



**'Y' SERVICES
(GARATS HAY)**



July 2020

Y SERVICES MEMORIAL PLOT AT THE NMA HAS A NEW SIGN



Ever since it was first laid out, the Y Services Organisation Memorial Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum has been without a sign at the entrance - so the plot was to some extent unnoticed (though not unloved). A brand new sign to inform visitors was installed during the last week of July 2020. Full story on page 2

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The Intelligence Corps Celebrates 80 years 1940 - 2020 Full Story on page 4





DEVELOPMENT OF THE 'Y' SERVICES MEMORIAL GARDEN AT THE NMA

The Y Services Memorial was one of the very first to be established at the NMA, largely through the drive and enthusiasm of Branch member the late Mrs Joan Nicholls, a World War Two Bletchley Park ATS operator. With the help of Branch members, a garden was set out and planted with its central feature being a 'Y' shaped footpath leading to a memorial stone and plaque commemorating the work and in remembrance of all those involved in Y service operations both in the Armed forces and as civilians.



Setting out the Y Services plot



The Y Services plot in 2020

Ever since the first sapling was planted, the plot has not had a sign to identify it to visitors; this has now been remedied with the installation of the excellent engraved stone sign pictured on the front page and below.



Notice to the left in this pic one of the NMA's trains which start and end their journey near our plot. This means considerable footfall in the vicinity and there has already been a lot of interest in 'The Y Services Organisation'. The NMA is open to visitors now but you have to book in advance.

The sign was largely financed with a generous legacy left by Joan Nicholls. Getting permission to install a sign, agreeing appropriate materials, creating a design (with special attention to the inclusion of the WRAC hat badge) having it approved and finding a suitable stonemason has been a lengthy process and we are delighted that the sign is now in place.

The next major task, which we are calling Phase Two, is to make the plot easier to maintain so that it always looks smart and pristine. Installation of paving and solid edging will help to ensure that the site can continue to serve as a fitting tribute to all those from the Y Services community who are now no longer with us. Such a development will not be cheap. Just before the COVID19 lockdown in March 2020, your Branch committee had just completed plans for a concerted fundraising appeal to raise £7,000 for materials and labour. This may sound like a considerable sum but, it has been suggested, that if each and every one of our 400 plus Branch members donated, for example £20.00 we would very easily achieve our target and more!

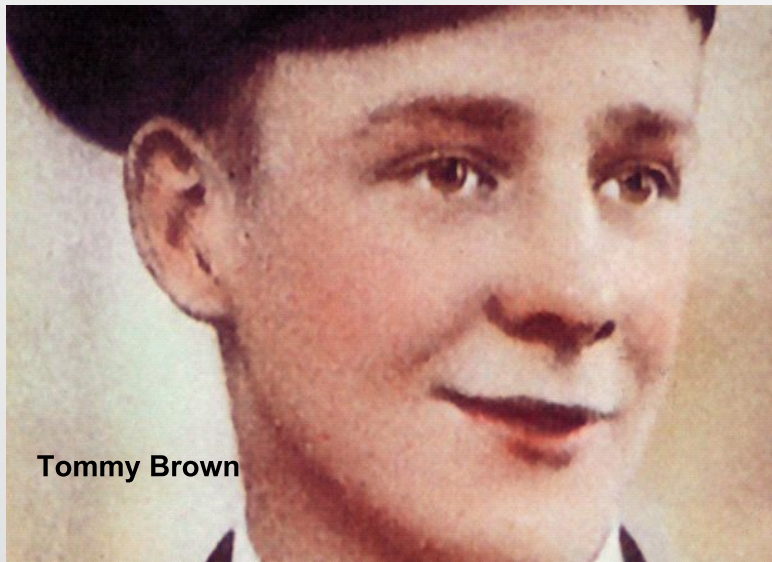
Lockdown obviously put these plans on hold and the aim here is to give a gentle prior warning that, in the (hopefully) not too distant future, we will be asking for contributions to raise funds for this development to enhance our already fine memorial and ensure its durability for many years to come. More on this in future issues.



