



## Central News – June 2025

### Membership information, updates and engagement

#### Key Information

Title	Page	Summary
<b>Festival of Remembrance</b>	2	The latest on ticketing for 2025

#### News and Updates

<b>Annual Conference recap</b>	2	Award winners, highlights and more.
<b>Our strategy 2025-2035</b>	3	An introduction to our new strategy
<b>Behind the scenes at Annual Conference</b>	3	A look at how Annual Conference happens
<b>Strengthening the Armed Forces Covenant Duty</b>	4	How we're working with MPs to strengthen the duty

#### Branch Life

<b>Marking 80 years since VE Day</b>	4	How some of our branches commemorated
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#### Important dates

Festival of Remembrance ballot opens	4 June 2025
Festival of Remembrance ballot closes	24 June 2025

## Festival of Remembrance 2025

We are pleased to announce that the ballot registration form for the Festival of Remembrance 2025 will open tomorrow, **Wednesday 4 June**.

### How to Enter:

1. Once the form is live, visit our website and follow the instructions to register for the ballot:  
[Festival of Remembrance | Royal British Legion](#)
2. You will need your membership number to complete your ballot entry.
  - Your membership number can be found on your membership card or on your renewal letter reminder.
3. Each member is allowed to enter the ballot once, for a maximum of two tickets.

### Key Dates:

Ballot registration opens	Wednesday 4 June 2025
Ballot registration closes	Tuesday, 24 June 2025
Ballot day	Wednesday 9 July 2025
Successful members notified from	Thursday 10 July 2025

### Next Steps:

- If you are successful, you will receive an email with a unique link from Thursday 10 July 2025 onwards. You will then be able to select your seats in your preferred location (subject to availability) and will be asked to enter your guest information and payment details.
- **Payment must be completed within seven days** of the link being sent.

For more information on the ballot process and ticketing rules, please [visit the RBL website](#).

Thank you for your continued support, and good luck in the ballot!

## Recapping Annual Conference 2025

Thank you to everyone who attended Annual Conference. Whether you joined us virtually or in-person, we were delighted to host you at the Harrogate Convention Centre. Feedback so far has been very positive from all who attended, and we'll of course note your recommendations and suggestions for future Conferences.

During the weekend we celebrated the hard work and achievement of our members during the National Membership Awards ceremony, with the winners and runners up [on the website](#) now. We also opened the floor to you during the Membership Forum on Sunday, which hope you found useful

and informative.

Please look out for more highlights from Annual Conference in July's edition of Legion magazine, and a highlights reel and photo gallery [on the website](#) in due course. We look forward to seeing you one week earlier than usual in Brighton, 8-10 May 2026.

## Introducing our Strategy 2025-2035

At Annual Conference we introduced you to Our Strategy 2025-2035 – we also sent an email to all members with email addresses. We're sharing our strategy with members, volunteers, and employees in readiness for the autumn when we will start working together in earnest to deliver it.

Our Strategy 2025-2035 is available [in colour](#) or [black and white](#). If you need to print copies locally you may wish to use the black and white version, which may also be more accessible for anyone with sight impairments.

You can also watch a [short video about RBL's work](#) and read more about [Our Story](#).

## Behind the scenes at Annual Conference

When RBL colleagues came together for Annual Conference 2025, there was one mission: to look after our members. So, it was a rewarding sight to see delegates and visitors leaving with smiles.



Preparations began more than a year ago and it was with great anticipation that colleagues from across RBL descended upon Harrogate. Briefings were had, goody bags were packed – and one of our dedicated MEOs, Sharon Turton, even volunteered to drive a truck so that a dais for our parade could be collected from Imphal Barracks, York.

Radios, WhatsApp Groups and Teams chats kept everyone in the loop so that issues could be dealt with quickly – including, for instance, “Where is Ruth?!” This was when our new Interim Director of Membership, Ruth Efunnuga, had – unbeknown to her – won first runner up for the Sir Clive Johnstone award and we had to get her into the auditorium on time.

Volunteering behind the scenes at Annual Conference is a privilege, especially if we might get to witness a special moment such as the National President receiving his jewel of office, followed by the National President surprising Devon County Chair Yasmin Gibbins with a gold badge and

Cornwall County Parade Marshal, Tony Vidler, with Life Membership.

From shedding a few happy tears to sharing laughs, there was also the Women's Section (WS) forum in which the WS National Chair, Jan Buxton, said she would make Executive Directors Antony Baines (Services) and Gary Ryan (Marketing, Fundraising and Remembrance) honorary WS members – just before presenting Antony with a cheque for £150k to refurbish the family rooms in RBL's care homes and promising to make up any shortfall on funds for new televisions in the homes.

