

Branch Member Dave Street Awarded the Legion Certificate of Appreciation



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They serve a good pint and great food at The Shoulder of Mutton pub in Hamstall Ridware, the location for part of the Branch Summer Gathering 2023 (see page 3)



Branch Member Dave Street Awarded the Legion Certificate of Appreciation

We are pleased to report that long serving Branch member Dave Street was recently presented with the Legion's highest award:

'A Certificate of Appreciation for Exemplary Service'. The award is made for his outstanding Legion work in the fields of promoting diversity and inclusion and, more recently, for his exceptional leadership in improving the Annual Membership Awards framework and processes

The certificate, bears the signatures of Legion President, Lt General James Bashall, CB., CBE, National Chair, Jason Coward and the Director General Charles Byrne. This award comes with a special Legion Badge bearing the motto "For Merit."



Dave (aka 'Strasse') has filled a multitude of posts within the Legion including; Branch Committee Member from 2003 - 2008, then Y Services Branch Vice Chairman until 2011, (when Bob White was Chairman). He was a founder member of the National Branches District in 2005 and District Vice Chairman and Conference Committee Member from 2007. He became District Welfare Officer in 2009 and District Chairman from 2011 to 2020, following which he was elected as National Branches District, Membership Council Representative.

Dave told our reporter

"I'm very proud to have been honoured in this way by TRBL. Being presented with the Legion's highest award was something I could never have imagined when I joined the branch."

Dave was awarded a District Certificate of Appreciation in October 2013, a Legion Gold Badge in February 2016 and this most recent award, the National Certificate of Appreciation, on June 1st 2023.

Well done Dave, a great achievement and well deserved. We must also report, sadly, that Dave has been most unwell for some time and we wish him well.

Summer Gathering 2023 (SG23)

SUMMER GATHERING 2023 (SG23)

A reminder that our Branch Summer Gathering this year, centred on the Shoulder of Mutton pub at Hamstall Ridware (postcode WS15 3RZ) will take place on 21/22 July 2023. We hold a Branch Committee meeting on the Friday afternoon commencing at 1600 hrs and, although these meetings are not really a spectator sport, members are welcome to come along and observe how the Branch is managed. The Friday evening is then dedicated to in depth discussions on the meaning of life, the scary reduction in the size of Britain's armed forces and, of course, the price of fish! All welcome. If the weather is fine we will congregate outside in the pub garden. On the Saturday morning, 22 July 2023 we will hold a short memorial service at the Y Services Plot at the National Memorial Arboretum (postcode DE13 7AR). All welcome. Gather from 1030 onwards, service begins at 1100 hrs. Dress is casual except for Dave Lawrence, our Branch Standard Bearer, who will be in best rig. Representatives from JSSU(R) will be in attendance. After the service you can take the opportunity to explore the NMA's many monuments and exhibits then lunch at your leisure in the NMA's restaurant.



Y Services Memorial Goes Hi-Tech!

At the end of 2022 the Branch Committee supported the idea of a virtual visitors book for the Y Services Memorial and Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum. Access to the book being via a QR code mounted on the sign at the plot entrance. A QR code was created and the sign designed. After extensive research a company was found capable of producing one stainless steel sign engraved with a QR code link to the visitors book on the Branch website. The one is underlined in the previous sentence because, whilst there are several companies able to engrave on stainless steel, minimum orders are expected to be in the thousands (i.e. spare parts for the automotive or engineering industries). Branch Chairman Jim McDermott installed the signage on Thursday 29 June 2023 and a test run has been conducted - it works!

If and when you do visit the site please make use of the online visitors book by clicking on the QR code, record your comments and, perhaps report on the condition of the garden.



Installing the QR sign



QR Sign in place

easyfundraising.org.uk - An amazing month!

Three more members signed up to the easyfundraising scheme during June 2023, taking our supporters total to **108**. Purchases large and small all attract a donation from the vendor. This month we raised an amazing **£123.77** taking our overall total since we joined the scheme to: **£2655.36** which has been donated to the Poppy Appeal.

You can view our cause page and sign up at:
<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/>



Thank you one and all for your kind contributions

Chairman's Message

Dear Members,

Our front page item recording the presentation of the Legion's top award to Branch member Dave Street (aka Strasse) comes only 5 months after we advised that Branch member John Clark had also been awarded this premier accolade. Clearly we produce members who go on to do great things! Well done Dave.

Our Summer Gathering 2023 grows ever closer. In the past we have situated the event in different parts of the country but this had little or no effect on numbers attending so, for now we locate the event pretty centrally in the UK in a pub close to the NMA and also at the NMA itself for our own commemorative service (details on page 3). This is a great opportunity to meet up with fellow Legionnaires who share a Y Service background as well as exploring the many memorials and exhibits at the NMA.

Special thanks go to our Branch webmaster Dave Rice who produced the QR code and coding for the now operational online visitors' book for those visiting the Y Services plot at the NMA. Dave Lawrence will act as the admin to check all visitors' comments before they are displayed on our website.