Crozier, Fasson, and Brown - The Story of the NAAFI worker and two brave sailors

In a quiet corner of the Y Services Organisation Memorial Garden, there is a bench with a brass plaque commemorating the exploits in World War Two of Able Seaman Colin Crozier, Lieutenant Anthony Fasson and NAAFI catering assistant Tommy Brown

Tommy Brown was only 15 when he enlisted, lying about his age in order to join the NAAFI. He was posted to HMS Petard, a "P-class" destroyer. In October 1942 the destroyer, based in Port Said, was patrolling the eastern Mediterranean when it took part in the chase of U-559, crippling the submarine and forcing it to the surface. The Germans attempted to scuttle the sub before evacuating. Fortunately for the Brits, the sub did not sink immediately. The three boarded the sinking sub to see if its code machine had been destroyed. Although the cipher machine itself was too firmly fixed to be removed, the three managed to take off some removable parts and a significant amount of documentation including the U-boat's "short signal key" and "weather signal key."



Tommy Brown

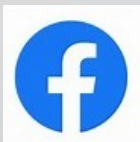


HMS Petard

The captured documents provided the decoders with an invaluable "crib" to help crack Enigma. By December 13th, they had broken the code and the first intercept, giving the positions in the North Atlantic of 12 U-boats, arrived at the Admiralty Operational Intelligence Office. A steady stream of intercepts followed, enabling the Admiralty to re-route the vital convoys coming in from the USA, so saving thousands of tons of shipping.

Sadly, Fasson and Glazier were drowned when the U-boat sank but, miraculously, Tommy Brown survived, "popping out of the conning tower like a cork out of a bottle", according to an eye-witness. The two navy men were awarded the George Cross posthumously (you can only get the VC if you're under enemy fire) and Tommy received the George Medal. Unfortunately, with all the attention the incident attracted, Tommy's real age was noticed by the NAAFI authorities, he lost his post and was shipped back home.

Tommy Brown himself died in 1945 in another act of heroism, trying to save his younger sister from their burning home.



Keep in touch every day via our Facebook group 'RBL Y Services'

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1253401141501009>



Intelligence Corps 80th Birthday



Whilst Int Corps 80 Celebrations aren't taking place quite as planned this year, we would still like to wish Branch members of the Intelligence Corps, past and present, a happy 80th Anniversary! The Intelligence Corps was formed 80 years ago on 19 July 1940 and in its many different roles and guises (as well as disguises and shades of dark and light) intelligence has shaped military operations past and present.

A little bit of Int Corps history

In the 19th century, British intelligence work was undertaken by the Intelligence Department of the War Office. In the early 1900s, intelligence gathering was becoming better understood, to the point where a counter-intelligence organisation (MI5) was formed by the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DoMI) under Captain (later Major-General) Vernon Kell. Overseas intelligence gathering began in 1912 by MI6 under Commander (later Captain) Mansfield Smith-Cumming RN.

Although there had been proposals earlier, the first Intelligence Corps was formed in August 1914 and originally included only officers and their servants. It left for France on 12 August 1914. The Royal Flying Corps was formed to (among other things) monitor the ground and provide aerial photographs for the Corps to analyse.

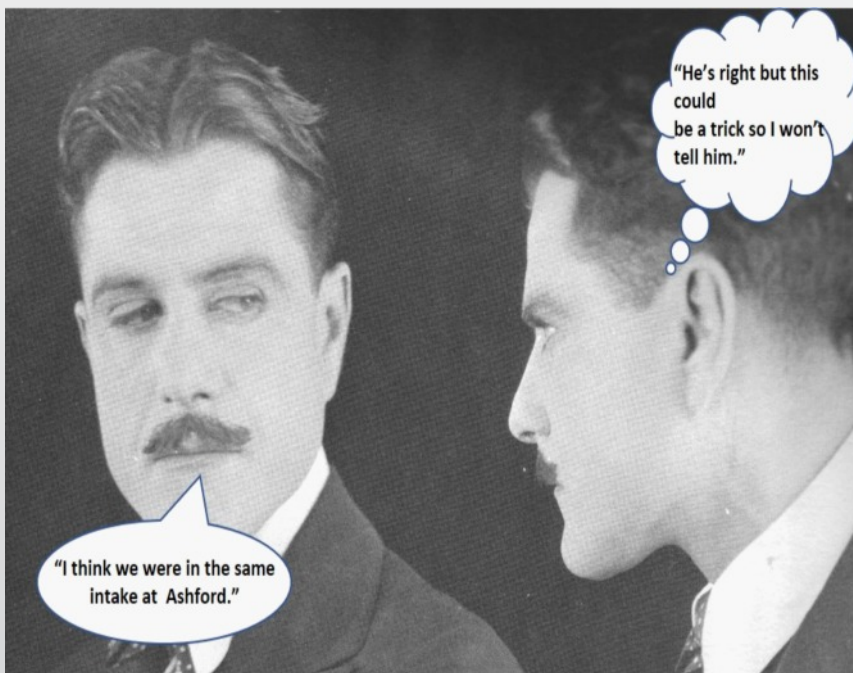
1940-2020



1940-2020

During the Irish War of Independence, Intelligence Corps operatives were used in an unsuccessful battle to defeat the Irish Republican Army. The Cairo Gang were overwhelmingly Intelligence Corps operatives. On Bloody Sunday 1920, twelve of these agents were assassinated at their lodgings by Michael Collins' Squad. Due to this and similar failures, the Intelligence Corps was disbanded in 1929.

