THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

St James's Branch

PRESIDENT: HRH THE DUKE OF YORK KG KCVO ADC CHAIRMAN: DAVID PAGE MBE SECRETARY: JIM ORGAN

www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/stjames

Message from our new Chairman

Dear Members, the photograph right depicts Group Captain Sandy Davie OBE RAF Retired handing over the jewel of Chairmanship for our branch to me, David Page MBE, whilst attending the National Branches District Conference, held at Haig House, on Saturday 12th January 2013. So ends a chapter of the Branch's history where we have notably moved forward under Sandy's chairmanship.

Our Benevolence commitment, again ratified during our AGM last November, I believe to be the most effective method we have ever employed to deliver, making a difference, to our benefactors, and long may it continue, with your support. We also hope to be in a position shortly where we can honour our commitment to donate the £100,000 promised to the most deserving Battle Back program. However, we just need that final amount to secure the £100,000 and ask for you to dig deep and donate where you can please to this worthy cause.



Handover to new Chairman David Page

Your committee is still striving to drag the Legion into the 21st century by putting into place procedures, within St James's, which we believe will show the way forward for the Royal British Legion as a whole. This work can be very frustrating due to the lack of understanding by great swathes of the Legion membership who believe that changes to membership, to the Royal Charter and to Clubs are something to be resisted because it's all part of a plan in HQ to take away their Legion, instead of making it fit for purpose with a self funding membership for today and, more importantly, tomorrow.

We are fortunate to have five new committee members who were voted onto our committee at the AGM. One is John Robson, who has been our Standard Bearer for over a year now and the others are Adrian de Villiers, Harrison Bramhald, Tod O'Brien and Phil Trask. It is hoped their addition to the committee will help drive the Branch even further down the road of efficiency and will be able to take some of the strain off some already overloaded committee members. While we have had some new additions to our committee, we have also bade farewell to Jeffery Long MBE. Jeffery has been pivotal to our success raising many thousands of pounds single handed through true grit and determination. The culmination of Jeffery's recent efforts has been to raise over £12,000 for Battle Back project. In recognition of Jeffery's devoted service to the Branch he has been made a Vice President.

So, in closing, I would ask each and every one of you to please recruit another member not just for our Branch but for The Royal British Legion as a whole, good luck. **David Page MBE**

Compensation and Pensions

For some reason the topic of 'compensation and pensions' are not at all attractive areas for Servicemen and women, Veterans and their families to engage in if their present knowledge is anything to go by. I am still shocked by the total lack of knowledge when talking to a large number of service personnel and their families. It is as though all the information that is available has been sucked into some sort of Bermuda Triangle.

The new Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) provides compensation for any injury, illness or death which is caused by service on or after 6 April 2005. It is available to all current and former members of the UK Armed Forces, including Reservists, who may submit a claim for compensation whilst they are serving or after discharge. It is important to note that unlike the War Pensions Scheme there are time limits.

The War Pension Scheme is for those who are no longer serving in HM Armed Forces and you have a disablement (i.e. an injury, illness or disease) that you consider was caused or made worse by service before 6 April 2005. Claims can be made for either physical or mental conditions. The most important aspect of this scheme is that any compensation or pension is only payable from the date you submitted your letter to Service Personnel and Veterans Agency, Norcross, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire, FY5 3WP, UK.

The objective of this Newsletter is to address this surprising lack of knowledge and make available as much of the present information. Obviously this is not the definitive article but with the various references and directions to various links and web pages the St James's Members should be able to access the information and make a claim for what they are justly and perfectly entitled to.

John Topping

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 2013

EDITOR: JOHN TOPPING MBA DMS MIED FRSA

AGM 2012

The AGM was held on the 22nd November 2012 followed by the Annual Dinner. Our Chairman, Sandy Davie conducted the members with his usual efficiency through the agenda. The Chairman then concentrated on the main activities of the Branch namely: The Battle Back Appeal, Branch Benevolence Scheme and Branch Management. This was to be Sandy's last meeting has Chairman and he took the opportunity to pay tribute to Jeffrey Long who, after many years on the Committee, had decided to resign in order to concentrate on activities nearer to his Yorkshire home and to welcome the Chairman Elect, Mr David Page.

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 Alan Protheroe CBE FRICS JP DL
Col Sir John Bradbeer OBE TD DL
Mr Graham Downing
Mr Jeffrey Long MBE

Chairman:
Mr David Page MBE

Vice Chairman:
Group Captain Sandy Davie OBE RAF Retd

Secretary:
Mr Jim Organ

Treasurer:
Mr Jim Organ

Committee:
Mr Alan Wanbon
Mrs Nova Western
Mr Phillip Eddens
Mr John Topping
Mr Mel Corley
Mr John Robson
Mr Phil Trask*
Mr Adrian de Villiers*
Mr Tod O'Brien*
Mr Harrison Bramhald*

Standard Bearer:
Mr John Robson*

*An introduction of the new members follows.

