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

AUTUMN 2013

The Royal British Legion - passed its 'sell by' date?

Our Branch, the St James's Branch, is without doubt maintaining its membership level but it is not easy. We frequently have to overcome the adverse perceptions of what The Royal British Legion (TRBL) is about and the public asking, "Has Help for Heroes (H4H) taken over the fund raising aspects for all service and ex-service personnel?"

We are not being helped in this matter by the on-going animosity between our Trustees and a lot of the rank and file. This manifests itself every year at the Annual Conference when members of Branches feel that they are being isolated, treated as 2nd class members and having no real voice in the running of the organisation. This is an organisation of which everyone is fiercely proud and strive to do their best to support.

So what is going wrong, has TRBL passed its 'sell by' date? Nearly every member has their own ideas as to what the answer is. Still the public perception remains of an organisation of old soldiers in smoky old drinking clubs becoming active once a year on Poppy Day. On the other hand, H4H is seen as the shiny new organisation catering for the injured soldier's needs and generating maximum positive publicity and, more importantly, thousands and thousands of pounds for many worthwhile projects.

So how does/should TRBL change this perception and more importantly, can it change? Is it that the present structure prevents this happening?

Over a number of years it appears that HQ has tried various strategies to alter this image. Modern businesses refer to this as repositioning in the market place. If TRBL was correctly positioned would there be a need for all these new support organisations for service personnel which have emerged?

What is true is, that if TRBL does not reinvent itself, it will gradually decline to nothing. The attrition rate with regards to declining membership is continuous and is evidence that this will happen sooner rather than later. Time is not on TRBL's side. The powers that be and the membership will have to make some momentous decisions as to how we do focus on the future. Change is not easy for any organisation and for TRBL dated in history even more so. In 2012 TRBL did not even reach its Poppy target, further evidence of what faces us in this austere financial climate.

In the words of Mother Teresa; "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." Let's hope that this small article can create enough ripples within TRBL to make things happen positively.

If you have any comments on this article, please email john.topping@btinternet.com or write to John Topping at St James's Branch at HQ.

Chairman's Report

Fellow Branch Members, as I sit to write this Chairman's report for our next Newsletter, I am conscious that we are already on the downward slope of yet another year and time seems to spinning ever faster, for me in particular. As a nation this year has hailed some amazing sporting achievements and there seem to be glimmers of light at the end of what has proved to be a long dark tunnel leading to financial recovery; depending on your personal circumstances of course. However, I feel our beloved Legion is being left behind as it tries to embrace modern technology and working practices.

My year as Chairman started with mixed emotions as on one hand I attended the funeral of yet another departed Vice President, Col Alan Protheroe. Alan had been one of those unsung supporters of the Branch since its conception and while not a man to shout from the rooftops he was always there for us if needed.

Then, without warning, our President, HRH The Duke of York rekindled his connection with the Branch and asked for an update on our performance and plans. So Sandy and I tripped along to Buckingham Palace for a meeting with the Prince. The meeting was very satisfying because HRH came across as interested, concerned and supportive to the Branch and, of course, the Legion as a whole. Unfortunately we were not allowed to take any photos inside to share the meeting with you but we did manage to persuade a duty policeman on the gate to at least record our presence in the grounds.

National Conference was held in May, as is tradition and your Committee and I really thought this was going to be the one that changed things. Our editor, John Topping, has already covered the matter with some vigour so I will not dwell but, suffice to say,



Sandy Davie and David Page outside Buckingham Palace

Continued overleaf

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

EDITOR: JOHN TOPPING

Continued from page 1

a golden opportunity to reform the Royal Charter and to devolve Membership matters to the Membership Council was rejected and so the status quo remains while others around us move forward. Your Committee has for sometime been contemplating taking the Branch forward on its own in the way we believe will make it more accessible and attractive to serving members of HM Forces and the younger generation (the future). Following the disappointing results from National Conference, I'm pleased to confirm that we are now in the throes of making this happen with the creation of our own website. We have already embraced Facebook and Twitter. Our President, The Duke of York, is also on Twitter and following us as we are him. If you don't know what the hell I'm talking about please trust me it works and will be presented at the next AGM. Your Branch Committee has commissioned work to design and build a new website for the Branch. Our intention is to re-launch the website in the Autumn. The new site will be better able to reflect what the Branch does and communicate our intentions and appeals to a wider audience. By enhancing the links to social media (Facebook and Twitter) we also seek to gain support (and eventually membership) from some of those currently serving in HM Forces. The new website will also enable us to send emails to those Branch members, who wish to communicate electronically, and to handle emails from members more efficiently. The transfer of even a small number of our 16,000 members from postal to electronic communication will help offset some of the recent increases in postal charges. However, the main benefit to members of the new website should be more information, in a timely manner, to enable members to participate fully in the events and activities of the Royal British Legion.



