



## Central News – August 2025

### Membership information, updates and engagement

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## Online RBL fundraising notice

If you're thinking of setting up a GoFundMe or other online fundraising platform page to fundraise for RBL, thank you! We really appreciate your support. **Please be aware that if you choose The Royal British Legion as the benefiting charity, all the funds raised will automatically go to RBL central funds.** It is possible to raise money for a specific branch through these platforms, but only if it's made really clear on the page from the very beginning and, even then, it can be a tricky and time-consuming process as the money must be reimbursed manually from central funds.

This is because the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice means we must use donations exactly as described when people give. If it's not absolutely clear that the money is intended specifically for a branch, other supporters may donate thinking they're supporting RBL centrally, which could prevent us from being able to transfer the funds to a branch. Because of this, we'd strongly recommend using a different method if you're looking to support a local branch directly.

## Membership fee increase

We would like to take this opportunity to kindly remind members that the £2 fee increase for 2025 comes into effect on **Thursday 4 September 2025**. New members and those renewing from that date will pay £22. The change will take place automatically at renewal.

The fee increase follows the motion passed at Annual Conference 2024. If you would like to know more about these changes, please visit [rbl.org.uk/membershipfees](https://rbl.org.uk/membershipfees).

If you have any questions or concerns about the fee increase, please reach out to us at [memberships@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:memberships@britishlegion.org.uk) or call us on: UK: 0800 307 7773 (free); Republic of Ireland: 1800 911 936 (free); Overseas: +44 (0)207 191 1091 (full rate)

## Cenotaph Parade 2025 – veteran registration

In 2025, we will continue to offer any remaining unused Cenotaph Parade tickets to eligible veterans who are *not* RBL members or affiliated to a service or unit associations, so that they are afforded the opportunity to march in the Cenotaph Parade. This will be done on a first come first served basis and will be restricted to UK and Commonwealth veterans from the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and the Merchant Navy.

Registration is open to eligible non-members [on our website](https://rbl.org.uk/cenotaph) – please do encourage anyone who meets these criteria to register. The deadline is Monday 29 September. Should you have any questions, please contact [cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk).

## Catch up on Annual Conference

Missed this year's Annual Conference? Or want to want to re-live the weekend's highlights? You can now head over to the [Annual Conference webpage](#) to watch both the [highlights reel](#) and full [recording](#) of the main sessions from the weekend. Photo highlights and our 2025 award winners can also be seen on the page.

If you've never attended Annual Conference before, why not check out the highlights? It offers a great overview of what to expect from the event! Keep an eye out for information about Annual Conference 2026 in October this year.

## RBL Central Band concert

RBL's Central Band will be holding a concert on Sunday 12 October at Cadogan Hall in London. The all-volunteer band, which is currently celebrating its 80th year, is conducted by RBL's Director of Music, Capt. David Cole, who leads the music for all RBL's commemorative events.

Tickets start from £18 and the concert promises to be filled with inspiring music, featuring classical favourites as well as beloved pieces from both stage and screen. Find out more and buy tickets [on the venue's website](#).

## South Asian Heritage Month

The Royal British Legion proudly supports South Asian Heritage Month (18 July – 17 August) with special content on its website. With this year seeing the 80th anniversary of VJ Day and the end of the Second World War, stories on the website reflect the crucial contribution of the men and women of South Asia. The 14th Army, for instance, was the main allied fighting force in Burma, and 85% of its ranks were made up of those from South Asia. Discover more on the [South Asian Heritage Month website](#).

## Back from the Brink – Solihull Branch

### **A Community Rallies Around Remembrance – the importance of succession planning**

Following the unexpected passing of its Chair and PAO, Solihull Branch was left in a difficult position. "Tracey had been the central figure in organising the Poppy Appeal," says Elaine Butler, Warwickshire and Birmingham County President. "She knew every collection point and maintained the list of volunteers. With no clear plan in place, there were serious discussions about cancelling the appeal for the year." But, says Elaine, cancellation wasn't the right answer.

It was strong relationships with the local authority's community teams that enabled the branch to reach out to the borough's 6k+ strong Hong Kong (HK) community, with an overwhelming response. "Many were eager to integrate more fully into the community and to understand the significance of Remembrance and the role of the Royal British Legion," she says.



*Photo credit: Elaine Butler*

Each day, more than 30 volunteers came forward, primarily to support collections. "Their dedication and enthusiasm were met with admiration from the public, who were both fascinated and moved by their support for the RBL."

As many of these new volunteers wanted to take part in other key events but were unfamiliar with the protocols and traditions, the branch invited Major John Lam of the Royal Fusiliers – a Cantonese speaker and former member of the British Army in Hong Kong – to deliver a talk on ceremonial customs and the meaning behind them. His session was a great success, helping to build confidence and deepen understanding among the HK volunteers.

Not only was the Poppy Appeal was a success, but new volunteers were welcomed into the fold and the branch has forged stronger ties with the local community. What began as a crisis has become a story of resilience, inclusion, and shared purpose.



*Photo credit: Elaine Butler*

Elaine's tip for other branches is: "Make part of the Branch plan going out and meeting organisations in your patch. You will be surprised how many are keen to support the RBL."

## One Year of centenarian membership

Just over a year ago we rolled out our first centenarian memberships – honorary membership to those over 100 years old. This was the result of a successful motion at Annual Conference 2022. Since then, our branches have been hard at work recognising their centenarian members and commemorating the Second World War generation. One such recognition recently took place on a veteran's 101st birthday in Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, Wales.

Born on 2nd July 1924, Dennis is one of the last surviving veterans of the Second World War. At just 18 years old, he joined the Royal Navy, serving from 1942 to 1948. His service took him to East Africa, where conflict continued long after peace was declared in Europe. Among his most vivid wartime memories was the moment his crew were forced to abandon ship, which later sank in the same area where the Titanic was lost, an unforgettable and sobering experience.

Dennis was presented with the Centenarian Membership Certificate along with a heartfelt gift from Llanelli branch on his 101st birthday.



*Photo credit: Llanelli branch*

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Thank you for reading! The next edition of Central News is due to be published Tuesday 2 September.