Annual Dinner 2012

Once again a happy gathering assembled to enjoy the Annual Branch Dinner. A pre-dinner drink followed by a three-course meal and an extra bonus, courtesy of Jeffrey Long, some excellent Swiss cheese. Jeffrey had also assembled an amazing array of raffle prizes. The atmosphere is always friendly and congenial and the venue located right next to Waterloo Station. Why not make a date and join us this year! Details in the Autumn newsletter.

Jeffrey Long has served on the St James's Branch Committee for 19 years and has decided to step down to leave more time for wider Legion activities and even occasionally to have some time to himself! He has been our Newsletter Editor for many years and also the Annual Lunch and Dinner organiser and a huge fund raiser for the Legion. We will miss him on the Committee, but as you may have read elsewhere in the newsletter, he has now been made one of our Vice Presidents. A well deserved honour!

Nova Western
Committee Member

New Branch Committee Members

Phil Trask
Phil is currently serving in British Forces (Germany) (BFG). His Operation/Tours have seen him serve in NI, Cyprus, Iraq and many others. He is a very active District member of SSAFA and a Youth and volunteer Victim Support Worker.

A very keen sportsman - he is a boxing judge/timekeeper and football referee of 20 years' experience at Conference level status. Although now suffering with injuries, he is still very active in the game as an administrator, assessor and instructor.

He has always aspired to be an active member of the RBL. As a serving member he will be an asset on the committee and he is looking forward to a long association with the Branch, Committee and its Members.

Adrian de Villiers
Adrian joined the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment in 1999 and served for a very valuable 5 years. On leaving the service he swapped his khaki uniform for a subtle shade of blue serge and joined the Metropolitan Police. He quickly worked his way through the ranks and is now a Detective Sergeant. He is trained and experienced in fast time critical incident management at tactical and strategic levels and the investigation of complex and serious crime.

He is grateful to RBL for the help, support and advice he received when he left the Military. He is now very pleased to be a Branch Committee Member and give something back to the organisation that assisted him when he needed it.



John Robson (Standard Bearer)
John was born and educated in County Durham. On leaving school in 1983, he started work in the Hotel and Catering Industry. Having become a trainee manager he left The North East and joined the Corps of Royal Engineers in 1987, his chosen trade was signaller.

His military career included several tours and operations including NI, Balkans and Afghanistan. He completed 24 years' service, as a Warrant Officer in 2012. On leaving the regulars he quickly signed on again this time as a TA soldier in Gateshead. He is employed as the QMSI signals (Q flags) in 72 Engineer Regiment (TA).

He joined the RBL as the Standard Bearer 18 months ago and has now been elected to be a Branch Committee Member. In his last years of military service he took on the role of visiting the wounded and sick personnel from his Regiment. It is with this commitment

that he now relishes the opportunity to give support via the Branch Committee to those most in need.

Tod O'Brien

Tod joined the Army serving with the Royal Corps of Signals in 1967. He finally changed from his green kit into a smart suit some 22 years later having attained the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1, where he was responsible for training some 400 soldiers plus many civilian support staff. Training is a theme that runs throughout his distinguished career. He saw service both operationally and in peacetime in many parts of the world.

An ex Corps player with the Royal Signals Rugby squad he looks forward to his trips to Twickenham especially for the Army and Navy games. He keeps himself fit and enjoys most sports.

With an impressive list of qualifications and memberships, he is very keen to place these experiences into his duties with the RBL and especially as a Branch Committee Member.

Harrison Bramhald

Harrison joined the Corps of Royal Engineers in Oct 1973, as an adult recruit. His many postings include: Hohne, Neinburg, Cove, Antrim NI, Chattenden, Waterbeach, Ripon and Tidworth. Commissioned in 1996 he served again in Hohne, followed by Hamein, Paderborn and finished his service in April 2011 in Antrim NI. In 2002 he was lucky enough to serve two years in Newcastle as the OC of a TA Field Squadron. He completed tours/operations in NI, Falklands, Bosnia (IFOR), Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan in 2010.

Before he retired he completed decompression in Cyprus (after Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan) and visited several very brave soldiers who had been injured during these tours. These visits included Selly Oak, Headley Court and the Rehabilitation Centre in Edinburgh.

Now firmly retired but still an active member of a number of professional bodies, Harrison feels very privileged to be a member of the Branch Committee.

