the front desk your credit card (for all the charges for your room). You get to your room and settle in.

"Someone" calls the front desk and asked for (example) Room 620 (which

Continued overleaf

Free Transport for War Pensioners

War veterans in receipt of an on going war disability pension including war widows, widowers and eligible dependents, are able to get an oyster photo card for free travel on public transport including mainline railways in the Greater London area. This does not include travel during peak rush-hour times. For more details on how to apply please Google 'Veterans Oyster Card' or telephone 0845 331 9872.

Jeffrey Long's RBL 90th Anniversary Celebration Dinner

The dinner was held at the Midland Hotel, Bradford last September. Among the guests were the deputy Lord Mayor of the City, our Chairman and his wife, Terry Whittles and wife joined with other Legion members and supporters for what was to prove to be a very enjoyable evening. Following a wine reception sponsored by Matthew Clark, it was into the festively decorated ballroom for a three course Yorkshire dinner.

During the evening a raffle and auction took place which included auctioning me for a day! Over £2,000 was raised for our Battle Back Appeal.

Many thanks to Gary Peacock and staff at the Midland for helping me to put on a good show, everyone else who provided support, and to those who donated raffle prizes or auction items.





PHOTO: MICHELLE HESELTINE

Jeffrey presenting Gary Peacock with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Continued from previous page

happens to be your room). Your phone rings in your room. You answer and the person on the other end says the following, "This is the front desk. When checking in, we came across a problem with your credit card information. Please re-read me your credit card number and verify the last 3 digits numbers at the reverse side of your charge card." You might give this person your information, since the call seems to come from the front desk. Actually, it is a scam of someone calling from outside the hotel/front desk. They ask for a random room number. Then, ask you for credit card information and address information. Sounding so professional that you do think you are talking to the front desk.

If you ever encounter this problem on your vacation, tell the caller that you will be down at the front desk to clear up any problems... Then, go to the front desk and ask if there was a problem. If there was none, inform the manager of the hotel that someone called to scam you of your credit card information acting like a front desk employee.

Someone who has been duped...and is still clearing up the mess sent this....

Thorne Branch

War Memorial Theft

Too many of our War Memorials are being desecrated by thieves who wrench Memorial Plaques off to sell for scrap.

The War Memorials Trust works to protect and conserve all war memorials within the UK

Objectives of War Memorials Trust:

1. To monitor the condition of war memorials and to encourage protection and conservation when appropriate.
2. To provide expert advice to those involved in war memorial projects, to act as the specialist organisation for war memorial conservation issues and to facilitate repair and conservation through grant schemes.
3. To work with relevant organisations to encourage them to accept responsibility for war memorials and recognise the need to undertake repair and conservation work.
4. To build a greater understanding of war memorial heritage and raise awareness of the issues surrounding war memorial conservation.

Volunteers are always needed and you can join the trust too. Please telephone 020 7834 0200 or visit their website at: www.warmemorials.org

With a little help from my friends

Advising and assisting injured Service personnel, veterans and bereaved relatives to recover a fair level of compensation for injuries or death caused by Service is a vital arm of the Legion's welfare service.

Legislation providing for a pension for injured Service personnel has been in place for almost 100 years. The scheme was updated recently by The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS), introduced in 2005 for injuries which have occurred since April 2005, but the Service Pension Order still applies to claims for injuries occurring prior to that date.

The two schemes can raise legal issues of varying complexity as Cecilia Miskelly, manager of the Legion's War Pensions and Compensation team, knows only too well.

Her team - comprising three pension officers, two co-ordinators and two administrative assistants who are all office-based, plus ten home-based tribunal representatives - handles more than 3,000 cases a year throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Claimants often contact the Legion prior to contacting the Service Personnel and Veterans' Agency (SPVA), who administer the War Pension Scheme and the AFCS for the Ministry of Defence.

Cecilia explains: "The two schemes can be confusing and some people approach us because they are not sure where to start.

"You don't have to be injured in a war or armed conflict to be eligible for compensation. The injury can occur during training or in other ways. The important thing is that the injury must be attributable to Service in the Armed Forces and that is where disputes often arise."

