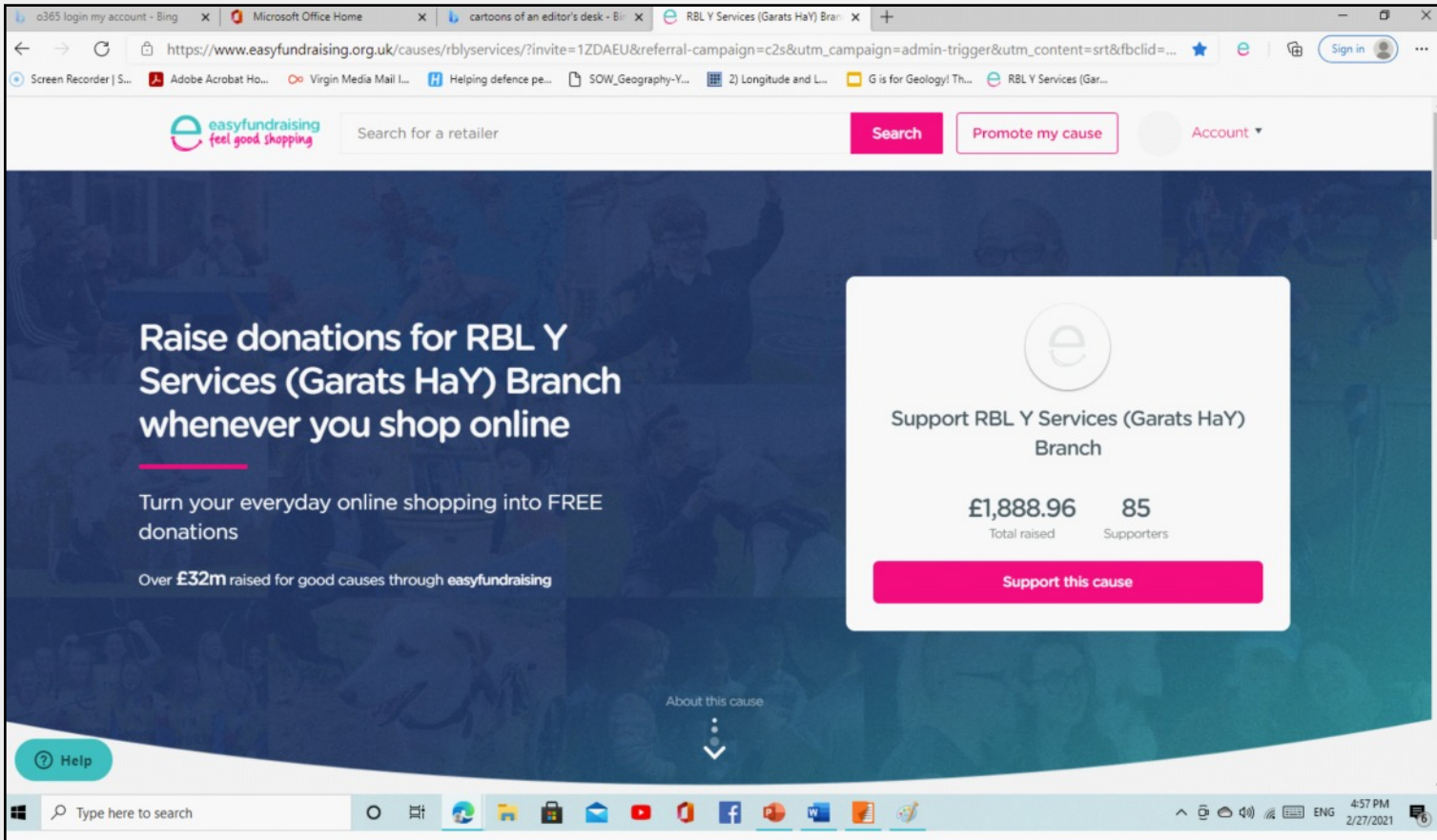


Poppy Appeal Fundraising the Easy Way



easyfundraising makes the front page!