Branch member AFCS Success Story

1. I was on adventure training in France, skiing and suffered an accident, injuring my left knee.
2. I sought medical attention and the Army process was to firstly try physio to mend the knee, which failed, so I was referred to the Regional Rehab Unit. This was 3 weeks intense training to fix the knee. This also failed, so I was referred to the hospital and underwent surgery.
3. **I was not aware of the AFCS until a friend told me.** I easily found the website and downloaded the claim forms. I read and understood how easy it was to make a claim, however the process could be a long one due to an increase in claims.
4. I made my claim on the 2nd May 2012. 12 weeks later I was told I would be contacted in 12 weeks' time as a decision had not been made. I am still waiting for the outcome.
5. In the mean time I have underwent further surgery on my spine, I believe caused by the Regional Rehab Unit prior to my initial knee surgery. I have since submitted another claim in respect of this and am waiting confirmation of receipt.
6. Compensation paid out 29 Jan 13, consummate to the injury £6000.

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.

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

Royal British Legion Claim Services

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) – 6 April 2005

If you are a member or former member of the Regular Armed Forces (including Gurkhas), or the Reserve Forces, or if you are a dependant of the above, you may qualify for compensation under the AFCS. The AFCS covers: injury, illness and death caused mainly by Service; using a tariff, it provides a lump sum to compensate for any pain and suffering. For those who have left the Armed Forces it can give a monthly guaranteed income payment for the more severely disabled; claims under this scheme should be made within 5 years of the date of the injury /illness.

Compensation claims against the Ministry of Defence for Personal Injury caused by Negligence

Serving and ex-Service personnel can make claims against the Ministry of Defence under Common Law for compensation for personal accident or injury through negligence. Claims for compensation can only be made for incidents after 15 May 1987. Examples of possible negligence are: failure to maintain equipment, failure in duty of care to properly instruct or make employees aware of danger/hazards, or failure to provide correct medical treatment.

Contact: claims@britishlegion.org.uk

Pensions and Disability Department,
The Royal British Legion,
Haig House,
199 Borough High Street,
London, SEI 1AA
Telephone +44 (0)20 3207 2163

Disability

The Disability Team offers individual support and assistance to the disabled Serving and ex-Service Community snd their dependants, in regard to disability issues. Particular attention is paid to Statutory Disability Benefits, which could be available to the Serviceman/woman, aside from War Disablement Pensions and Service invaliding pensions.

Covenant, Covenants and more Covenants!!!

Branch Members may well have seen media updates on the Armed Forces Covenant following the recent release of the first update on the Governments performance against the Covenants objectives.

Community Covenants compliment, at a local level, the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the government and the armed forces. The aim of the community covenant is to encourage local communities to support the service community in their area and promote understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the armed forces community. The community is where the real benefit of the covenant emerges for regulars and veterans. As I've had the privilege of representing the Royal Air Force at a number of Armed forces Community Covenant signings within London, I thought it might be helpful to explain what they are about and encourage you to check that your local authority is also supporting the Community Covenant.

Many people have become involved in supporting the service community through service charities, or more recently by participating in Armed Forces Day. They have shown their support through fundraising, military celebrations and open days, attending homecoming parades and repatriation ceremonies and offering commercial discounts. Even simple demonstrations of support, such as displaying the Armed Forces Day window sticker in cars and businesses, have had a positive effect and boosted the morale of our armed forces community. The community covenant scheme aims to build on this local level of support.

The aims of the Armed Forces Community Covenant are to:

encourage local communities to support the armed forces community in their areas nurture public understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the armed forces community recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the armed forces community encourage activities which help to integrate the armed forces community into local life to encourage the armed forces community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement



The Branch Vice Chairman 'at work' representing the RAF at the Community Covenant signing with the Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

Local authorities and the armed forces community are encouraged to work together to establish a community covenant in their area. Community covenants may look quite different from one location to another.

2012 Community Covenant Conference

Eighteen months after its launch, the Community Covenant has proved a towering success. Half of the Uks local authorities have officially signed-up to back the Armed Forces Community. The Community Covenant Conference was held in the MODs Main Building on 6 November 2012.

The Community Covenant is a statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces community and outlines the moral pact between the nation, Government and the Armed Forces. Last year, just five local authorities had signed the Community Covenant. Eighteen months on, take-up has soared to nearly half; yet the aim remains largely unchanged - promoting assistance for serving personnel, veterans and cadets. Not all councils have military units stationed in their community, but nearly every council can count Service personnel and Veterans among its citizens.

