



Central News – February 2024

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Important dates	
16 February 2024	Annual Conference Awards nominations close
1-2 March 2024	Spring County Chairs Seminar
28 March 2024	Closure of Annual Conference registration and Jim Prince Fund applications
4 April 2024	Appeals and amendments to Motions deadline
10-12 May 2024	Annual Conference 2024

Annual Conference 2024

Guest Speaker – Stacey Denyer

We are delighted that Invictus Team UK's Stacey Denyer will be a guest speaker to Conference. Stacey represented Team UK in Düsseldorf, competing in the powerlifting and indoor rowing competitions, coming away with a bronze medal and two British records in the one-minute sprint. She served for 19 years in the RAF Police but was medically discharged having developed multiple sclerosis and osteoporosis in her knees. She received support from RBL as a beneficiary and now works for RBL as an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer. We look forward to warmly welcoming her in May.

Closing soon: Annual Membership Award nominations

The window to submit nominations for the 2024 Annual Membership Awards closes at 5pm, 16th February – so don't forget to get yours in on time and help us celebrate the achievements of our members and formations. Winners will be presented with an engraved, glass plaque on stage at Annual Conference.

A list of the awards and their criteria can be found on the [nomination form](#), which should be completed and emailed to membershipawards@britishlegion.org.uk. Alternatively, nominations can be submitted using the [online form](#). There is no need to complete both forms.

Register as a Delegate or visitor

Registration to attend Annual Conference 2024 as a delegate or visitor is open until 23:59 28th March 2024. Registration is available [via the RBL website](#). For information or guidance about the process please refer to the [Registration Overview](#) and [Guide for Branch Secretaries](#) on MAP.

To facilitate our online registration process and support our commitment to sustainability by reducing paper waste, we regret we cannot accept applications sent by email or post. Late applications may not be accepted. If you require support with the registration process, please contact your Membership Engagement Officer (MEO).

New Women's Section Chair

The election of Jan Buxton (pictured right), the new Chair of the National Women's Section (WS), was confirmed at the WS' County Conference in January. She succeeds Heather Spence, who served as Chair for three years. Previously National Vice Chair, Jan joined the WS in 1994, becoming a Branch Treasurer shortly afterwards. She is also a member of her local RBL Branch and serves on the County Committee. Jan joined her husband at home and abroad on various postings throughout his 22 years serving whilst also managing a career in the NHS.



Remembering the Service and Sacrifice of the Generation of 1944

This year sees the 80th anniversaries of momentous turning points of the Second World War. Marking the service and sacrifice of the generation of 1944, RBL is encouraging members, Branches and communities to get involved. A pack to support this is available by [clicking here](#).

To help you engage with your community we are also producing display units that will explore the themes being commemorated in 2024. These will take the form of free-standing displays of different sizes. There will be an easily assembled four-sided tower which, at 2.5m high, would form a great talking point at an event. In addition, there will be one- and two-sided pull up banners and the option of a large poster. A poster and leaflet will also be available for our Remembrance Learning Programme. Some of the frames can be reused, which makes them a good investment to mark future anniversaries.

For 2024, you will be able to order the following display units:

- Exploring D-Day and the Battle of Normandy.
- Exploring the 80th anniversaries of 1944 including D-Day and the Battle of Normandy, Monte Cassino, Kohima, Imphal, Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Scheldt.

An [online portal](#) has been set up where you can explore the range on offer and order units. Branches can only pay by cheque. Information about ordering and how to pay can be found [on MAP](#) or on the online portal. Any use of Branch funds must be authorised by your Branch Committee prior to ordering.

Membership Engagement Survey

The Membership Engagement Survey is going live this week, so please do check your inbox for the link. By the end of this week if you have not received a link, please do let us know by emailing membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.

The survey will be sent to all our members that we hold an address for and will be live for 4 weeks. We ask you as Branch and County Officers to encourage your members to participate if they can, as

we want the responses to be as representative and useful as possible.

All survey responses will be anonymous, however the option to enter our prize draw does require sharing details. All this information will be held entirely by Shift, which is the supplier we are using to run the survey.

The results of this survey will help the Membership Directorate understand what is working well, what you value about your membership, and what you want to see in the future as part of your membership experience.

New application form update

The updated version of the application form will shortly be available. Once it is live, we will only be able to accept new applications on this version of the form, due to the way in which the data is scanned into the system. Therefore, we request that any Branches or RBL Clubs that have any completed application forms in their possession send them in now. If these are received once the new form is in operation then we will be unable to process, so will have to be returned to be refilled on the correct form.

A communication will be sent out when the new form is available, and it will also be uploaded onto MAP. If you want to order hard copies of the form, please contact Membership Services at membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk to submit your request in advance.