Jeffrey Long being presented with his Certificate as The Vice President of our Branch by Chairman David Page and Secretary Jim Organ.

Keep watching the current website for details of the change-over date: www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/stjames

On the 19th July 2013 the town of Richmond in North Yorkshire bestowed the Freedom of the Town to The Royal British Legion. This was the first time in the Legion's history that a town had granted Freedom. The event was well marked with some fifty standards on parade and about seventy marchers who were joined by Jim Organ, your Secretary/Treasurer and myself. The parade concluded with a presentation of the framed Freedom Charter presented by the Mayor of Richmond to The Royal British Legion National Chairman John Crisford on the steps of the Town Hall. The icing on the cake was that for some time I have been holding a certificate of Vice Presidency that has been signed by our Royal President for Jeffery Long. I managed to move Jeffery into position to receive his certificate straight after the Freedom Charter presentation and thanks to everyone present for their cooperation. A great event was followed by a great evening soaking up the town's hospitality.

For those who can make it I look forward to seeing you at our AGM and/or Dinner at the Union Jack Club on the 21st November. To the rest of you "Stagg on".

David Page
Chairman

Death of Vice President and former Treasurer

Unfortunately we have to report the sad deaths of Colonel Alan Protheroe and Mr Dougie Smith earlier this year. Both Alan and Dougie agreed to became involved with the Branch at its formation, and both will be sadly missed.

New Vice President

We are pleased to announce that our former Editor of the Newsletter and Membership Committee Member Jeffrey Long has now been made a Branch Vice President.

Branch Subscription Rates 2013/2014

An increase of £1.00 in both the Membership Fee and the Branch fee will come into effect as from 1st October. The new Branch subscription rates will now be as follows:

Branch only: Affiliation Fee: £14.00 Branch Fee: £5.00 Total £19.00

Branch & Club As above with Club fee of £2.50 added Total £21.50

Branch Website

For the latest news go to www.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/stjames

We welcome your news and views, e-mail: john.topping@btinternet.com

Members paying by Cash

A renewal notice will be issued to you as normal in August, however please inform the Branch Administrator if you do not receive your letter by the middle of September.

Reservists are Veterans too!

Reservists

The media has commented much in recent months about MOD's intention to make greater use of reservists across all three Services and particularly in the Army. However, within our Legion community, little has been made of the fact that reservists are already classed as 'veterans', whenever they are not mobilised and deployed. They are, therefore, eligible for any benefits that other veterans may attract. However, many reservists do not realise that entitlement.

The Reserves of 2020 will be critical in providing the government with the options it needs to address the scale and range of future national security requirements in an uncertain world.

The recent Government White Paper - Reserves in the Future Force 2020: Valuable and Valued, highlights our future reliance upon reservists and, perhaps more importantly, indicates the new underpinnings to the reservist proposition that could attract and retain reservists. Many of the underpinnings also relate to the Military Covenant that the Legion fought hard to have introduced only a few years ago.

The Reservist Proposition spells out the detailed improvements to the reservists' employment conditions. These include paid leave, pension entitlements as well as improved training opportunities and kit, but from a Legion perspective, it is great to see that the following have been listed:

- better access to welfare support access to Occupational Health support whether mobilised or not supported by the Defence Rehabilitation Service if injured during training as well as mobilisation
- improved notice of when reservists will be expected to train or mobilise
- [The Government] will legislate to provide reservists with right of access, without a qualifying employment period, to the Employment Tribunal if you are unfairly dismissed on account of your reserve service
- [The Government] will gather evidence on reservists being disadvantaged in, or when seeking, employment, follow up individual cases and, if the evidence justifies it, we will consider additional measures, including whether to provide additional protection in the next Armed Forces Bill

Links

You can read the full White Paper, key facts and the results of the Green Paper consultation here www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-reserves-2020-consultation

Veterans

Veterans in the British Armed Forces can be as young as 18 years old. The younger a veteran is injured, the longer the period of time that he or she may need life-long help and support from the Legion

The Royal British Legion has been helping veterans (men and women of all ages and from many conflicts) for almost 100 years. The Legion helps them find homes and jobs; we help injured veterans with their recovery; we help veterans with re-training if they decide on a new career path and we support their families throughout.