Lieutenant General Sir Bill Rollo, Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel & Training), provided an overview of issues affecting military personnel. He said that signing the Covenant is just the first step and warned:

The Community Covenant is only worth the paper its written on if its turned into practice.

The Covenant aims to remove any disadvantages that result from signing on the dotted line, and, secondly, to ensure special treatment where it is justified. There was no one-size-fits-all approach; needs vary hugely for Armed Forces communities depending on whether they are based in rural communities or bustling garrison towns. Building new homes, priority healthcare, providing careers advice and helping veterans to integrate into the community were all highly encouraged.

With 4.8 million veterans living in Britain, Sir Bill called on the MOD to share information to help councils in their planning. The majority of Service leavers make a successful transition into Civvy Street and a little more joined-up effort will go some way to integrate veterans into the community.

For any council leaders keen to explore what a Community Covenant entails, Chris Simpkins, Director General of the Royal British Legion, has produced a guide of best practice, packed with tips. Councils can make a real difference and Wiltshire County Council has launched a Veterans Charter.

The day's speakers also included representatives from charities, the military, local government and organisations that have benefited from generous grants to deliver successful projects through the Community Covenant Grant Scheme.

The Borough of Barking and Dagenham Community Covenant signing coincided with the commemoration of the battle of El Alamein and a North African pine tree was planted to commemorate the occasion.

Service Discount Card

The Defence Discount Service now offers a Defence Privilege Card, which is available from today to members for a small cost of £4.99. It enables special discounts to be obtained in-store from participating high street businesses. Details on how to register to purchase the new privilege card can be found below:

The privilege card is exclusively for members of the Armed Forces Community including serving Regular and Reserve personnel, Armed Forces veterans, spouses/partners of Service personnel and bereaved spouses/partners. It is also open to MOD civil servants, members of the cadet force and NATO personnel serving in UK-based posts.

The MOD launched a new Defence Discount Service in October (https://www.defencediscountservice.co.uk), as part of the Armed Forces Covenant in recognition of service in the Armed Forces. Over 24,000 members have already registered with the scheme. Examples of discounts they can receive are outlined below.

The new privilege card is a key part of the new Defence Discount Service. It is the only card of its type with the support of the Ministry of Defence and participating companies across the country will accept the card in-store, offering good discounts to scheme members.

In the light of the Prime Minister's recent comments we expect many more companies will now come forward to offer meaningful discounts to help make life a little easier for our Armed Forces community.

Some of the high profile companies already on board are offering discounts on cars, lap-tops, supermarket shops, holidays and phones. Many companies have come on board to add their support to the Armed Forces Community since the launch of the Defence Discount Service, including:

Vodafone. 20% off the monthly payments of contracts worth £20 a month or more. They offer 10% off monthly rental costs of deals costing less than £20 a month.

Iceland. 10% off groceries for members of the Defence Discount Service.

Vue Cinemas. 20% off cost of ticket prices.

Restaurant. 20% off at Frankie & Bennys.

Clothing companies. including Austin Reed offering 15% off (with 20% off for launch), and Burton Menswear offering 10% off.

Merlin Group Attractions. Discounts of over 40% on visits to attractions like Alton Towers, Legoland, the Edinburgh Dungeon, and Warwick Castle when booking online.

KFC. 10% off.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Defence Discount Service (DDS): www.defencediscountservice.co.uk

Festival of Remembrance Tickets 9th November 2013

The application form for tickets to the evening performance is on the back page of this newsletter. Tickets are limited and are issued in strict order of receipt so get your application in as soon as possible. Applications must be made via this form and returned to the **Branch Office only.** No S.A.E. is necessary. If successful, your tickets will be sent by the end of August.

Tickets for the afternoon performance should be obtained direct from the **Royal Albert Hall** only from 1st July. Apply by phone 020 7589 8212, online www.royalalberthall.com or in person or by post at: Box Office, Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London W7 2AP. Branch Members may use their personal address details, but the Branch name and your membership number must be clearly printed on the letterhead for correct identification.

Operation Long Run

Mike Crawley, a Branch Member

Operation Long Run is an attempt by two ex-soldiers to cover 100 consecutive ultra-marathons as a 'tag' team, around Britain in 50 days, that is, 60 miles every 24 hours for 50 days! They will both be 66 at the time of the run. They aim to complete the distance by 'tabbing' which is a combination of running and walking. In addition to the pure physical challenge they have set themselves the additional target of attempting to raise in excess of £1,000,000 for The Meningitis Trust, BLESMA and Diabetes UK.

Operation Long Run is scheduled to start on Saturday 25th May 2013 and continue for 49 days thereafter.

