



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



August 2020

RBL Y SERVICES BRANCH COMMEMORATES VJ DAY



An RBL poppy posy in memory of Y Service personnel who served in the-Far East Campaign was placed on the Y Services Memorial Plaque at the National Memorial Arboretum on 15 August 2020, VJ Day 75. Full story on page 6

Photo - D Whimpenny

Branch 2020 AGM & Remembrancetide

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Due to the ongoing Covid19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed on meetings and gatherings, we do not know at the moment how, or even if, we will be able to hold a Branch AGM in November. The same applies to the Branch Remembrance service held in Old Woodhouse. Members will be updated as the situation becomes clearer.



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

In the Branch Newsletter for July 2020, we reported on the the installation of a sign to mark the entrance to the Y Services Memorial garden and explained that the next phase of developing the plot is to replace the Y' shaped loose gravel footpath, leading to a memorial stone and plaque, with slabs and a solid kerb. This will make the plot easier to maintain as well as improving its appearance. We need to raise in the region of £8,000 to pay for this enhancement and a fundraising campaign will begin on 1 September 2020. Full details will be sent in a personal letter to every Branch member with an email address and by post to those who have not. The Y Services Memorial Garden has been the focus of remembrance for the Branch since its inception and we hope that members will contribute generously to this very worthy project.

The fundraising campaign will also be reaching out to relevant regimental, corps, ship and station associations and we hope to be in a position by early 2021 for work to begin.

THE 'Y' SERVICES MEMORIAL STONE AND PLAQUE

For members who have not visited the Y Services plot at the NMA, the memorial stone and plaque commemorates the work and is in remembrance of all those involved in Y Service operations both in the Armed Forces and as civilians. A photo of the plaque is presented here to clearly show the wording and various hat badges and emblems of those involved in Y Service activities over the years.



WHO'S WHO ON THE BRANCH COMMITTEE ?

Following a request from a Branch member here are details of your Branch Committee.

Appointment	Name	Email	Remarks
Branch President	Col (Retd) Eric Sambell OBE		
Chairman	Jim McDermott	yservices.chairman@rbl.community	
Vice Chairman	Dennis Weir MBE	yservices.vicechairman@rbl.community	Poppy Appeal Organiser
Secretary	John Swann	yservices.secretary@rbl.community	
Treasurer	Lyn Oldfield	yservices.Treasurer@rbl.community	
Membership Secretary	Peter Derrick	yservices.MemSecretary@rbl.community	
Committee Member	Bob Oldfield		Term of office ends at 2020 AGM
Committee Member	Linda McDermott		Term of office ends at 2020 AGM
Committee Member	Karen Brutnell	yservices.BCS@rbl.community	Welfare
Committee Member	David Lawrence	yservices.Stdbearer@rbl.community	Branch Standard Bearer
Committee Member	Terry Whittles		
Co-opted Member	David Rice		Branch Webmaster

Note that in most circumstances initial correspondence should be addressed to the Branch Secretary



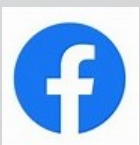
Listening to the enemy in World War 1

Eagle eyed readers will have spotted the badge of the Royal Engineers on the Y Services Memorial Plaque on page 2. This article, which we hope will be of interest to readers, is extracted from research into the emergence and development of interception in the trenches during World War 1 by Royal Engineers signallers.

It was during World War 1 that the Allies began to realise the symbiotic relationship between signals intelligence collection and what today is termed 'communications security'. Put simply, in 1916 the British were shocked to discover that their frontline communications were insecure and this spurred them to police their own messages as well as collecting their enemy's. The French army led the development of telephone interception on the Western Front. Having accidentally overheard German messages through ground water, they established their first listening set team in November 1914 and experimented with earths created from rifle bayonets or shell casings that were then connected to receivers taken from wireless sets. Their first permanent station was established in April 1915 to the south of Verdun and their capability grew steadily, using Alsatians [*German speakers from Alsace*] and language teachers to listen to German messages.