The Legion is committed to helping those who serve with the British Armed Forces today as well as those who have served in the past, now and for as long as they need us, whether that is for a few weeks or for many years.

Helping Armed Forces families and supporting them through difficult times is at the heart of The Legion's work.

Armed Forces families are very special: they often have to deal with long periods of time apart; Dads and Mums may miss out on special events – a child's first word, first step, first day at school; a family birthday or special anniversary.

They frequently have to cope with fear of injury or a family member being killed whilst overseas serving their country. Their sacrifices are many and often and they deserve the very best support given to them by The Royal British Legion.

From finding a home, paying for a new fridge or sending a family on a much-needed holiday, the Legion offers a range of services and activities to help.

Help us to continue this good work by making a donation to: **St James's Branch, Royal British Legion**

Members paying by Direct Debit

Your new membership card should reach you by the middle of September. However, if you do not receive your card by mid-October, please contact the Branch Administrator who will then arrange to have a replacement issued to you.

Replacement cards

If you need to have a replacement card issued, a charge of £2.50 is now in place. We can however, arrange to have a proof of membership letter sent to you if you so wish. A letter and cheque (made payable to TRBL) should be sent to the Branch Office.

St James's Branch Tie

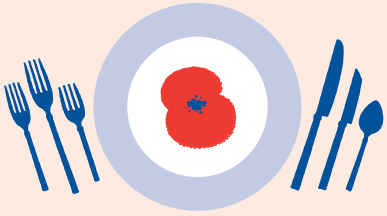
The tie is in navy polyester with red and gold diagonal stripes. It shows the RBL crest with St James's Branch embroidered below. Your cheque/postal order for £7.00 inc p&p should be made payable to the St James's Branch. Please mark the envelope for the attention of the St James's Branch.

Lapel Badge

Badges are available at £4.00 inc p&p. Please send your request and cheque to the Branch office, please mark the envelope for the attention of the St James's Branch.

Contacting the Branch

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



Annual General Meeting & Dinner 2013

Our Branch AGM & Dinner will be held on Thursday 21st November at the Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, London SE1 8UJ (opp. Waterloo Station) Tel. 020 7902 6000. Accommodation can be booked at the UJC. The AGM will commence at 18.00 hours when we would be pleased to see as many of our members as possible. We hope that you will also be able to attend the Branch dinner which will commence at 19.30 hours. The cost for the three course meal will be £32.00.

You will find an application form to complete on the back page.

Transferring to your local Branch

If you are thinking of transferring to your local Branch but are unsure of its location, please contact the Branch Office. We will then be able to give you either a contact telephone number for the Branch you wish to transfer to, or the telephone number of the County Office who will then be able to assist you.

Festival of Remembrance Tickets

Once again the number of applications received from our members exceeded the number of tickets the Branch were allocated. We are sorry that we were not able to issue tickets to everyone, and those members who were successfully drawn out of the hat, will have now received their tickets.

Legion Magazine - Multiple Copies

If you are receiving more than one copy of the magazine per household, and would prefer to receive one copy only, please let the Branch Office know.

Please note: At present we have to send a copy of the Branch Newsletter to all of our Members.

The Freedom of Richmond



The Freedom Scroll presented by Bob Whitby, Mayor of Richmond to RBL National Chaiman John Crisford.

On the 19th July 2013 an unique event took place in the small town of Richmond, North Yorkshire when the borough council conferred upon the Royal British Legion the "Freedom of Richmond". There have been similar ceremonies involving individual branches but this is the first time anywhere in the UK that the Royal British Legion, as a whole, has been granted this honour.

