



'Y' SERVICES  
(GARATS HAY)



October 2020

# REMEMBRANCE 2020



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**BRANCH AGM**  
1100hrs  
**14 November 2020**  
See full details  
on page 3.

**Remembrance 2020** will look very different this year. Following Legion policy and government guidelines Remembrance services have been greatly scaled down. See story on page 2.



### REMEMBRANCE 2020

**STOP PRESS!**

The government has scaled back the public to mark Remembrance Sunday at home, due to the pandemic. For the first time in the Cenotaph's 100-year history the service in Whitehall will be closed to members of the public. A limited number of people, including armed forces veterans, members of the Royal Family and international dignitaries, are permitted to pay their respects on November 8.

As this nation's freedom is under threat, the government has announced more restrictions on this Remembrance Day. The Prime Minister has announced that the Branch Chairman will lay a wreath on behalf of the Branch during the day but without ceremony.

*31 Oct 20. Distribution of Newsletter delayed awaiting Announcement by Prime Minister of a second Lockdown. 1 November 2020 UPDATE Branch Remembrance Day Event Cancelled. Branch Chairman will lay a Wreath on behalf of the Branch during the day but without ceremony.*



### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I am very pleased to report that as at 30 Oct 2020 our appeal for funds to refurbish the **Y Services Organisation Memorial Plot** at the National Memorial Arboretum has been very successful with the target of £8000 achieved in just over one month. The next step in the project is to award a contract to a builder and the Branch Committee is currently considering two quotes. In the meantime the names of everyone who has so generously donated will be assembled into a list and uploaded, in due course, to the Branch website - unless of course a donor wishes to remain anonymous. If you have not yet donated there is still time. Full details of how to donate – right here: <https://gf.me/u/yvymzm>

The Y Services Memorial Garden has become very much a part of the Branch efforts with respect to all year round remembrance and a willing band of volunteers has worked on weeding the gravel path and generally keeping the site tidy. Up until now the NMA staff have cut the grass, and trimmed the hedges and trees at no cost to us. However, we learned just recently, to our dismay, that there has been a change in policy at the NMA and all of these activities now fall upon the owner of the plot, which is this RBL Branch. How we will be able to maintain the plot from now on needs serious thought and your committee will be addressing this issue at its meeting in November.

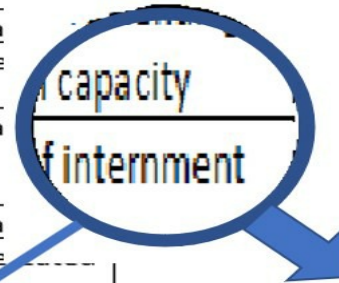




## Legion National Conference 2020 Error

Horror of horrors, an error in the newsletter. An eagle eyed member spotted an error in the September Newsletter which we have rushed to correct. The sub editor has been sacked (again)!

Motion	Motion (Abbreviated for space)	RESULT
1	Rescind proposal to close Break Centres and the Handy Van Scheme	Carried
2	Management Council to examine competing activities during Poppy Appeal	Carried
3	Increase Membership Fee by £1	Ca
4	Automatic enrolment of armed forces personnel on discharge	De
5	Serving member of armed forces who are Branch Standard Bearers be permitted to parade in service uniform	Ca
6	No confidence vote in Trustees	Ca
7	Standards to exist in places where there is no Branch	De
8	Pay expenses to carers of members attending events and functions in an official capacity	Carried
9	Resident veterans to have right of internment in Germany	Carried
10	War Widows Grant-in-Aid extension to family members	Carried



Should, of course, read **"interment"** which has a somewhat different meaning!

## Branch AGM 2020

A reminder that The Y Services Branch Annual General Meeting will commence at 1100 on Saturday 14 Nov 2020 online via Zoom. The draft Agenda for the AGM will be posted on the Branch website, <https://garatshay.org.uk/> by Monday 9th November 2020. Current Branch Members who wish to attend the meeting should register their intention to do so via email to the Branch Secretary John Swann Email: [ysservices.secretary@rbl.community](mailto:ysservices.secretary@rbl.community)

Deadline for registration is 1200 on Thursday 12 Nov 2020. The registration email should include your full name and Membership No. in order to confirm eligibility. If any member wishes to have an item added to the agenda please notify the Branch Secretary by email before 8th November 2020. Note that only items on the published agenda will be discussed at the AGM.

