



MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER FOR OVERSEAS

HELLO FROM MSO (OVERSEAS)

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. I would like to say I hope you have had a nice rest from the Poppy Appeal but I know your work continues long after the Poppy Appeal has finished. Saying that, you did work VERY hard during the Poppy Appeal and I can see from the SC22 forms that Overseas has yet again topped their previous total and more funds are still coming in! Great big well done and thanks to everyone involved!

Currently there are no deadlines that are looming however if you want to attend Annual Conference this year (16th – 17th May in Southport), please ensure you get your application submitted by 10th April. To attend Conference you must have:

- Submitted fully audited Branch Accounts on time
- Submitted complete Branch MS1 on time
- (Please see below for information on affiliation fee payments)

I would like to draw your attention to Page 17 of the latest legion magazine. It gives an update on Membership Improvements that are being implemented in line with the new Comradeship Database. The magazine can be accessed here: <http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/6db25a23#/6db25a23/2>

Many more branches have sent items to me for inclusion in this newsletter and it is much appreciated. This newsletter will go to every branch Overseas so it is a great way to share information and tips and tell others about events and services you have held or attended.

Please send any correspondence to me at Overseassupport@britishlegion.org.uk

I Hope to hear from you soon,

Kayleigh

LATEST NEWS

The Comradeship Database Project

We are still on track to implement the first phase of the Comradeship Services Project in May and this will require a number of changes to normal practice that will be outlined below.

Collection of Affiliation Fees

- There will be no invoices produced in February, instead every branch will receive a final invoice in May.
- This will simplify the transfer of data into the new system and means Branches are not asked to make two payments.
- As timely payment is a condition to attend Annual Conference the National Conference Committee have decided that payment of Affiliation Fees will not be taken into account when issuing delegates credentials.

Online Joining/MS4

- We will cease to accept MS4 new joiner forms from 30 March 2015. On Line Joining will also cease from this date.
- Systems will go live again on 18 May, including On Line Joining for all branches.
- We will undoubtedly experience some delays during April and May as no applications will be processed.
- Whilst the system is closed, the invoices can mature and final statements sent to branches with a collection to zero the membership debt in early May.
- This should not stop recruitment at branch level as we are hoping that we will be able to provide a new form at this point, which can be retained by the branches until we start processing the applications again

Data Protection

There is a new Legion Data Protection Policy which is attached as a PDF document. When Branch Officers are sent membership listings it is important to note that the information contains personal information and that as Branch Officers you are responsible for its security and confidentiality in accordance with Data Protection Act 1998 and access to this information should be limited.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Kyrenia Police Memorial

The Kyrenia Branch of the Royal British Legion has been officially acknowledged for its assistance in erecting a Memorial in honour of the sixty two police officers who died serving the Crown in the British Colony in Cyprus between 1955 – 1959, an era known as the Eoka Crisis.

The Memorial was erected in November 2014 and Sidney MacKay, the Chairman of the Police Roll of Honour Trust has offered his sincere thanks to the Kyrenia Branch for their unstinting efforts in ensuring that the unveiling ceremony was a fitting remembrance to those who died. The branch was also instrumental behind the scenes providing helpful contacts within the Turkish administration which proved invaluable in getting approval for the Memorial and clearing bureaucratic problems.

The Branch has been given custody of the British Cyprus Police Standard to be paraded each Remembrance Sunday in Kyrenia. To read the full article and for more information please contact the MSO(O).



Nice-Monaco Ceramic Poppy Gift

The Royal British Legion Nice-Monaco Branch has been presented with one of the 888,246 ceramic poppies from the Seas of Red 'garden' in the moat of the Tower of London, by a member who visited that amazing display and bought her poppy.

Commander Michael Healy (pictured right), Chairman of the Nice-Monaco branch, displayed the poppy at the Family Communion Service at St' Paul's Church in Monte-Carlo on 4th January 2015.

Each poppy represented a British or Commonwealth serviceman killed in WW1. The branch has remitted to Poppy HQ in Aylesford, Kent, the sum of £11,137, the result of the local Poppy Appeal. This goes toward the British Legion's global target £40 million, of which the Seas of Red raised about £5 million, at £25 per ceramic poppy sold.



Sark Remembrance



planted either side of the Memorial Cross in homage to the rest of the mem who served and are not buried in Sark.

Later that night the Sark Branch organised a candlelit vigil at the Mem of Sark Memorial Cross.

Thanks to Lydia Bourne of Bourne Photography for allowing us to use these photos of the day.

School Children read out the names of the sixty eight Sark men who served during the First World War at the Service of Remembrance at St Peters Church. After the service a plaque commemorating the anniversary was unveiled at the base of the Men of Sark Memorial Cross.

