

# Branch Standard on Parade

## ANZAC Commemoration Day

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It is with great sadness  
that we report the death  
of Branch Member  
Stanley O'Connor  
(Obituary on page 2)

## Obituary

### **Stanley O'Connor (RIP) A life of service.**

Stanley Passed away peacefully on 4th March 2022, aged 95 years. Beloved husband to Gladys' father to Susan and David and a much loved grandpa and great-grandpa. Dearly missed by sister Margaret, sister-in-law Margaret and brother-in-laws Brian and Geoff.

Stan was born in 1926 and spent his childhood in Kendal. During his schooldays he was a keen member of the Air Training Corps and so in 1943 at the age of 17 ¼, he volunteered and was subsequently accepted a for RAF aircrew training.

Having learned that there was a surplus of aircrew and he would not be required and due to his facility with Morse Code, he was transferred to the Army Y service.

He was trained initially in Japanese Morse and was due to be sent to the Far East when the war ended and he was instead sent to Europe, where he spent two years in Italy and Austria. On his return to England, he was asked to remain on as a civilian and spent his time at Beaumanor Hall, Leicestershire, which he did happily until leaving the army.

Stan subsequently joined the Electricity Board and remained with them for the rest of his working life. He worked his way up through the ranks as an Accountant and following much studying, became a Fellow of the Chartered Certified & Corporate Accountants and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.

Stan was passionate about helping his local community and held a number of voluntary posts over the years, including governor of Roundhills School for the disadvantaged, a governor of Kendal Technical College, a member of Natland Parish Council, a contributor to St Mark's PCC and a Sidesman in his local church for over 40 years. In addition to this, he was a member of the Rotary Club of Kendal for forty-seven years, becoming President in 1982. He was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship for meritorious Rotary service.

He was a Trustee and later Chairman followed by Vice-President of The Lakeland Sinfonia Concert Society and greatly enjoyed assisting in providing South Lakeland people with high quality classical music.

He had a great interest in sports and was a lifelong supporter of Preston North End.

Stan's funeral took place in Kendal on 26th March 2022 and Stan will be sadly missed by his family and friends



[We are grateful to Stanley's Son David for this obituary.]



## Branch News

### *Branch Chairman's Message.*

The first quarter of the year is always pretty quiet and this year is no exception. Our membership numbers remain pretty static at 435 but our Branch Standard Bearer, Dave Lawrence has been active parading our Standard and keeping the Branch in the public eye. The results of the Legion officers and Trustee elections will be made known at National conference in May and I am sure we wish all those standing the very best of luck. I came across an interesting bit of information about Johnny Cash which some of you probably already know but it surprised me. I have listed a precised version of the 2022, RBL National conference motions on page 6 for your info. I am particularly interested in the outcome of motion 6 concerning the material used for our membership cards.

My top tip to one and all - Don't get Covid, wife and I have been suffering for a week and it's not fun. Otherwise,

*Best wishes to one and all*

*Regards*  
*Jim McDermott,*  
*Branch Chairman*

**During April Branch Standard** Bearer Dave Lawrence paraded the Branch Standard at a Standard Laying-up/Dedication ceremony for the RBL Hinkley Branch on Sunday 03 April 2022 at St Mary's Church, Hinkley, Leics and, as reported on pages 1 and 4 at Cannock Chase as part of an event to commemorate ANZAC Day, 25<sup>th</sup> April.



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

## Commemoration of ANZAC Day - 25<sup>th</sup> April.

The 5th Battalion of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade (NZRB) arrived on Cannock Chase in September 1917 and would stay there until returning to New Zealand in May 1919. The unit had been involved in fighting at the Battle of the Somme in September 1916 and the Battle of Messines Ridge in June 1917 and as such, was an experienced unit. This combat experience made them an ideal battalion to train new recruits at Cannock Chase, before they were sent as reinforcements to New Zealand battalions on the Western Front.

The Unit remained stationed Cannock Chase until their return home in 1919.

Possibly the most visible reminder of the presence of the New Zealanders on Cannock Chase is the number that are buried in the Cannock Chase War Cemetery. There are 379 burials in the cemetery, 73 of them being New Zealanders. Most of them would have died during the Spanish Flu Pandemic in 1918

The CWGC Cemetery at Brockton on Cannock Chase, Staffordshire, has long been the location of the largest commemoration of ANZAC Day (25th April) outside Australia and New Zealand and is attended by many dignitaries, representatives of ex-services organisations and is organised by the Stafford Branch of the Royal British Legion. A large number of RBL and other standards feature prominently during the service including performance of the 'Act of Homage' during the Last Post & Reveille and a 'Royal Salute' during the National Anthem.

Our Branch Standard has been paraded at the ceremony since at least 2016 and possibly earlier.

