

Legion Winter Newsletter 2014

Welcome to the *Legion Winter Newsletter*, an overview of key successes and achievements across the organisation in 2014.

THANK YOU

With the World War One Centenary, 70th anniversary of D-Day and one of the most successful Poppy Appeals in our history, 2014 has been a special and remarkable year for the Legion. Thank you to all staff for your tremendous efforts, hard work and dedication in making these achievements possible.

The diverse range of activity staff have engaged in across all of sections of our organisation has helped to raise both the Legion's profile and shown that the need for our welfare services is still as great as when the Legion was founded in 1921.

Whether you are a part of our Fundraising or Marketing and Communication teams, a staff member working at one of our Care Homes or Break Centres, a Community Fundraiser or Poppy Appeal Organiser, an Area Administrator or an Advice and Information Officer—the list is extensive—you have all in your own ways contributed towards the achievements outlined below, so a very big thank you.



TRANSFORMATION OF OUR SUPPORT SERVICES

After three years of development and restructure, the Legion undertook the biggest transformation in its 93-year history this year resulting in a complete change of how we deliver our frontline support services. We have now opened 13 of our 16 Pop In advice and information centres on major UK high streets and recruited over 130 Information Volunteers and 500 active Caseworkers to support our beneficiaries across the county. The three remaining centres will be opened next year.

This year has also seen the start of the Comradeship Services project which will introduce new payment and renewal processes for membership. This project aims to introduce a central database with information on all members, volunteers and supporters. Meanwhile, more than 2,500 Military Members have signed up to the scheme demonstrating our success in engaging with the Armed Forces community and our presence through Armed Forces sport is going from strength to strength.

In November, in further support of our Armed Forces Community, the Legion released findings from the most comprehensive survey into the needs of the ex-Service community that has been undertaken in ten years. Our Household Survey provided the most accurate picture in a decade of the scale of the Armed Forces Community's needs.



CAMPAIGNING FOR THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

As a result of our Justice for Widows Campaign and our 2015 General Election Manifesto the Government announced that from the 1 April 2015, all widows, widowers and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces will be allowed to keep their military pensions for life, regardless of their future marital status.

In September, the Legion also welcomed the adoption of the Armed Forces Declaration by the 28 member states of the Western alliance at the 2014 NATO Summit in Cardiff, the UK's first summit since 1990. Following a sustained campaign by the Legion, these principles were written into the Armed Forces Act 2011. Millions of pounds in funding have been unlocked to help the Armed Forces community with assistance ranging from high quality prosthetics to community mental health services.



REFRESH OF OUR BRAND

The Legion has also made great strides in joining our welfare and Remembrance activities in a more coherent way. In October, we launched a refresh of the Legion's brand: Live On—*To the memory of the fallen and the future of the living*. This new visual style provides a clear message to the general public and our beneficiaries of what the Legion does: Remembrance is a significant part of our work, but we also help the living to approach their future with hope. We'll be phasing out our strapline 'Shoulder to shoulder with all who Serve' and replacing it with 'Live On' across all of our marketing and communications—a process that will take some time.

The Legion also scored second place in the annual Third Sector Charity Brand Index this year, our best ever result! The Legion rose three places from our ranking in 2013 and we have also beaten our previous best of third place achieved in 2011 and 2012. The Charity Brand Index, which is in its sixth year, gauges public awareness of charity brands and sets the charity sector standard in brand measurement. With this year's launch of the Legion's brand re-fresh—Live On—we look forward to similar success in 2015.



CENTENARY AND D-DAY 70TH COMMEMORATIONS

This year has provided the Legion with a rare opportunity to get involved with a huge range of Centenary and Remembrance activities—we've shown the British public what we're really made of. The Legion was involved with the Tower of London poppies installation with many of our dedicated volunteers planting ceramic poppies, LIGHTS OUT saw the public come together across the UK to mark the Centenary in their homes and communities, our Every Man Remembered campaign united the public in paying tribute to the 1,117,077 men and women from the Commonwealth who died in the War, and the Normandy 70th anniversary commemorations were far bigger than expected illustrating the public's respect for our D-Day veterans.

If that wasn't enough the D-Day 70th anniversary commemorations were far bigger than expected illustrating the public's respect for our D-Day veterans. With your continued support we plan to make VE day and VJ Day just as memorable.



POPPY APPEAL TRIUMPH

The 2013 Poppy Appeal raised £38.9 million, an increase of 5.24% on the previous year. We are proud to say that this year's Poppy Appeal was another roaring success with 350,000 collectors hitting the streets across the UK in November.

In the year that marks the 100th anniversary since the outbreak of the First World War, the Legion undertook a poignant and moving sunrise-to-sunset vigil at the Cenotaph in central London to officially launch the Appeal. Members of the public, British Armed Forces and Legion beneficiaries took part in 'The Watch' where the Legion asked people to not only commemorate the memory of the fallen, but also to focus on the future of the living.



The City Poppy Days demonstrated the enormous level of support there is for the Poppy Appeal nationwide by our volunteers, members and supporters. Collection by our volunteers took place far and wide in communities large and small. London, Bristol, Manchester, Birmingham and Plymouth held official Poppy Days with London alone reporting a collection of £1.2 million.



This impressive level of support was bolstered by some brilliant fundraising and awareness-raising initiatives across the country: in London, Transport for London teamed up with a host of recognisable celebrity voices, Football clubs and performers to encourage Londoners to give generously; in Gateshead, a giant poppy was positioned in front of the iconic Angel of the North to launch the Poppy Appeal in the North East; in Cardiff, Warship HMS Somerset, decked out with poppies, sailed into Cardiff Bay with its horn ringing to mark the launch of the Poppy Appeal in Wales; and in Greenhithe, a dramatic projection of the poppy appeared on the cliffs surrounding Bluewater to support the Poppy Appeal in Kent.

TOWARDS 2015

We must remember that these accomplishments are just the beginning of the Centenary period and that they have laid the foundations for even greater ideas and projects— please keep up the great work as without your efforts the range of Legion services we offer to our beneficiaries would not be possible.

We wish you a very happy holiday season and a safe and prosperous New Year and look forward to reporting on even greater achievements in 2015.



Registered Charity Number: 219279.

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