On 19 July 1940, a new Intelligence Corps was created by Army Order 112 and has existed since that time. The Army had been unprepared for collecting intelligence for deployment to France; the only intelligence had been collected by Major Sir Gerald Templer. The Corps trained operatives to parachute into France as part of the Special Operations Executive (SOE). Intelligence Corps officers were involved in forming the highly-effective Long Range Desert Group, and Corps officer Lt Col Peter Clayton was one of the four founders of the Special Air Service (SAS). Around 40 per cent of British Army personnel at Bletchley Park were in the Intelligence Corps.





Membership

Our Branch Membership has dropped a little to around 430 possibly due in some way to the current crisis.

Membership Cards News

A Legion policy change enables members to join more than one Branch. You pay just one membership fee, admin fee and a joining fee, if appropriate, for your main Branch and the admin fee for each additional branch. The Legion Membership Services Department is currently sending out a card for each Branch that the member belongs to or joins, but are working on having one card for a member with each Branch written on it.

Recipes for the Branch Recipe Book

No submissions from members this month and sadly we have to report that the greatly anticipated recipe for Corned Beef Hash will have to be held over for another month. This ancient recipe, written on the back of an old BAOR petrol voucher was mistakenly shredded in an office clear out. Attempts are being made to piece the recipe together from memory.

Editorial note:

Contributions to this monthly Branch Newsletter are always welcome on any topics members think will be of general interest. We aim to provide uplifting stories and attempt not to duplicate messages already sent from RBL HQ. Copy should be sent by email to the editor Jim McDermott at jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com Preferred format is unformatted MS Word and any photos, cartoons or pictures should be submitted separately as JPEGs

RBL Poppy Appeal Fundraising

Serving RAF Branch member Simon (Cosy) Gray has now completed his self-set mammoth target of virtually walking the length of the US-Canada border, a total of 3503 miles. His 'Justgiving' page is still open for donations. He is currently at £633 which is 84% of his £750 target. How about some last-minute donations to help him over his target finishing line? See our FB page for more details and the link to his justgiving account: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/cosywalking365>

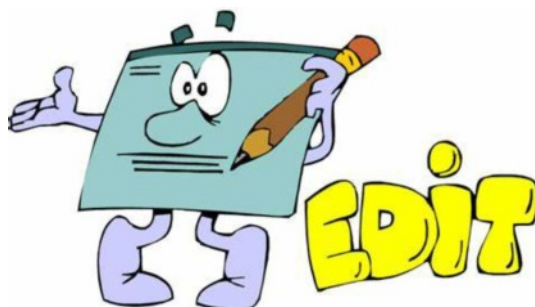


Easyfundraising

Our monthly appeal for members to sign up to our easyfundraising scheme has recently produced an increase of one more member. Thanks to whoever that member is. Thanks also to an anonymous existing participant in the scheme who recently earned the biggest single donation that we have received so far and in doing so pushed our easyfundraising total to almost £1800.

Poppy Appeal fundraising is not easy in the current pandemic situation. Please do all you can to keep our charity income ticking over.

Dennis Weir (Branch Poppy appeal Organiser)



Technical stuff

This newsletter is originated in MS Word Type-set in Serif PagePlusx9 and compiled as a PDF. Using Adobe Acrobat, the PDF is hyperlinked as a button in MailChimp and distributed to all our 400 plus members with an email address Primary layout and hyperlinks are designed for PCs