The easyfundraising approach to raising funds for the Poppy Appeal, all year round, has been one of our most successful ventures. The scheme thoroughly deserves its front page placing in this issue. The screen shot above clearly shows how just 85 of our members have together contributed close on £1900 since we registered the Branch with easyfundraising. Please consider signing up - it is totally FREE and once you are registered any online purchases you make require just a couple more clicks which will generate a contribution from the vendor to our Poppy Appeal Fund. To join the merry band supporting our Branch Poppy Appeal go to: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/>

Contents

1. Easyfundraising



2. Branch Chairman's message/
Membership/ Y Services Memorial
3. Recruitment, aide memoire

Branch Mem bership
Branch membership remained
steady this month at
439

4/5. Sigint in WW1
6/7. Poetry Corner



Branch Chairman's Message

Covid19 is keeping the lid on a lot of our activities so little to report this month. The front page promotes the easy way we raise funds for the Poppy Appeal and members are encouraged to consider signing up. With spring in the air and 2021 being the Legion's centenary, it seems a good time to launch a membership recruitment drive and an aide-memoire is provided on page 3 to help with this. Our 'Sigint in World War One' series ends with this issue but a more technical article, on the same topic, submitted by a member will be featured in the March issue.

Jim McDermott, Branch Chairman

Branch Membership
membership remained steady
this month at
439



No new members this month but we know from a 'sort of' reliable source (Facebook) that there are several Y Service types both on and off line who are not members and could be gently made aware of the benefits of joining the RBL.

All Branch members are encouraged, please, to 'lean on' anyone they think might be persuaded to join the RBL and of course this Branch.

Details of how to join can be found on the next page in the form of a Q & A. which you can use to hone your membership recruitment sales pitch!

Y Services Memorial - Update

The pandemic continues to hold up work on development of the site and it is now hoped that our building contractor will be able to commence the refurbishment in March. As a consequence we are now pencilling in September 2021 (date to be decided) on which to hold a re-dedication event at the National Memorial Arboretum.

In other and better news, we are delighted to report that members of the JSSU(V) have conducted a virtual vote which has resulted in them agreeing to contribute the magnificent sum of £200 to the Y Services Memorial Garden Appeal. This amount has been added to the sum already collected and a message of grateful thanks has been sent to the unit. The relationship between the Branch and JSSU(V) spans many years and enables us to maintain a link with those still in the business.

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



Technical stuff

This newsletter is originated in MS Word Typeset in Serif PagePlusx9 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

Membership Recruiting - Aide Memoire

Why Join the RBL?

Become a member of the Legion family today and take pride in supporting all generations of the Armed Forces community. You can join online or by phone full details below.

=

What do I get as a member of the Royal British Legion?

Benefits include:

Priority access to tickets for the Festival of Remembrance

Access to purchase members-only products from the Poppy Shop and a 15% discount on other products.

5% discount on Remembrance Travel tours

A Legion membership card which gives you access to conferences and Legion clubs.

=

Why join the RBL Y Services Branch?

You can join any Branch but our branch is mainly peopled by folk with a Y Services background.

We are a National Branch meaning we have members nationwide,

indeed worldwide, rather than from just one village or town.

=

What does the RBL Y Services Branch do?

We raise funds for the Poppy Appeal

We hold an Annual Summer Gathering social event

We manage and look after the Y Services Memorial Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum

We support our members

We have Branch members worldwide and to cater for this we have our own website that allows members to communicate with each other directly in a safe and secure environment: garatshay.org.uk

We also have a Facebook presence: RBL "Y" Services

How much does it cost to join the Royal British Legion?

Y Services Branch

Annual cost is **£23.00*** (RBL membership £18.00 plus £5.00 Branch admin fee and a one off £4.00 joining fee)

From the Legion you will get your Membership Card, a regular Legion magazine and e-newsletters

From the Branch you will get a Legion Badge a Branch Badge and a monthly Branch Newsletter.