[Contributed by Dave Lawrence]





# Summer Gathering 2022 (SG22)

## SG22 - A reminder

The Branch Summer Gathering for 2022 will be centered around the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. An act of remembrance will take place at the Y Services Memorial on **Saturday 23 July 2022** followed by an opportunity to explore the rest of the NMA park and a meet up for an informal lunch and socialising in the main NMA restaurant. No booking needed just turn up and meet up at the Y Services Memorial then treat yourself to an NMA lunch afterwards.

### Outline Programme:

**Fri 22nd - 1600 - Committee meeting at the Shoulder of Mutton pub.**  
Evening - Skittles match and possible BBQ.  
**Sat 23rd - 1100 - Meet at Y Services Memorial. Free time at NMA**  
1300 - Meet up for lunch in the NMA Cafe.  
Evening - Group dinner at the Shoulder of Mutton pub.  
**Sun 24th** Depart.



Pub location:  
Yoxall Road  
Hamstall Ridware, WS15 3RZ

A Branch committee meeting will take place on the Friday afternoon in the Shoulder of Mutton and this will be followed by what should be a pleasant Summer's evening in the pub's extensive garden. Most of the pub's available accommodation is now booked up, but one two bed-roomed (both en-suite) cottage remains vacant. To book it please contact the Shoulder of Mutton directly on 01908562183. Going direct to the pub, rather than through a booking website, will reduce your bed and breakfast fee by 10%. Please quote Royal British Legion when booking.

If you would like to join in the evening sessions at the pub please email Dennis Weir:  
[yservices.vicechairman@rbl.community](mailto:yservices.vicechairman@rbl.community)

**STOP PRESS: Accommodation at the Shoulder of Mutton Amstell Ridware One cottage (two double rooms) remains available and there is still room to accommodate 3 more couples for Dinner on the 23rd. The evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup> will be a BBQ and skittles evening in the pub garden, with no limit on numbers attending.**



# Motions to be debated at RBL National Conference 2022 13-15 May 2022.



Our Branch delegate to conference is  
Branch member Karen Brutnell who is also our Branch Community Support  
(BCS) committee member.

## Formation Staple Hill and District Branch and Gloucestershire County

### **Motion 1**

This Branch requests that the Board of Trustees and Director of Welfare provide clarification on current arrangements for Welfare breaks for beneficiaries.

### **Motion 2**

## Formation Portugal and Atlantic Islands Branch BR3443

That Honorary Membership of the Royal British Legion be automatically granted to any member attaining their Centenary.

### **Motion 3**

## Formation Paris Branch, France – BR3441

Conference asks the Board of Trustees to allow proxy voting for branches at AGMs.

### **Motion 4**

## Formation Derbyshire – Chesterfield

Conference passes this motion to the Board of Trustees for action. To implement the use of Bank debit cards, if required, by Branches who are finding difficulty in paying bills by cheque.

### **Motion 5**

## Formation Lancaster Branch – BR1473

This Conference requests that the Board of Trustees request that "the printers" revert back to using paper-based card for the Legion Membership Cards.

### **Motion 6**

## Formation Cheltenham & District Branch BR 3030

This Conference challenges the current policy of Head Office Finance Department in relation to its actual and planned disbursements from Area Trust Funds (ATFs) and the lack of visibility of such transactions, particularly relating to the Southwest Midlands (SW Mids) ATF. Finance Department should publish to branches each May, clear details of the annual income and expenditure from the relevant ATFs.



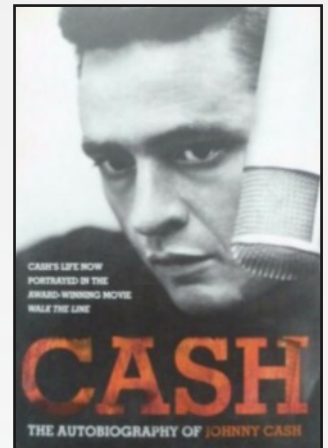
Not a lot of people know that Johnny Cash was a Spec Op!

Cash enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1950 and was assigned as a Morse intercept operator with the 6910th Security Group at Landsberg, West Germany where he intercepted Russian military radio transmissions. He reached the rank of sergeant before leaving the service. Over the next three years, between shift work Cash developed his singing skills, and following his departure from the service, went on to become one of this nation's most popular country music stars. The Air Force gave Cash his first steady pay cheque, \$85 a month, which he used to buy his first guitar. He was honourably discharged from the military in July 1954.