Registered members will receive all relevant documents and Zoom link prior to the meeting via email.



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

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



## Membership Matters

Branch Membership has for some time hovered around 400 to 450 and it would be great if we could attract more members. We are putting together a strategy using Facebook and a series of persuasive and informative messages to try to recruit more members to the Branch. If you know of anyone who might be interested in supporting the Legion's charitable efforts by becoming a member, please point them towards: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/things-to-do/membership/become-a-member>

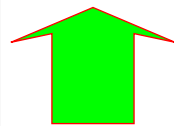
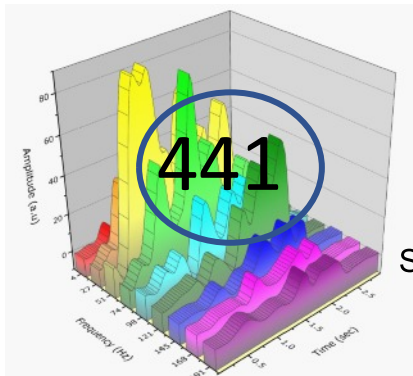
with instructions to select the Y Services (Garats Hay) Branch.

## Letters to the Editor:

Dear Sir,  
I was sorting out my attic and came across a round black disc with hole in the middle. Is this a record?  
Eric Shellmadeen  
Lowestoft.

Dear Eric,  
No, just a very old joke.  
Ed.

## Current Branch Membership



+ 3

Since last month

## Vacancy on the Legion's Membership Council

There is a vacancy on the Membership Council and elections for this post will be held in May 2021. All National Branches (of which we are one) have been asked to nominate their candidate for this post. If any member is interested in serving on the Membership Council please contact the Branch Secretary John Swann by email on: [y.services.secretary@rbl.community](mailto:y.services.secretary@rbl.community) for further information by no later than 20 November 2020

## 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](mailto:jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com) Preferred format is unformatted MS Word and any photos, cartoons or pictures should be submitted separately as JPEGs



## 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



## **UPDATE ON PROJECT ROSE**

### **A NEW HISTORY OF THE INTELLIGENCE CORPS**

#### **A message from the Deputy Col Commandant The Intelligence Corps Colonel (Retd) Fox OBE**



There has been a good response to this project to produce a new history of the Intelligence Corps. The project is very much about the exploits of members of the Corps over its time. The team wants to capture a broad range of personal experiences and stories from WW2, Borneo and Malaya, to Suez and Aden; in the Cold War across Germany, Cyprus and Hong Kong, to the more recent conflicts in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, and all the smaller operations in between.

There are gaps that need to be filled so that the new Corps history is comprehensive. Experiences, therefore, from anyone who took part in the following would be very welcome:

- a. Borneo (Confrontation): 1963 - 66.
- b. Gulf War 1/The Gulf War/Op DESERT SHIELD: Aug 1990 – Feb 1991.
- c. Bosnia: Oct 1992 - Dec 1995 (with UN) and
- d. Bosnia Dec 1995 to Dec 1996 with IFOR, and thereafter with SFOR.
- e. Afghanistan: Nov 2001 - Oct 2014 with ISAF and
- f. Iraq: March 2003 - May 2011 OP TELIC.

There is no need for long discourses, just a concise story confirming the time period covered, the location/campaign/operation, the basic context and your story of about 1200 words. Much of what the Corps did (and does) is, of course, sensitive. However, please note:

- Measures will be put in place to address personal security, including use of unattributable segments or pseudonyms, if requested.
- There is now an Oversight Committee of which the HQ INT CORPS Disclosure Cell is part; all material goes through this committee to determine its sensitivity and other security aspects. Nothing is seen by the 'civvy' author until the Disclosure Cell clears it.

Material should be sent to John Condon, the Research Coordinator for Project Rose; He can provide more detail if needed at: [john.condon1@btopenworld.com](mailto:john.condon1@btopenworld.com) and his phone number is: 028 2827 1550

Any specific questions about security/disclosure can be addressed to WO1 Wallis, the Legal and Disclosure WO in the HQ INT CORPS Disclosure Cell on:

Tel: 01462 752552  
 Mobile: 07970385893  
 E-Mail: [kimberley.wallis912@mod.gov.uk](mailto:kimberley.wallis912@mod.gov.uk)  
 Insecure Fax: 01462 75 2752

The timescale is 'as soon as possible' mid-November at latest..