Where a claimant is refused or feels they have not been sufficiently compensated, they can appeal to an independent Tribunal. Cecilia's team can advise appellants on their position, on additional evidence needed, and represent them by putting their case before the Tribunal.

War Pensions and Compensation Co-ordinator Ann Pemberton says: "We deal with everything from the initial claim right through to tribunal. We get over 200 new claims per month but we also pick up other related cases."

The Tribunal representatives have about a 40% success rate with contested appeals.

Ann adds: "We also advise on war widow pensions. We support bereaved families through the process, but people's expectations have to be managed. To win an award they have to prove the death was due to Service or hastened by it, and that can be difficult."

A valuable addition to the team's services two years ago was the establishing of regular advice clinics.

Peter Derrick, tribunals co-ordinator, says: "A lot of appellants were going to tribunal and they weren't properly prepared in terms of evidence. And some were pursuing claims which legally had no chance of success. The hardest part of the job is having to tell people they don't have a case."

Free Respite and Welfare Breaks at the Victory Services Club

The Haven for Heroes

Experience and enjoy London's West End on a Haven For Heroes break at the Victory Services Club.

The Victory Services Club provides and funds free "Respite & Welfare" breaks for those who have been wounded in operational areas. The breaks include provision for a carer, and have benefited those who are genuinely distressed and in need of a break in the nation's capital. This also applies to those who are identified by the major Armed Forces charities as suitable beneficiaries of this scheme.

Also to demonstrate support for British Personnel serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East and to thank them for their commitment and bravery, the VSC offers substantial discounts to those returning on R&R or post operational tour leave from those theatres.

The "Haven for Heroes" scheme offers special room rates, and this offer runs until 31st December 2012. Eligibility is only for British Serving Armed Forces men and women who have served in these theatres within six months or whilst on R&R. A letter of proof of Service in Theatre on headed paper, signed by your Unit Admin Officer, is required on all bookings. For more information, please contact the Club Secretary on 020 7616 8304 or email: info@vsc.co.uk or contact your Unit Welfare Office.

To demonstrate our support for British Personnel serving in Afghanistan and the Middle East*, on land, sea and in the air and to thank them for their commitment and bravery the VSC offers substantial discounts to those returning on R&R or post operational tour leave from those theatres. Below the "Haven for Hero" rates are shown against our standard price for a Memorial Wing Room.

Room Type	Haven for Hero Rates	Standard Rates
Single ensuite per night	£32.00	£49.50
Double ensuite per night	£45.00	£94.00
Family ensuite per night	£65.00	£130

E: res@vsc.co.uk T: 020 7616 8335 www.vsc.co.uk/Haven-for-Heroes

Central Location
Heart of London's West End, close to Oxford Street.

Every Occasion
Choice of bars, restaurants and 8 function rooms.

The Victory Services Club
63 Seymour St
London W2 2HF

(Haven for Heroes eligibility is only for British Serving Armed Forces men & women who have served in these theatres within the past 6 months. A letter of proof of Service in Theatre signed by the commanding officer is required on all bookings).

*Afganistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Yemen and at sea in the Arabian Gulf

Battle Back Appeal

Membership No:

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel No:

E-mail:

I am pleased to make a donation of £

Cheques payable to RBL St James's Branch

Gift aid (please tick)

Please clearly mark envelope St James's Branch and return to Branch Office.

Festival of Remembrance 2012

Membership No:

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel No:

I would like to apply for
1 ticket 2 tickets
Please mark your envelope 'St James's Branch' and return to Branch Office.

Spring Get-Together and Lunch 2012

Please reserve before 10 May 2012

Membership No:

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel no:

Please reserve .....places for the Summer Lunch @£16 each.

Cheques payable to RBL St James's Branch.

I will be accompanied by (name)

Please state any special dietary requirements

CLEARLY MARK ENVELOPE ST JAMES'S BRANCH AND RETURN TO BRANCH OFFICE

Please address your correspondence to
The Secretary, St. James's Branch, The Royal British Legion, Haig House, 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA
Christine Martin email: cmartin@britishlegion.org.uk Tel: 020 3207 2335
Registered Charity No. 219297