In addition to the seventeen men who made the ultimate sacrifice, another fifteen who served are buried in Sark's cemetery and with permission their gravestones were affixed with an enamel poppy as a permanent reminder. For the week of the commemoration, red sashes were placed on each of the graves to easily mark their location from the road. Thirty six crosses were



The Highlanders Bridge, Holland

Edmund-Paul Charnley-Nijton had the honour of laying a wreath at a remembrance service in Gennepe, Holland. Below he recounts his experience:

"I had a long career as a Nurse, much of that time working with (ex-) British Military. My first post as a qualified Nurse was on ward for elderly men – many who had fought in the First World War. Much of the physical care they needed was the direct result of war injuries from bullets, bombs and "mustard gas". I worked night duty and, death often near, these veterans would talk with me about their experiences. Much of the mental health care they needed was what we now know to be Traumatic Stress related. I didn't need to say much – just try to really listen and comprehend.

Unfortunately I am no longer able to work due to brain damage. It has taken me several years to adjust to being pensioned off on medical grounds and to receive care rather than to give it. In fact, I only stopped being quietly angry a few weeks ago, just before Christmas, when I joined the Royal British Legion. I did this to try and be useful in some way again, something I could cope with - and to get more social contact.

I was surprised to find I could join as a full member of a thriving branch here where I live in the Netherlands.

I felt uneasy about the membership at first – not having a military-service background. But I soon realized I could find some small role for myself. I was invited to lay a wreath at the British War Cemetery in Milsbeek by Eric Geurts, Branch Secretary, and I said "yes". Later, Derek Williams, our Branch Chairman called to welcome me as a new member and outline wreath laying etiquette.

A poppy wreath was sent by post to my home. I found that an unsettling idea at first - but it was so dignified and the name of the person who manufactured it at the Poppy Factory was printed on the packaging – "Made by:- P. Wills" which reminded me I was not laying it in a personal capacity but on behalf of The Royal British Legion, Holland Branch. I hand wrote the dedication card on behalf of the committee and members.



With kind permission of Paul ten Broeke TBfotografie

The night before the day of the commemorations was rather stressful. We had to drive a long way early in the morning to collect the Standard Bearer and get to the town of Gennep near the Dutch-German Border. The journey itself was not the problem – the weather forecast was rain followed by severe frost and I dreaded being late for something so important. Fortunately the weather was not as bad as had been forecast. The journey gave us the chance to get acquainted with the Standard-Bearer, Ad Rotscheid. Ad is in his 80s but is more fit and alert than many people half his age.

When we arrived we were received by Peter de Koning, Burgemeester (Mayor) and he introduced us to John Cameron-Webb, the president of the Holland Branch and British Consul to the Netherlands. Then Ad lead us through the crowds again to our appointed place in the procession behind the Mayors party. The procession set off down through the old town, towards the river, accompanied by a Dutch Royal British legion Band of Scottish pipers. What followed was a ceremony to rename the Niers Bridge in honor of the 51st. Highland Division. The 51st. Highland Division was the primary British force which liberated the towns of Milsbeek and Gennep from Nazi occupation in 1945 together with the Niers Bridge. The Niers Bridge was a vital crossing point - a key route through to Germany for the advancing Allied forces. Part of Operation Veritable, it was heavily defended by the German Forces and was recaptured at a severe cost of lives. Tom Renouf, a veteran from Operation Veritable, made a very moving speech and then ceremonially renamed the bridge as The Highlander's Bridge, together with two other comrades.

The ceremonies continued at a second location - a monument dedicated to civilians. The third part of the day was held in the neighboring town of Milsbeek. There was an ecumenical multi-language church service during which the names of all the fallen were read out loud. German guests from neighboring towns across the border took part in the service – and spoke of the contrast between then and now. Former enemies are now invaluable allies.

In conclusion the procession went out of the church and into to the adjoining British War Cemetery.

After the Last Post and the British and Dutch National Anthems had been played, a total of twelve wreaths were laid – including ours. I took the chance to shake hands with two of the three Scottish veterans to thank them personally.

We drove back to Ad's home and had coffee together with his wife. My partner drove us home and I slept all the way.

I am very grateful to the Royal British legion for the opportunity to partake in this memorial event and especially to Ad who helped us to be in all the right places, in the right order and to do the correct things!"



Royal British Legion, Holland Branch
Edmund-Paul Charnley-Nijton

CORPORATE MESSAGE JANUARY 2015

The corporate message was delivered at Counties and Districts at their annual conferences during January. Many of you belong to Branches that do not fall into a District so I have attached a copy in PDF version for you to read. It is very interesting and touches on various aspects such as the Poppy Appeal, the Legions new 'LIVE ON' branding, the Harris Charity Brand Index (in which the Legion ranked 2nd!), how our new ways of operating are working, the success of the Public Affairs team and of course, a big thank you for all the hard work you do!

DISTRICT CONFERENCES

District Germany

Unfortunately the National Chairman could not make District Germanys Conference held on 10th January at the Kurhaus, Bad-Fallingbostel, Rod Bedford delivered the corporate message in his absence.

Keith Smith from the Paderborn Branch came first in the District Standard Bearer competition and was charged with the District Standard.

Ken Adams from the Minden Branch, and Joan Hatton from the Sauerland Branch were presented with commendations by the General Officer Commanding for their outstanding support.

Well done to the District of Germany for collecting an outstanding €132,000 in the 2014 Poppy Appeal!