The afternoon started out with a small ceremony in the Town Hall where the Freedom Scroll was presented to the Royal British Legion National Chairman John Crisford and by Royal British Legion Richmond Branch Chairman Bob Whiteby, the Mayor of Richmond.

After the ceremony the National Standard and Standards representing branches from all parts of the country paraded through the town accompanied by a local band and two contingents of Legion members, including the Chairman (D Page MBE) and Secretary (J Organ) of the St James's Branch.

The salute was taken by the Mayor of Richmond and the National Chairman, John Crisford.

After the parade the Mayor graciously gave permission for the Branch Chairman to present Jeffrey Long MBE with a certificate marking his appointment as a Branch Vice President.

The Chairman informed the crowd that Jeffrey had been a member of the Branch committee since 1995 and had taken part in many long distance walks, including a walk to Switzerland, to raise funds for the Branch. In 2012 Jeffrey retired from the committee and to recognise his outstanding contribution he was elected as a Branch Vice President.

In the presence of the Mayor and National Chairman, the Chairman handed over the certificate which had been signed by our President, His Royal Highness The Duke of York.



Freedom of Richmond Scroll



Standards Parade

Why we are RBL members

It seems timely to remind our membership how extensive the support RBL gives to the Service and ex-Service community and their dependents. H4H have had a great response from the public but differ from us as they are not a membership organisation and their aims are purely fund-raising. As you will read in the following article, the Legion covers much more than that...

About the Legion – Did You know????

Our Mission and Purpose

- Our Mission is simple. We want to be the No.1 provider of welfare, comradeship, representation and Remembrance for the Armed Forces community.
- Our Purpose each and every day is to stand shoulder to shoulder with all who Serve

What we do is defined by the four pillars set out in our Mission.

- **Welfare:** We provide welfare to the whole Armed Forces family – serving, ex-Service and their dependants.
- **Comradeship:** We are one of the UK's largest membership organisations
- **Representation:** We are a powerful advocate for the Armed Forces Community and campaign on a range on issues affecting them.
- **Remembrance:** We are the custodian of Remembrance and safeguard the Military Covenant.

Who We Help

- We help members of Armed Forces past and present each year. And importantly we are one of only a few Armed Forces charities to help families members too.
- In fact, in 2012 we are putting Armed Forces families at the heart of our organisation - by also supporting the mothers, fathers, partners and children of our serving personnel past and present, we can provide better, more intergrated support to the individual.
- To be eligible for the Legion's help you need to have served or be the dependant of someone who has served for at least seven days.
- We know that approximately 9.5 million people in the UK are eligible for our support.

How We Help

Last year, we spent **£90 million** on health and welfare for the Armed Forces community - that's **£1.7 million every week** helping more than 165,000 a year. The Legion steps in to provide housing, employment, social and financial assistance to those most in need.

As a snapshot of what this means to serving and ex-Service people:

- Last year 11,000 people received help from our Benefits and Money Advice service with the average person **£3,000** better off as a result.
- We supported 23,000 beneficiaries with immediate need grants of cash, goods or services.
- Our pioneering Be the Boss scheme has helped **1,000** Service leavers set up their own business through funding and mentoring.
- We employ **10** Client Support Officers to work with homeless veterans or those at risk of homelessness.

For families:

- We gave **8,000** people a well-deserved break, including 'bucket and spade' holidays for families reunited on RnR, adventure breaks for Service children and breaks for the elderly.
- Our Independent Inquest Advice Service supported 144 service family members in relation to 74 Service deaths.

For older veterans:

- We provide a Handy Van service in 19 counties to assist independent living.
- We have six Royal British Legion Care Homes in East Sussex, Kent, Norfolk, North Yorkshire, Somerset and Warwickshire.
- Two of our care homes have specialist Dementia Units, with two further homes to have units by 2013.

Helping the Injured to Recover

- The Legion has also committed **£50 million** to help injured, sick and wounded in-Service personnel over the next 10 years through the Defence Recovery Capability, a partnership between the Legion, the MoD and Help for Heroes. It is the single biggest funding commitment in the Legion's history.
- The recovery programme will help around 800 wounded, injured and long-term sick in-Service personnel each year between 2011 and 2021.
- Of the Legion's £50 million, £20 million will pay for the operating costs of 4 Personnel Recovery Centres in Edinburgh, Catterick, Colchester and Tidworth, and the building and operating costs of a recovery facility in Sennelager, Germany and **£30 million** has paid for the creation and running costs of The Battle Back Centre, hosted at the Sport England facility in the West Midlands.
- The Battle Back Centre is focused on rebuilding confidence, ability and self-motivation through adaptive sports and adventurous training to enable personnel to regain their fitness and return to duty, or reskill and make a successful transition to civilian life.