...Continued overleaf



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

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



Listening to the enemy in World War 1 ...continued

In April 1915 British General Headquarters (GHQ) asked subordinate formations for information about the German field telephone system; specifically whether the wires were buried and if they ran into the forward trenches, along with a request for any captured telephone equipment. This early interest would also explain British directives in June 1915 that ordered the severing of any Allied telegraph wires, railway lines, or wire fences that ran towards the enemy. Field telephone and telegraph traffic carried via:

- (a) 'earth return' system (in which the ground was used as a medium of transmission)
- (b) 'earthed' circuits (where the wire was not insulated from direct contact with the ground).
- (c) imperfectly insulated cables whose current leaked into the ground, could be intercepted in two fashions: through an earth 'pin' (a metal bar placed in the ground) or induction (long 'loops' of wire laid on the front line parallel to the enemy's cables [. . .])

'Pins' and 'loops' intercepted weak electrical currents originating from cables up to several thousand metres away and transmitted them by wire to an IT set. Here valve amplifiers boosted the strength of the currents so that operators wearing headphones could overhear the traffic.

In the spring of 1916 William Rumsey, a Royal Engineers signaller, was ordered to an old French dugout in the frontline north of Arras.

"Bent double we groped our way down a row of steps in a narrow dark passage and turning, entered a room of mystery. The average household coal cellar would present a more welcome appearance. It was lit by one candle. Two bunks one above the other held two of the occupants [and] the third was seated at a bench on which was placed 'the box of mysteries' [. . .] The instrument used was a French three valve low frequency amplifier. Earth lines [. . .] were run out in either direction along the trench and terminated in an earth pin [. . .] It was possible to hear [. . .] conversations carried on by the German telephonists as far away as a thousand yards."

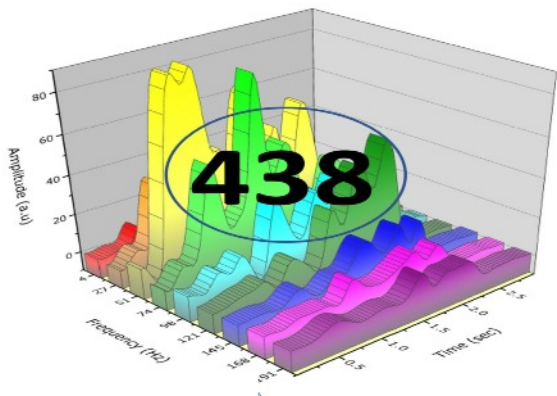
At that moment Rumsey was at the cutting edge of signals intelligence development. With both their ally (the French) and their enemy intercepting trench telephone traffic, the British were attempting to catch up. Official documents would refer to this new capability as Listening Set Posts but their inhabitants would refer to them as IT or IToc (aye-tok) Stations, an abbreviation for Intelligence, Interceptor, or Intercepting Telephone.



Source: Abridged from: Jim Beach & James Bruce (2020) British signals intelligence in the trenches, 1915–1918: part 1, listening sets, *Journal of Intelligence History*, 19:1



Current Branch Membership



Recipes for the Branch Recipe Book

Readers may recall that the ancient Corn Beef Hash recipe written on the back of an old BAOR petrol voucher was mistakenly shredded in an office clear out. The picture editor was instructed to try and retrieve the recipe from memory but instead tried to retrieve it from the shredder (See below).

Needless to say he is no longer the picture editor.



New recipes for our Branch collection always welcome

RBL Poppy Appeal Fundraising



Easyfundraising

Here it is again - our monthly appeal for members to sign up to our easyfundraising scheme which now has 74 supporters who have to date raised just over £1800.

easyfundraising turns your everyday online shopping into FREE donations when you use them to shop with over 4,000 retailers such as eBay, John Lewis, Argos, ASOS and Booking.com.

Retailers then make a small donation to say 'thank you' and easyfundraising gives those free funds to the cause.

Please register using this unique link – just click (or cut and paste the link) to sign up

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/?invite=1DZNV&referral-campaign=s2s>

Plus, once you've signed up and raised £5 in donations, easyfundraising will give the Branch an extra £5 donation.

There's no catch or hidden charges and RBL Y Services (Garats HaY) Branch will be really grateful for your donations.

Dennis Weir (Branch Poppy appeal Organiser)

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



THIS BIBLE IS FINISHED SO CAN YOU DO A SPELL CHECK PLEASE FATHER BARNABUS.