District Spain North

District North Spains Conference was held on Friday 30th January at the NH Hotel in Alicante. Unfortunately the main guest speaker, TRBL National Vice-Chairman, Mr Terry Whittles, was snowbound in Manchester and was unable to attend, much to the disappointment of the delegates.

The Chairman of Orihuela and District Branch, Mr Keith Carter, was presented with two awards, one was the District Recruitment and Retention award for increased membership over the past 3 years and the other was a District Certificate of Appreciation for his work as District Parade Marshal over the past years.

The most prestigious award of the day however went to Mr Chris Wyatt, retiring District Secretary. He was presented with the Legion Gold Badge awarded for his dedicated service to the Legion in Spain over the past 10 years. When the Chairman read the accompanying citation, it was obvious that this award was very well deserved.

During the Conference, the fantastic Poppy Appeal collection total was revealed, an astonishing €188,324.80! This is a €15,000 increase on the previous year.



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District Spain South



Chris Simpkins, the Director General, was the only guest speaker to make it to a District Conference. Please see him pictured below with officers of the District and the District Parade Marshal.

Well done to the District of South Spain for collecting an amazing €76,000.00 in the 2014 Poppy Appeal!

MESSAGES FROM THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY TEAM:

Insult to Injury Campaign:

Veterans injured during Service are having to give up most of their compensation to pay for the costs of their social care.

Military compensation is awarded as recompense for the pain, suffering and loss of amenity experienced by injured Service personnel and veterans; it should not be treated as normal income.

It's unfair and has to change!



INSULT TO INJURY

The Public Affairs and Public Policy team would really appreciate your support during their campaign, whether this be helping them to source much needed case studies, talking to stakeholders and beneficiaries about the campaign, or writing to your own MP about the issue.

With the Budget Statement not far away (18 March) and the General Election just around the corner (7 May), this will likely be a short and intensive campaign. Please help us to promote the campaign in any way that you can.

Please find more information on the campaign here: <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/campaigns/insult-to-injury>

Restricting Non-Residents' Entitlement to the UK Personal Allowance

The Public Affairs and Public Policy team has spent some time reviewing the Government's proposal to restrict entitlement to the UK Personal Allowance for non-residents. Whilst the proposed policy change would apply to all ex-patriots, we were initially concerned that the policy change could leave veterans now living overseas financially disadvantaged compared to many other ex-patriots. This is because Armed Forces veterans (along with former local government and NHS employees, for example) receive government service pensions, which are taxed exclusively within the UK regardless of the recipients' current residence status.

Withdrawing the UK Personal Allowance from non-residents in receipt of UK government service pensions, therefore, would effectively result in these individuals having to pay a greater proportion of tax overall since there is no overseas tax liability against which the additional UK tax could be relieved.

However, having considered the consultation document in detail, the Legion is encouraged by the sentiments expressed in paragraph 6.6, which refers specifically to overseas pensioners. In particular, we acknowledge the Government's admission that veterans living overseas could be disproportionately affected by the proposed policy change, and welcome the assertion that it is not the Government's intention to raise taxes in situations where the UK is the principal taxing authority. In this way, it is our understanding that recipients of a UK government service pension are not likely to be affected by the proposed policy change, if the Government does indeed decide to proceed with this measure. Rather, it will be those individuals with income that is taxable both in the UK *and* overseas (such as that from immovable property) who will likely see their entitlement to the UK Personal Allowance restricted.

The Legion has nevertheless written to the Treasury to note our concern and to seek firm assurances that veterans now living overseas will not see the value of their Armed Forces pensions diminished by restricting their entitlement to the UK Personal Allowance. On 8 October 2014, we received a provisional response from officials, extracts of which are copied below.

'The intention is that if a person receives most of their income from the UK then they should be treated as if they were resident here, as they have a close economic tie. [...] In the consultation document we proposed a test which would look at the proportion of a person's income which came from the UK as a proportion of their income globally – so if someone had £10,000 of pension income which is taxable in the UK and £1,000 of bank interest in France then they would qualify to claim the UK personal allowance. Note that as we are still at an early stage in the policy design, and indeed we don't know whether this proposal will go ahead, we haven't yet determined where that proportion would be set; we think it is likely to be either 90 or 75%.'

'[...] In addition to the protection that this threshold would offer, we did as you say set out additional protection for people in receipt of government service pensions and any other pension where the UK retains the primary right to tax that income even when someone is living overseas. Where this is the case, the intention of the policy would be for the person to continue to be entitled to the personal allowance.'

As you can see, Treasury officials have confirmed that our understanding of the proposal is correct. We do, however, note that the Government's proposal is still very much in its infancy (it hasn't progressed further than the provisional consultation stage) and so will be subject to further revision. I can assure you that the Public Affairs and Public Policy team will continue to monitor developments closely.

For more information on the proposal please follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/restricting-non-residents-entitlement-to-the-uk-personal-allowance/restricting-non-residents-entitlement-to-the-uk-personal-allowance>

THE NEXT OVERSEAS NEWSLETTER WILL BE SENT OUT AT THE END OF MAY, PLEASE SEND ANY NEWS ITEMS TO OVERSEASSUPPORT@BRITISHLEGION.ORG.UK