New recruitment material

The Membership Services and Development team has been working on new recruitment material that we plan to have available this month for Branches and new applicants to use. This includes a *New Member Branch Guide* explaining how our Branches operate, the Branch Offer, the value and purpose of membership, roles at Branch and County level and the various ways to get involved. This is [available now on MAP](#) under Branch Guides in PDF and PowerPoint format.

Additionally, a recruitment leaflet that illustrates some of the ways to get involved in RBL and brings out the great value gained by being a member is planned to be available in the next month. The leaflet contains a detachable application form, which has a QR code linking to the *Join* page on the website and should be a great recruitment piece to use at Branch events and community activities. Hard copies will be available to order.

The BCS recruitment leaflet, which has the same recruitment-based goal specifically for Branch Community Support, was launched in December. This is available in both print and digital format on the BCS Portal under *Promotional items*.

Registering for *Discover*

When members initially register on *Discover* for learning opportunities, they should enter their County or District name and not their area code. Currently, *Discover* does not recognise area codes. Therefore, for example, if your Branch is Darlington, you would enter Northumbria when registering. If you are unsure, please email L&D@britishlegion.org.uk and the team will be able to help you.

Membership Management Handbook timeline

Please be advised that the revised Membership Management Handbook (MMH) will be made available by 28th March 2024. Should you have any urgent questions, please contact Membership Services (membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk).

Youth Affiliation badge ordering process

A new process has been created for the ordering of Youth Affiliation badges. If your Branch has placed an order and it has not yet been fulfilled, please forward your application form to your regional mailbox. The Membership Engagement Administrator will contact you to resolve the order.

For new affiliations, badges will be consolidated into monthly orders. Badges will arrive around 6 weeks after the affiliation is confirmed. Branches will not be sent new affiliation badges when/if the badges are updated or changed. View the affiliation form and badge process [on MAP](#).

Social media policy for Branch Officers

RBL's social media policy for Branch Officers has been updated and is available [on MAP](#). This policy is for anyone involved in managing or contributing to a social media account on behalf of an RBL Branch, County, District or Section and is to help you get the most out of your Facebook and X (formally named Twitter) accounts while positively contributing to RBL's online presence and reputation.

Updated Health and Safety Guide

An updated Health and Safety Guide is now available in [print](#) and [digital](#) format on MAP, under *Branch Guides*. This updated version contains a new paragraph on page 4, clarifying the need for overseas Branches to familiarise themselves with local legislation. No further changes have been made.

RBL General Election Manifesto

The next general election will be held this year. Last September, the Royal British Legion and PoppyScotland launched our 2024 Manifesto, *Supporting Those Who Serve Us*, which calls on the government to better support the Armed Forces community. Please [visit our website](#) to learn more about our top five priorities for the next government. These priorities will frame much of our work

leading up to the next general election and beyond. We hope that you will join us; to learn more about our manifesto and to campaign with us, [click here](#).

Good Practice – South and West Yorkshire

Following a successful County Conference in January, we're shining the light on South and West Yorkshire. Less than a year ago, the County was at risk of administration and compliance rates were poor. However, after a new Chair and Vice Chair came into post less than a year ago, there has been a rapid transformation. Compliance rates have risen rapidly, as has overall County performance.

Credit has been attributed to the new County Chair and her personable, collaborative and focused leadership style, as well as to the unwavering support from the County's knowledgeable, dedicated MEO, and guidance from their MC Representative, Gordon Barker.

Sharon Turton, MEO for South and West Yorkshire, said: "The transformation we have seen take place in the County emphasises the importance of leading from the top." Sharon further elaborated "The County Committee is now a mix of people from different ages and backgrounds. Everyone has different strengths and views that they bring to the table and, most importantly, they all work together for the betterment of their County and its Branches, and the cause we are all so passionate about." Sharon also commended the seamless flow of information between the County and Branches, the Committee's unanimous completion of County Management Training and its commitment to planning for the future.

Sally Court, County Chair for South and West Yorkshire, emphasised the importance of setting an example. "We've got to lead from the top and filter good practice down, giving some structure and guidance to everyone," she said. "Leaving the Committee and Branches to do things on their own without support leads to problems, we have to all work together". Sally further commented "structure is important and doing things by the book is part of that, as is attending training to be qualified for your role. Of course, we all get on and it is a social opportunity, but we're there for a reason."

The successful, rapid turnaround of South and West Yorkshire has been a true success story and exemplifies the values of One Legion. The Membership Directorate extends its heartfelt congratulations to all involved for their contribution to such a rapid and successful improvement.