=

*It's £23 from 1 April 2021, save a whole £1.00 if you sign up before then!

What if I am already a Legion Member?

No problem, you can now join up to 4 more Branches on payment of a small annual admin fee for each additional Branch, in our case £5.00.

Or, without any cost, you can transfer your membership to the RBL Y Services Branch

Email our Branch Membership Secretary for advice on how to transfer your

Membership: ysecurities.memsecretary@rbl.community

=

How Do I Join?

By Telephone:

CALL - 0800 3077773 with your debit card to hand and quote 'Branch 3502 Y Services (Garats Hay) Branch.'

THIS IS THE EASIEST WAY TO JOIN.

ONLINE: Go to our RBL Branch website garatshay.org.uk scroll up the front page to JOIN NOW which takes you straight to the membership application form.

If you have any others questions about membership then please contact our membership secretary, Peter Derrick by email: ysecurities.memsecretary@rbl.community

British Signals Intelligence in the trenches, 1915–1918

This final section in the series looks at how this unusual bunch of specialists managed to operate and survive at or near the front line, mixed in with more conventional other front line troops

Although the IToc stations were formally subordinated to the RE(SS) and relied upon that organisation for tasking and technical support, they also interacted with local infantry units; the latter helping to provide suitable accommodation and sometimes rations. Given they could provide warnings of enemy intentions and other forms of intelligence support, the IToc stations were presumably welcomed by local commanders but their communications security function required them to report any breaches of signalling regulations. One signals historian suggested that these ‘police activities often brought wrath from above on their infantry hosts, [and] the unfortunate detachments usually met with an unfriendly reception’ That said, a pragmatic relationship between the stations and their neighbours could emerge. As one battalion history noted, in June 1917:

“We [...] received a rather futile complaint from the authorities, so to prevent a repetition of similar rebukes we made a suitable arrangement with the Listening Set personnel, who were [re]located [to] a dug-out they had long coveted, and after that, our conversations, when picked up, were treated with more discretion.”

Although not positioned at the front of the British trench system, the IOs experienced daily dangers. The continual requirement to leave their dug-out to maintain the loops, earths, and lines of the interception equipment put them at risk, particularly from bombardments. But they were in most danger when British positions came under infantry attack. Trench raids were a potential problem, but the stations’ locations meant the enemy would have to penetrate very deeply to kill, wound, or capture an IO. More serious was the threat from a more general offensive because the IToc stations could produce vital tactical intelligence they had to remain in situ until the last safe moment before withdrawing.



British Signals Intelligence in the trenches, 1915–1918

Conclusion

Within an army of three-and-a-half million, a couple of hundred IOs were but a tiny fraction of Britain's war effort but the intelligence capability they provided was much greater than their small numbers might imply. Their core work and everyday life in the trenches was captured by one of their number in September 1917:

Asleep after my 2 am to 8 am spell [on the amplifier] did me some good and after dinner a walk [...] to fetch water did me still more good [...] During my 4 pm to 8 pm spell came to the conclusion that the Bosche had been relieved and, advising Battalion HQ, found my conclusion was justified.



This snapshot is, on one level, utterly unremarkable; there is no great intelligence 'coup', nor any other form of military drama. But the context is important. The IO in question was, at that point, three weeks into his tour of duty in the trenches and it would be another week before he would be relieved. Therefore, on another level it reveals the individual stoicism needed to spend long periods living underground in order to wear a headset for up to six hours at a time, so as to listen to enemy messages. As the quote implies, the intelligence snippets gathered were rarely in themselves significant but, when built up incrementally, they could offer a significant contribution to the all-source tactical intelligence picture. Taking a long view, because their raison d'être was to provide signals intelligence linguists, it can be argued that these Interpreter Operators (IOs) were the British army's first formally-recognised intelligence trade group.



Poetry Corner

John Berry will be well known to many readers of this Newsletter, in service and as a Branch member and former Branch President, Over many years John has been putting pen to paper to create fun verse to amuse both himself and a wide but exclusive audience. John's work has been featured previously but we will now be including more of his poetry each month until he runs out of rhyming words.