Here is an excerpt from his memoirs about his time as a signals intelligence (SIGINT) intercept operator

*"The Air Force taught me the things every military service imparts to its enlisted men ... plus one skill that's pretty unusual: if you ever need to know what one Russian is signaling to another in Morse code, I'm your man. I had such a talent for that particular line of work and such a good left ear, that in Landsberg, where the United States Air Force Security Service ran radio intercept operations worldwide, I was the ace. I was who they called when the hardest jobs came up. I copied the first news of Stalin's death. I located the signal when the first Soviet jet bomber made its first flight from Moscow to Smolensk; we all knew what to listen for, but I was the one who heard it. I couldn't believe that Russian operator. He was sending at thirty-five words a minute by hand, a rate so fast I thought it was a machine transmitting until I heard him screw up. He was truly exceptional, but most of his comrades were fast enough to make the best Americans sound like amateurs, sloppy and slow. It didn't matter, though. Our equipment was so good that they couldn't make a noise anywhere in the world without us hearing it. Our receiver worked pretty well bringing in WSM, too. Some Sunday mornings I could sit there in Germany and listen to Saturday night at the Grand Ole Opry live from Nashville, Tennessee, just like at home. I heard the enemy every day in the Air Force, but I never saw combat or even came close to it. I enlisted a week before the Korean War broke out, so I was already in the system, and once they'd discovered my aptitude, trained me, and assigned me to the Security Service, Korea wasn't an option. My only choice was between Germany and Adak Island, the Aleutian archipelago off Alaska. that wasn't hard: frozen everything or food and Frauleins? I chose Landsberg."*

Source: (Johnny Cash and Patrick Carr. "Johnny Cash: The Autobiography." New York: Harper Paperbacks, 1997. 79-80)



Here is our oft repeated message about a really easy way to contribute funds to the Poppy Appeal. We are registered as RBL Y Services (Garats HaY) Branch with [www.easyfundraising.org](http://www.easyfundraising.org) which means over 6,000 shops and sites will now donate to us for FREE every time you use 'easyfundraising' to shop with

To date we have 92 members participating in the scheme, making regular 'micro' donations - which, since we became involved with easyfundraising, has raised [£2215.87](#) for the Poppy Appeal. In the last 30 days we have raised £6.97 with the only effort required being a couple of additional clicks on your keyboard.

Use this link to get started:

[https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/?utm\\_campaign=raise-more&utm\\_source=social&utm\\_medium=facebook&utm\\_content=gs-f1](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_source=social&utm_medium=facebook&utm_content=gs-f1)

Dane-Geld  
(Rudyard Kipling)  
A.D. 980-1016

It is always a temptation to an armed and agile nation  
to call upon a neighbour and to say: --  
"We invaded you last night--we are quite prepared to fight,  
unless you pay us cash to go away."

And that is called asking for Dane-geld.\*  
And the people who ask it explain  
that you've only to pay 'em the Dane-geld  
and then you'll get rid of the Dane!

It is always a temptation for a rich and lazy nation,  
to puff and look important and to say: --  
"Though we know we should defeat you,  
we have not the time to meet you.  
We will therefore pay you cash to go away."

And that is called paying the Dane-geld.  
But we've proved it again and again,  
that if once you have paid him the Dane-geld  
you never get rid of the Dane!

It is wrong to put temptation in the path of any nation,  
for fear they should succumb and go astray.  
So when you are requested to pay up or be molested,  
you will find it better policy to say: --

"We never pay any-one Dane-geld,  
no matter how trifling the cost;  
For the end of that game is oppression and shame,  
and the nation that pays it is lost!"



Ukraine-Geld?  
A.D. 2022

The most recent exemplar (by a self-appointed Tzar!)  
is a call from Ukraine's neighbour who has said:  
"We invaded you last night, gave the Western world a fright,  
so, unless you do our bidding, peace is dead!"

And that is called being a bully!  
And that man gave chilling advice:  
"Unless you comply with me fully  
you'll find Ukraine paying the price!"

There may well have been temptation for Ukrainians as a nation  
to surrender, but we heard their tart reply: --  
"Though we know we are outnumbered, with your rule we won't be lumbered  
so.....get knotted Vlad!.....Go forth!.....and multiply!\*\*

You can count on firm defiance of your diktat for compliance!  
We've no allies in the Kremlin or Red Square!  
It isn't rocket science! On Ukraine we place reliance.  
Why would we sell our souls to Stalin's heir?"

And that's called refusing to cower,  
to kow-tow, to grovel, to flinch.....  
'cos you know this superior power  
takes a yard if you give him an inch!

Jobe March 2022

\*Danegeld was a form of blackmail.....a tax paid as tribute to Viking raiders to save a land from being ravaged. Inevitably they took the money, but came back for more, presenting the same "option."

\*\* You may have seen the invitations to the Russians on Ukrainian placards and tee shirts "idi na xui!"  
"Go forth and multiply" is a polite version of that sentiment!

ENDS