Many queries answered, boxes unpacked and repacked, several thousand steps taken, assistance given, feedback gladly taken – these are just a few of the activities that go on behind the scenes.

And with last box labelled and ready for collection, the conversation turned to Brighton and [Annual Conference 2026](#), 8 – 10 May. Will we see you there?

### Strengthening the Armed Forces Covenant Duty

The Royal British Legion recently supported the latest meeting of the [All-Party Parliamentary Group \(APPG\) on the Armed Forces Community](#), focusing on how the Armed Forces Covenant Duty is being applied and where improvements are needed.

The [Armed Forces Covenant](#) outlines the nation's obligation that members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families should not face any disadvantage due to their service, and provides special consideration in certain circumstances, such as for those who have been injured or bereaved.

With gaps in implementation reported in many areas of the country and key policy areas such as employment and social care still excluded, we're continuing to call for the Covenant Duty to be strengthened.

This work feeds into the shaping the upcoming Armed Forces Bill, which is expected to expand the Duty's scope.

### Marking 80 years since VE Day

From coffee mornings to dancing in the streets, last month our branches worked tirelessly to make sure VE Day 80 received the recognition it deserved. Here are just a few highlights of the tremendous work that connected communities with their local branches.

In addition to flag raisings, a lunchtime service and linking in with local entertainers to put on an evening event, **Redcar Branch**, North Yorkshire, created a poignant display by lighting 226 tealights – one for each of the names on the local cenotaph and for the civilians who lost their lives during bombing raids on the town.



**Burbage Branch**, Leicestershire, assisted Burbage Heritage Group in creating a temporary history trail. Branch members approached the occupants of houses linked to men who had lost their lives during WWII, seeking permission to display a poster with a QR code outside the house, telling the men's stories. Five posters that couldn't be placed – two addresses no longer existed – were displayed in the rose garden of the village war memorial.

**East Preston and Kingston Branch**, Lancashire, invited a Winston Churchill impersonator to get the crowd into street party mood. With huge support from the local community, the East Preston RBL



Club, where the event was held, was at capacity inside and out for the whole day. An opera singer, Harriet Rose, and a trio of 'wartime singers', The Silhouettes, provided the entertainment while 'Winston Churchill' mingled with the crowds

**Nantwich & District Branch**, Cheshire, sent thanks to RBL for the VE Day grant, which helped them to [bring the local community together](#) in an event where "there was literally dancing in the streets". A tea party also proved to be a success, helping to promote RBL in the community and raising £904.95 for the Poppy Appeal.

Meanwhile members at **East Knoyle Branch**, Wiltshire, were joined by communities from other parishes for a service of Remembrance that was followed by a celebratory buffet in a decorated marquee and a quiz on WWII rationing.



In Cambridgeshire, **Wisbech Branch** marked the day by [signing up its latest member](#) – WWII veteran, 102-year-old Stanley Eastgate. Mr Eastgate had requested to join the RBL. A Wisbech man, he completed his National Service from 1942 to 1947. The branch was contacted by Mr Eastgate's son and daughter who enquired whether their father was too old at 102 years to join the RBL.



After Toby North, Chair of Wisbech Branch, explained that you are never too old to become a member and that the branch would be delighted for Mr Eastgate to join, it was agreed that he would become a member on VE Day 80. Toby said that the Wisbech Branch is 103 years old and one of the first branches in the country to be consecrated in 1922; also that Stanley may be the oldest person ever to become a member for the first time at 102 years old.

In Leicestershire, **Melton Mowbray Branch** marked the day with residents of Wilton Manor Care Home, along with invited guests from RAFA Association. As well as a lovely afternoon tea, there was a 1940's singalong that was enjoyed by all.



*Photography by Chris Thompson*

Still in Leicestershire, **Hinkley Branch** linked with the Head Teacher and Governor of a local primary school to mark the day. Fabulous aerial photographs were taken of pupils dressed in red, white and blue to form a large 'VE' and military vehicles and re-enactors also attended to bring a bit of the 1940s to the school.

At their touchpoint and branch office, **Weston-super-mare Branch** marked the day with a street party-themed coffee morning, which was attended by local veterans, the town Mayor and local supporters – also helping the branch's most senior member to celebrate his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday!

Finally, in Lancashire, an estimated 25,000 people attended 'VE80 Fest' – a free, open air concert and family-friendly day organised and hosted by **Blackburn Branch**. Aimed at bringing local communities together, the event was over seven months in the planning and widely advertised both on social media and local newspapers.



With too many wonderful events to list, we want to say a huge **“thank you”** to all our branches and every individual who planned, organised and supported VE Day 80 commemorations!

Read about our national commemorations at the National Memorial Arboretum [here](#).

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Thank you for reading! The June edition of Central News is due to be published  
Tuesday 1 July.