VJ Day

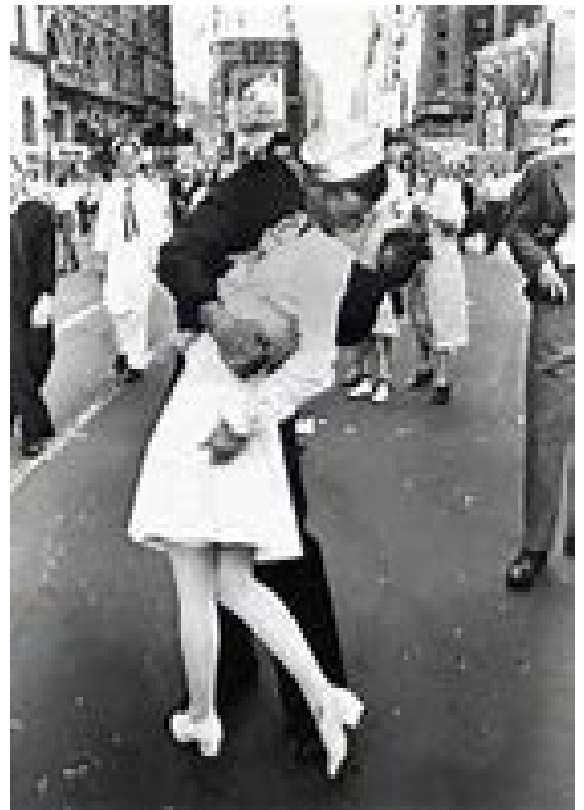
The Covid19 Lockdown has obviously affected a great many activities including annual ceremonial and commemorative events. VJ Day (Victory over Japan) will be commemorated but in accordance with current guidelines. Our own Branch Standard Bearer, Dave Lawrence, will post his own video tribute on behalf of the Branch on the Branch Face Book Group page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1253401141501009/>

For those able to travel there is a special event at the National Memorial Arboretum on 15 August, to mark the 75th anniversary of VJ Day. The commemoration will be centred around the Act of Remembrance at 11am. It will be broadcast on BBC One from the NMA and will include veteran testimonies and music from military musicians as well as wreath-laying activities at several of the relevant memorials and artefacts linked to the World War Two campaign in the Far-East.

Due to current guidance, any formal proceedings will not be open to general site visitors, but they can be observed from large screens in the Naval Review. A limited number of tickets will be available via the NMA website, <https://www.thenma.org.uk/> from Monday 3 August on a first-come, first-served basis.

Veterans of the Far-East Campaign who may wish to attend should email commemorative.events@britishlegion.org.uk to register their interest.





Telling our Story

As we approach 2021, and the Legion's centenary year, the Legion is asking members to delve into the history of their branch and share its history. Through printed materials, letters, Legion records, photos and personal recollections, the aim is to tell the human story of the Legion over the past century. Whilst demonstrating our record of togetherness, Remembrance, and caring for the Armed Forces community, we will signpost our role in the future. **Submissions are being accepted now and up to 30 September 2020.**

The themes to consider, and which will also feature in a book marking the centenary, are:

- The People - a history of the Legion from its formation up to the present day, focusing on major national figures to the stalwarts of branches and communities who have shaped its character and history.
- Poppies in production - how the poppies are produced today and how that has grown from small beginnings in the early 1920s.
- The Remembrance Day Service - beginning with the story of the Cenotaph and the burial of the Unknown Warrior, a focus on the history and act of commemoration at the national and local levels.
- The Legion on the Move - focusing on the practical way the Legion has helped men to find work and develop skills and the disabled men who found work in the poppy factories.
- The Legion and its worldwide community.
- Trauma and Rehabilitation - at the heart of membership is assisting veterans in their community.
- Conclusion and the future - showing how the Legion looks forward to the next twenty-five, fifty, one hundred years and how it has to react and change to stay relevant to the times.

Branch Chairman, Jim McDermott and Branch Secretary John Swann have attended the online seminars and fully support what the legion is trying to achieve for 2021. We can certainly tell the story of how our Branch came into being, how the Branch helped create the Y Services memorial garden at the NMA and our Branch attendance at GP90. However, this is a warts and all history of the Legion (no suggestion here that our members have warts) and all contributions from years ago, or even yesterday, are equally valid. If you have a tale to tell about your personal memories of Legion life with supporting documents or pictures then please do get involved. As a Branch we will not be collating material so anyone and everyone in the Branch can tell their own story. The Legion will carry out some editing primarily with concern for space. There are far too many details to include here but please do go to the following RBL website for full information and instructions on how to upload your stories: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/things-to-do/membership/our-members/legion-100/telling-our-story>

RBL Telling Our Story

Our Request To You

- Search Your Own Personal, Branch and District Records
- Explore the 'Telling Our Story' Key Themes
- Identify those items, books, objects that you feel are important to your local story
- Share them with us so that we can fairly and accurately commemorate our centenary