Background to the verses

AA Milne's poem about a fat bear was one of our children's favourites. I adapted it several times in various stations in the world, (Birgelen, Ayios Nikolaos, Bosnia) mainly at the behest of the resident Army Physical Training Corps staff, whose aim in life, (rarely achieved!) was to get 100% success rate in the Unit's Basic Fitness Test (BFT) and Combat Fitness Test (CFT). This version was incorporated into the Garats Hay daily Regimental Part One Orders sometime in 1989 at the request of the PT staff.

The team at Garats Hay, nicknamed the Mean Machine, was run by Sergeant Instructor Bragg, APTC, ably assisted by Assistant Instructors Corporal Bell, Royal Signals, and W/Corporal Beattie, WRAC, a fiercely combative Scot. The BFT and CFT courses took us up to the Beacon and back or around Swithland's leafy lanes.

Matters Physical

A chap, no matter how he tries,
grows flabby without exercise
our soldier boy is stout (or fat!)
which isn't to be wondered at.....
he thinks he's keeping up to scratch
by pouring Tennents down the hatch,
and generally does not lack
the energy to knock six back!
But when it comes to BFTs
he weakens somewhat at the knees
and Combat Fitness Testing sessions
lead to multiple depressions
remedied, or so he thinks,
by two Big Macs and six more drinks.



Continued on next page

Matters Physical...continued

In SI Bragg's considered views
the officers could use less booze
and caviar and all that stuff
and strive to look a bit more tough.
Dinings-in or Lunchings-out
tend to make our Rupert stout,
and black tie banquets every week
don't do much for his physique.
Sportin' jaunts like fishin',
huntin' shootin',
croquet, bridge or puntin'
don't reduce Sir Rodney's waist
they merely stimulate his taste
for all those (nice!) forbidden goods
like coq-au-vin and queen of puds
and tempt a chap to drink more demon
drinkie-poohs like gin and lemon!

Sergeants Mess (with due respect!)
seem to be a bit select
in what they do to keep in trim.....
they genuflect before the gym
then, rigid purists that they are,
they hold their "O" groups in the bar
and midst the din of voiced opinions
get stuck in to filet mignons
boeuf-en-crouete or plates of scouse
then wash it down with pints of grouse!

The corporals, stalwarts (almost all!)
tend to be more on the ball
and seem to keep themselves in shape.
Could be, of course, they can't escape
the rigours and the strict routine
of Bell and Bea(s)ttie's "Mean Machine"
but even corporals have their losers
(known to most as self-abusers!)
blokes whose special tour-de-force is
Chinese nosh – a dozen courses,
fish and chips, Kentucky Fried,
with half a loaf of Mother's Pride,
chased with beer, or if it's handy,
litres of Bacardi shandy.
Blokes whose fitness failure rate
is in proportion to their weight!

A chap, no matter how he tries
grows tubby without exercise!

Jobe Garats Hay 1989

*The following was appended
to Part One orders:*

```

*****
IF THIS HAS PRICKED YOUR CONSCIENCE...
The only fitness training many soldiers do is RUNNING out of
cash!
The Gymnasium can help with the following facilities:
Multi-gym
Sauna
Main Sports Hall
Evening activities
Monday          1700 - 2100    Multi-gym
                  1900 - 2100    Volleyball
Tuesday         1700 - 1830    Multi-gym
                  1900 - 2100    Swimming
Wednesday       SPORTS AFTERNOON
                  1700 - Facilities available on request
Thursday        1700 - 2100    Multi-gym
For training sessions for:
RUGBY           }
FOOTBALL        }   Contact IC Sports   { SSgt Williams    x-4442
BASKETBALL      }                   { SSgt Robertson  x-4470
                                                         { SSgt Widdicombe x-4470
Also, Permanent Staff Fitness Training, TUES + THURS 1310 - 1340

```