In other news we continue to attract people to participate in our easiest of fundraising activities - the easyfundraising scheme with Over £120 raised via micro donations in the last 30 days.- thank you to all concerned.

Regards to one and all.

*Jim McDermott
Branch Chairman*

MOD Garats Hay - Update

The site converted back to a military establishment in September 2021. In January 2023, the permanent staff population grew when a small Regional Medical Centre was opened for Serving Personnel. The Ministry of Defence is looking to retain the site and are currently undertaking an assessment study on what role the site will play going forward.

Currently, MOD Garats Hay is used for military training, conferences, sporting events and classroom learning. Other organisations such as the Police and Emergency Services make use of the site for training. It is not unusual for there to be dogs, simulated gunfire, pyrotechnics and blue lights on site as part of this training. The staff at MOD Garats Hay say they are absolutely committed to being a good neighbour and will always endeavour to minimise the impact on the local area and community.

Did you know?

The Korean Peninsula is said to be the most serious potential flash point in the Asia-Pacific region. South Korea now maintains the most intense signals intelligence (SIGINT) activity in the world, involving some of the most advanced SIGINT systems currently operational. Most of this activity is maintained by US SIGINT authorities and units, but South Korean capabilities for both independent and joint SIGINT activities have increased greatly over the past decade. They are expected to provide some one to four days' warning of a North Korean decision to invade the South and some 12-16 hours' warning of an actual invasion.

Editor's Note:

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 as well as Branch news 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 for text is unformatted MS Word and any photos, cartoons or pictures should be submitted separately as JPEGs.



**Culture Corner - More poetry from our very own
Branch Poet - John Berry**



Nobody Told Me!

There's yet another crisis looming, adding to the rest.....
(Covid.....Cost of Living.....Ukraine) guaranteed to test
our patience and our bank balance, but nobody told me
we're up shit creek without a paddle with our "Energy!"
And if the news can be believed, our energy crown jewels
are on the wane, we're running short of home-grown fossil fuels.

They say that no-one saw it coming, but there's no refutin'
lots of what we're going through was caused by Comrade Putin!
And Vladimir's tight stranglehold on this fuel hurly-burly's
got most Western countries firmly by the short and curlies.
Now anyone with gas or oil to heat their home or water
will struggle, 'cos that Putin prat has said he'll give no quarter!
So prices rise as stocks run short and governments advise:
"We've few "renewables" on tap! **You** must economise!"
Their action plans bemuse me! How am I supposed to know
how best to keep my bills down if those clowns won't tell me so!

The diktats that we get from them are pushy and confusing.
How dare they order me to switch off lights that I'm not using!
Or only boil sufficient water for my cup of tea
and switch off stuff on standby mode like PC or TV?

We're urged to get a "Smart Meter" to check the day's consumption.
We're told: "Reduce your washing loads per week..... and use your gumption!
Don't daily bung a pair of knickers in your brand new Beko
then stick the thing on "Quick wash" mode, and just ignore the "Eco."
It seems we're not supposed to dry stuff in our tumble driers.....
but use a thing called "clothes horse" parked in front of our log fires
or even on a washing day, (that's if the weather's fine!)
take washing in the garden and just "peg" it on a "line!"
And when we use the dishwasher, we're told to fill it up,
not switch the damned thing on to wash a single coffee cup!

What's the point of having all this swish technology?
Why have a dog and bark yourself? Can somebody tell me?
Why should we change the things we do? The things we've grown up doing?
They're in our genes, these habits of a lifetime we're pursuing!



Culture Corner - continued



It gets my goat to know our elders seem to know the score.
My hackles rise to hear them say: "We've seen it all before!
Why can't **you** whippersnappers get it into your thick heads?
In my day we'd put sweaters on, drape overcoats on beds.
Hot water bottles warmed cold sheets, (if true, then that's amazing!)
we had no leccy blankets, central heating, double glazing!
We wrote our names in ice that formed **inside** our window-panes,
wore mittens on our hands to combat hot-aches or chilblains!"

I've heard tell Baby Boomers use some tricks that are quite crafty.....
they put "excluders" under doors with gaps that make rooms draughty!
Another trick these old gits use I think will take some beatin'
it's that one where you shut the doors to rooms.....to keep the heat in,
or turn the radiators down in any unused room
(they kid us it brings down the cost of power you consume??)
They always draw the curtains when it's cold and dark outside
and when they've finished baking, leave the oven open wide!

They do things automatic'ly! They don't need to be told!

(I s'pose this is a price I'll have to pay when I get old!)

If such tricks of the trade have been around for years, for free
why have they kept **me** in the dark? Why's nobody told **me**?

And as my bills go through the roof, they taunt me, chide me,
scold me!

But how the hell was I to know if no-one ever told me?

Now as I bank four hundred quid I got in recompense
I still don't get why old folks claim I'm lacking common sense??

Jobe January 2023

ENDS