New in 2012

- **MediCinema:** We're funding a 50-seat state-of-the-art cinema and entertainment centre for injured Service personnel at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC), Headley Court to help them recuperate.
- **Admiral Nurses:** The Legion has launched The Royal British Legion Admiral Nurse Service, in partnership with Dementia UK to improve the quality of life for people with dementia by supporting those who care for them. The Service is now operating in Lancashire and shortly in the West Midlands, the aim is to roll out the service nationally over the next two years.
- **Bomb blast injury:** We're also investing £5 million into a 'Blast-injury' research centre at Imperial College London to combat the devastating effects of roadside bombs and IEDs - the leading cause of death and injury for Service personnel on operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Comradeship

- The Royal British Legion enjoys the support of more than 1 million members, donors and volunteers caseworkers and fundraisers

- Members and volunteers are organised through 2,500 branches in the UK
- Our supporters are also engaged through Twitter and Facebook. With over two million friends we have one of the largest charity Facebook pages in the UK.
- Whether through Remembrance, Membership or Fundraising, our supporter base provides comradeship opportunities for all ages, including the Military Wives Choir and our youngest branch, HMS Heroes.

Representation

- The Royal British Legion was voted most effective campaigning charity by the three main parties, according to an independent survey of MPs.
- We campaigned vigorously and achieved a historic breakthrough when the principles of Military Covenant were enshrined in law in 2011. The Covenant ensures that the Government must recognise the unique nature of Service, and honour its lifelong duty of care to those who serve.
- We also campaigned to save the position of an independent Chief Coroner from the Public Bodies bill so Service families receive fair and inclusive treatment during the painful inquest process.
- We have campaigned successfully for higher compensation for the injured and better welfare conditions for all Service families - Our campaigns have placed an extra £40million directly in the pockets of wounded personnel.

Remembrance

- As the Custodian of Remembrance, the Legion is responsible for national observances such as the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall, and the Cenotaph march past
- Within the Legion family is the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, home to the Armed Forces Memorial
- Remembrance forms a central part of our schools learning packs, as part of our mission to educate young people on the contemporary relevance of sacrifice.

Why not tell your friends just how much your Legion does every year!!

Shoulder to shoulder with all who Serve

Royal British Legion – The Essential Back-Pocket Guide

Our Mission is simple. We want to be the No.1 provider of welfare, comradeship, representation and Remembrance for the Armed Forces community.

- We help members of Armed Forces past and present each year. And importantly we are one of only a few Armed Forces charities to help families members too.
- We know that approximately 9.5 million people in the UK are eligible for our support
- Last year we spent **£90 million** on health and welfare for the Armed Forces community - **£1.7 million every week** - helping more than 165,000 a year
- Last year 11,000 people received help from our Benefits and Money Advice service. - - The average person £3,000 was better off as a result.
- We supported 23,000 beneficiaries with immediate need grants of cash, goods or services.
- We gave 8,000 people a well-deserved break, including 'bucket and spade' holidays for service families reunited on RnR, adventure breaks for Service children and breaks for the elderly.

The Legion has also committed **£50 million** to help injured, sick and wounded in-Service personnel over the next 10 years through the Defence Recovery Capability, a partnership between the Legion, the MoD and Help for Heroes - the biggest funding commitment in the Legion's history.

Shoulder to shoulder with all who Serve

Annual Dinner and AGM 2013

Membership No:

Name

Address

Postcode Tel No:

I will be attending the AGM ☐

Please reserve.....places for the Dinner at **£32** each.

Cheque for £.....payable to **RBL St. James's Branch** is enclosed.

I will be accompanied by (name)

Please state any special dietary requirements

CLEARLY MARK ENVELOPE - ST JAMES'S BRANCH AND RETURN TO BRANCH HQ

'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 HQ

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