This new book will be an important step in recording and sharing the Corps' glorious history but it does rely on you, the past and present members of the Corps, to contribute to it. Please do come forward with your experiences about your service, particularly for those theatres/operations highlighted above. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to add to our Corps' history. Your contributions will be very welcome.



## Listening to the enemy in World War 1 - Continued

This item continues the series with a section on training extracted from academic research about Sigint in World War One.

### The Trade



Recruiting soldiers to the trade. Initially, German speakers were found by trawling the BEF. The survival of a Canadian Corps document illustrates how the requirement was articulated in May 1916:

*The names are desired of four [non-commissioned officers] or men from each Division who can be spared for special service to operate with telephone apparatus of a secret character. All must be so familiar with the German language as to readily understand it both written and spoken. It would be an advantage if one or more are telephone operators although such qualification is not essential.*

Candidates' language proficiency was confirmed by an interview with an officer from the intelligence staff of their division or corps. Not all the men proposed were volunteers; at least one was surprised to be nominated and sought, successfully, to convince the interviewing officer that his language skills were insufficient. Those who were considered to have an adequate command of German were sent straight to listening sets with no training. Initially, they also remained on the strength of their parent unit and were 'attached' to the RE(SS). Putting aside larger issues of administrative efficiency and group identity, this meant that, in contrast to the signallers within the IToc stations, they received no extra pay for their specialised work.

These *ad hoc* arrangements lasted until July 1916 when the extent of German signals intelligence success against the BEF's trench communications was revealed. This prompted General Headquarters (GHQ) to initiate an overhaul of the IToc system. Up to this point the intelligence staff appears to shown limited interest in IToc. In modern parlance, they seem to have been perceived primarily as a communications security capability, which was best left within the remit of the signals staff. That changed suddenly in early July when Lieutenant-Colonel Walter Kirke of the GHQ intelligence staff effectively took temporary ownership of the problem.

Within a month Kirke had agreed with the signallers that IToc apparatus and personnel would be continue to be controlled by the Director of Army Signals, but his section would assume responsibility for the intelligence aspects. By then he had also written to the War Office regarding a new manpower establishment for the listening sets, initiated a fresh trawl for German speakers, and had begun to design a training course for them. Although no direct archival evidence has yet been found, it would be logical that the decision to create a new trade for IOs within the RE was part of this general overhaul of IToc in the summer of 1916.

...Continued overleaf



## Listening to the enemy in World War 1 continued

GHQ's intelligence staff sharing bureaucratic responsibility for a technical means of intelligence collection has parallels with other areas. For example, in 1916 they took over the management of air photography while the Royal Flying Corps retained control of camera development and the process of taking the pictures. Similarly, as wireless intelligence came to the fore, the RE signallers intercepting German messages were managed by Intelligence Corps officers. This shared responsibility was reflected in the training arrangements for IOs. The language and intelligence components of training were dealt with by three lieutenants from the Intelligence Corps, who, as well as teaching on the courses, produced a monthly summary showing the disposition of the ITOc stations, along with 'a summary of their work from an intelligence point of view'.



The early courses at Campagne-lès-Hesdin were only four weeks long and some parts were compressed for veteran IOs. Towards the end of his re-training one trainee, Schürhoff, commented that 'these days, so full of concentrated work, are making us "loony". We are almost expected to cram our heads in a fortnight what

others will take eight weeks to absorb'. By January 1918 what had become known as Course 'I' was six weeks in length. Because the students were already competent German speakers, the linguistic element of the training was limited to military vocabulary and jargon. To develop their ability to 'live log' German voice communications, messages were dictated to trainees over telephones and sometimes by native German speakers. Similar techniques were used to develop the trainees' ability to record Morse code messages. Here there was no assumption of prior knowledge or skill, although some men may have had some experience with Morse during their previous military service. For example, Schürhoff had undertaken a 'signalling course' while serving in the infantry and he therefore set his sights on fifteen words-a-minute. The final component of the course was the use and care of the intercept equipment. [To be continued]

Extracted from: Jim Beach & James Bruce (2020) British signals intelligence in the trenches, 1915–1918: part 2, interpreter operators, *Journal of Intelligence History*, 19:1, 24-50,

ENDS