They would like to cover the administration and logistic costs of the project through commercial sponsorship and by encouraging others to join them on the various stages around the route. This will allow for all the monies raised through donations and individual sponsorship to go directly to our three benefiting charities.

With this in mind there is a provisional breakdown of the route on this site which will give an indication of where and when they are likely to be so you can chose a stage best suited to your location. All stages start at either 13.00 hours or 01.00 hours. You can run or walk and go as far as you want on your chosen stage whether that be 500 yards or 30 miles. Everyone who takes part will be given an Operation Long Run medal. You will be free to raise additional sponsorship for our charities or chose one of your own. Any monies you do raise should be sent direct to the charities and not to us. You can enter/sign up using the 'sign up here' option and select 'run a stage'.

If you are not sure of where a particular stage starts or finishes just type the start/finish location into Google Maps which will get the exact location on a map of Britain. If you would like to be part of the project but are not too keen on the physical aspect then there are other options for joining in at 'sign up here' and select 'sponsor' or 'make a donation' at the web site at http://www.operationlongrun.org/.

If you have any novel or innovative ideas for fund raising around the route please email us at admin@operationlongrun.org. We would love to hear from you as either individuals or companies.

Developments in Reserves and Veterans Healthcare

Future Reserves Healthcare: Developing a 2020 vision Conference

On 17 January 2013, I participated in an event hosted by The Royal British Legion and Combat Stress to consider and answer the healthcare questions that potentially arise from the MOD's plans to expand and restructure the Reserve Forces. While the initial rationale for the Conference was 'Future Reserves', it was made clear that reservists are classed as 'veterans' at any time they are not mobilised.

The Armed Forces Health Partnership programme is a joint venture between The Royal British Legion, which provides help and welfare to the Serving and ex-serving community, and Combat Stress, the UK's leading military charity specialising in veterans' mental health. By working together, supported by funding from the Department of Health's Voluntary Sector Strategic Partnership Programme, the intention is to build knowledge amongst clinicians and service providers on the health effects of Service in the Armed Forces and promote veteran pathways to treatment and support.

Following the Government's consultation Green Paper on Future Reserves, and to assist in the development of a White Paper in the Spring, the Conference was an ideal opportunity for the Armed Forces, voluntary and health sectors to gain an understanding of the associated healthcare implications and to consider how they could work together to provide the best possible provision. The key speakers set the scene in the morning session, to inform the afternoon group discussions and panel debate. The Minister for Personnel, Veterans and Welfare, Rt Hon Mark Francois MP, was the Keynote Speaker. Other speakers included representatives from Ministry of Defence (MOD), Department of Health (DH), Kings Centre for Military Health Research and the Territorial Army. The Conference was part of the Legion and Combat Stress's three-year programme, as Strategic Partners of the Department of Health for the Armed Forces and Veterans. The partnership aims to



promote understanding of the health issues experienced by those who serve and foster new pathways of care and support and brings an array of expertise and organisations together, ensuring everyone has a voice and that the widest possible net to help improve health outcomes is cast.

The outcomes/findings of the Conference will be considered by MOD in developing the forthcoming White Paper on Reserves. It is also intended to publish the findings at http://www.armedforceshealthpartnership.org.uk/

Combat Stress is the UK's leading military charity specialising in the care of veterans' mental health. We look after men and women who are suffering from a psychological condition related to their Service career. This might be depression, anxiety, a phobia or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Our services are free of charge to the veteran.

Since 2005 the number of ex-Service men and women seeking our help has risen by 72%. We have a current caseload of more than 4,400 individuals - including 102 Afghanistan and 400 Iraq Veterans.

Visit www.combatstress.org.uk for more information.

Veteran Prosthetics Interim Funding Arrangements Guidance

Dr Andrew Murrison MD MP was commissioned by the Government in December 2010 to examine the future needs of veteran amputees, including how best to fund high-specification, evidence-based prosthetics services for them in the NHS. In support of the recommendations of the report, the Prime Minister announced that the government would invest up to £15 million over three years to improve prosthetics services for military veterans who have lost a limb due to activities while serving their country.

The interim funding arrangements and application information is set out on the NHS London website. The guidance details who qualifies for the new funding, what will be funded and the interim arrangements for achieving this before the National system goes live in April 2013. The London Armed Forces Network is coordinating this national programme on behalf of the Department of Health.

http://www.armedforceshealthpartnership.org.uk/news/helping-patients-return-home-from-hospital

Sandy Davie
Vice Chairman

Annual Conference 2013

The Annual Conference will be held on the 17/18/19 May 2013 in Llandudno. This year the Branch will be sending John Topping, Harrison Bramhald and John Robson, our Standard Bearer.

Festival of Remembrance 2013

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.

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