Technical stuff

This newsletter is originated in MS Word Typeset in Serif PagePlus9 and compiled as a PDF. Using Adobe Acrobat, the PDF is stored on the Branch Web site and 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 Commemorations

The Covid19 Lockdown affected any attempt by the Branch to organise an event to commemorate VJ Day (Victory over Japan) but our own Branch Standard Bearer, Dave Lawrence, posted his excellent video tribute on behalf of the Branch on the Branch Face Book Group page:

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



Also on VJ75 Day, 15 August 2020 Branch member David Whimpenny, in his capacity as a Trustee of the Legion, attended the official ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum and kindly took time out to visit the Y Services Organisation plot to place an RBL poppy posy on the memorial stone in memory of Y Service personnel who served in the Far East Campaign.



Branch Community Support (BCS) and Welfare

A couple of years ago the Legion introduced 'Branch Community Support' (BCS) an arrangement whereby one Branch can provide help or assistance to individuals in need in another Branch. As a National Branch we have not been involved with BCS but decided this year to sign up to the scheme so that our BCS representative could gain access to the training available to benefit our own Branch members. In addition, where possible, without treading on any toes, to provide help to those from other Branches. Prior to the introduction of BCS, this function was known as 'Welfare' and within the Branch, for the last three years this has been handled by Branch Committee member, Linda McDermott. The role mostly and sadly focuses on providing messages of condolence and comfort to the families of bereaved members and, in liaison with relatives and our Branch Standard Bearer Dave Lawrence offering to parade the Standard at a member's funeral. Linda completes her three-year term of office at the 2020 AGM and Branch member Karen Brutnell, who has recently completed the BCS training course (and has 10 years experience as a Samaritans Listener) takes over the 'welfare' elements as well as the wider BCS responsibilities.

Editor's note: I am sure Karen will not mind me mentioning that her Dad was the late Laurie Storey (RIP)





Telling our Story

A reminder that 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.

Latest date for Submissions is 30 September 2020.

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>



The RBL Y Services Branch was on parade in Ypres for GP90

Lost Connections - Ernie Simpson

We recently received a request from an Ian Simpson who is trying to find out about his Dad's army service. Ian says that his Dad Ernie Simpson (149483, Int Corps) was in "Y" Service, 2 SWS and was in North Africa and Italy during WW2 (War substantive rank WOII which he retained post war) and then at RAF Eastcote as well as Palestine (45-48), Munster and possibly Goslar in Germany, GCHQ Cheltenham, Brockworth, Cyprus (57-61) when 2 SWS morphed to 9 Wireless Signals and finally at Garats Hay (61-62).



WOs/Sgts of 2 Wireless Regiment/ 9 Signal Regiment on change of name 31st August/ 1st September 1959, 4 Mile Point, Ayios Nikolaos, Cyprus
Rear: Andy Riddell- Paddy Montgomery-Alan Maxwell-Kitson-Frank Jones-Harry Evans-Smith-Henry Smith-Don Bray- X
3rd row: (11 shown only 9 known names) Jim ? (Tech)-Dennis Wilson-Tom Henderson- X - X - Alan Burgess-Jim Logan-Pat O'Connor- Sutherland
2nd row: (w/ between Beale & Makepeace) Ernie Simpson-McGregor-Paul Beale-Joe Nightingale-George Jackson-Bill Smith-Mike Dawkins-Jim Hunter-Joe Makepeace-Dougie G...-George Bellott
Front: Don Owen-Mike Cryer-Tom Gorton-Ken Kennedy-Taff Jenkins-Lt Col Gibson-RSMScott-Adjutant-OC-Ron Jackson- 'Banger' King-Barge Pearsall-Gordon Portman

photograph and names supplied by Andy Riddell with additions from Frank Jones. 2007

Ian goes on to say that he realizes that his Dad was deeply traumatized by WW2. His Dad told him that when he boarded the SS Dilwara leaving Cyprus for the UK via Malta and Southampton in '61, he was handed an envelope which indicated there was a price on his head (from Greek terrorists Ian presumes). Ian reckons there must have been some truth to the story given the attacks on British troops in 1957 - 1962 in Cyprus and the Middle East generally?

Incidentally, Mrs Simpson (nee Stone) was an ATS TAS/SIXTA cipher clerk in Hut 6 for the duration of WW2. Ian enclosed the photo above this which was taken by the late Andy Riddell (RIP).

Ian asks that if any of these facts strike a chord with any of our members or their families, no matter how trivial, it would be great to hear from them. Ian can be contacted direct by email at: ian_fionasimpson@hotmail.com

Editor: Ian has been provided with details to enable him to obtain a copy of his father's military records.