

'OP NEWBIES 2024' LAUNCHES 1st MARCH


See story on page 2



UPDATE

Our members at the National Y Services Branch (BR3502). We still serve or have an association with the modern equivalents of the Y Service Organisation (CEMA/EW/SIGINT/ELINT/COMINT etc) and an affiliation to JOIN NOW

The Legion helped fund the Royal British Legion Complex Trauma Gym at The Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC Stanford Hall, near Loughborough)




UPDATE

In 2023 the Branch Standard was paraded at 4 ceremonial events and 6 funerals by Branch Standard Bearer, Dave Lawrence.

Y Services Branch (BR3502). We are the Royal British Legion Branch for all who served, still serve or have an association with the modern equivalents of the Y Service Organisation (CEMA/EW/SIGINT/ELINT/COMINT etc) regardless of single service or civilian affiliation. New members always welcome.

To **JOIN NOW** click on the link above



UPDATE

The Legion unites across faiths, cultures and backgrounds to remember the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces community from Britain and the Commonwealth.

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To **JOIN NOW** click on the link above

Our membership is slowly shrinking. We plan to stop the decline with a concerted online recruiting effort throughout the month of March

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Army Recruiting Station

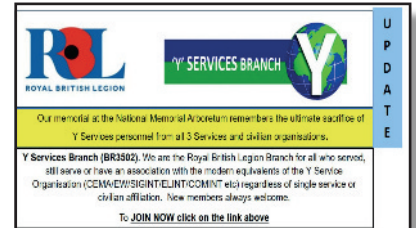


"I remember when it used to be 'serve your country.'"

OP NEWBIES 2024 LAUNCHES 1 MARCH 2024

Facts about the month of March and recruiting new members

- March is the third month of the year in the Gregorian calendar.
- March has 31 days.
- March is named after Mars, the Roman god of war.
- The Vernal Equinox for 2024 will occur on 20 March.
- March is the time of year when animals start waking up from hibernation.
- The birth flower for March is the daffodil.
- The birthstone for March is aquamarine.
- The first successful blood transfusion using human blood took place in March 1818.
- **The RBL Y Services Branch will commence a concerted one month recruiting campaign online on 1 March 2024 - OP NEWBIES 2024**



Our Branch membership numbers are slowly dwindling. In March 2023 we boasted 440 members but as at the end of February 2024, we find ourselves reduced to around 417 members. Dwindling membership is, unfortunately, a Legion wide trend and problem.

We want to buck that trend and will be making a concerted effort online in March to see if we can persuade the over 1000 individuals who use Facebook pages and groups associated with the Y services organisation to sign up to the Legion and join our branch.

This is a concentrated focus on Facebook but our efforts will continue elsewhere with reminders in this newsletter, face to face contacts and, during 2024, visits to relevant military installations.

As always, all members are urged to play the role of recruiting sergeant (or other service equivalents) and persuade former Y services friends to join the RBL Y Services Branch and support the good works of the Legion.

We very much hope this March initiative will generate interest and help to increase our membership. We also hope the daily online notices (as per examples shown on the front cover) throughout March will generate conversations and enquiries leading to folk clicking the link to the membership application form.

CORRECTION

In the Chairman's message in the January issue it was stated that:

As a Branch we do have a history of providing the Legion with members to serve in high places, with, just a few years ago member Terry Whittles (also OBE) serving as Legion Chairman.

In fact Terry was appointed **CBE** not OBE. A message of apology has been accepted.

The CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) King George V established the Orders of the British Empire during World War I to recognize services to the war effort by individuals supporting activities within the UK (not on the front lines). The CBE is awarded for prominent national roles, leading regional contributions, or highly distinguished and innovative achievements. The award is one step down from a knighthood.

easyfundraising

In January we raised an amazing **£99.07** all through members buying items online via easy fundraising - . All funds collected in this way go to the Poppy Appeal.



We have **121** members participating and since we joined the scheme, in 2016, a total of **£2829.38** has been raised and all for free!

View our cause page online and sign up at:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/>

Or scan this QR code with your phone's camera



Thank you one and all for your kind contributions

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 please, as JPEGs.

GARATS HAY - AN UPDATE

Many of our members, mostly from the army but also some from the Royal Navy, will have heard of Garats Hay and may well have been trained and served there. There has been a military presence in the Garats Hay area since 1939; the purpose built barracks closed in 1998.

The site is very close to Beaumanor Hall, a WWII Y Services listening station. After closing as a military training centre the Garats Hay site was flattened and rebuilt to house Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College which opened in 2005.

Despite several successful years training entrants to the technical arms of the armed forces and the MOD, a decision was taken to close the facility in 2021. Since then, the site has been maintained as MOD Garats Hay and has been used for various MOD related activities.

Rumours abound as to the nature of its next occupant but in the meantime here is an update of current and future activity from the site's Executive Officer.

*MOD Garats Hay has recently supported Ops **RESCRIPT** (Covid) and **ORBITAL** (training of Ukrainian Personnel) and is currently supporting Op **LAZURITE** as part of the ARAP Scheme and we will be hosting families from Afghanistan as a reception centre for at least the next 12 months.*

The longer term future of the site is secure with the penned arrival of elements of UKStratCom arriving around 2027-28 the specific detail of who and when is yet to be determined, I will be able to brief you further when decisions are made.*

We will be hosting a small Remembrance Service here onsite on Monday the 11th of November and if you would like any members to attend please let me know and I will make arrangements.

XO MOD Garats Hay

Footnote: If you are interested in attending the Remembrance Service at MOD Garats Hay on Monday 11 November 2024 please let our Branch Secretary Chris Lowish know and he will create a list. Exact details will be made known in the fullness of time. Contact email: yservices.secretary@rbl.community

See next page for an explanation of UKStratCom*

What is UKStratCom?

*UK Strategic Command (UKStratCom), also known as **Strategic Command**, is a crucial component of the **United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence (MOD)**. Its primary focus lies in managing **joint capabilities** across the three branches of the Armed Forces: the **Royal Navy**, the **British Army**, and the **Royal Air Force**.

Here are some key points about UK Strategic Command:

1. Role and Purpose:

- UKStratCom plays a pivotal role in driving **integration** within the defence sector. It aims to make the Armed Forces more effective by coordinating joint efforts among military personnel, civil servants, and civilian contractors.
- Joint capabilities involve collaborative efforts across services to achieve common goals.

2. Leadership:

- **General Sir Jim Hockenhull KBE ADC Gen (late The Intelligence Corps)** serves as the Commander of Strategic Command.
- The command's mission is to sharpen the edge of UK defence.

3. Recent Activities:

- Strengthening defence ties with India through educational visits and joint staff talks.
- Recognition of Strategic Command personnel in the New Year's Honours List 2024 for their services to defence.
- Sharing wargaming expertise with international guests.

4. Responsibilities:

- Providing leadership in the **cyber** and **electromagnetic** domains.
- Contributing to defence strategy and operational effectiveness.

In summary, UK Strategic Command ensures that the Armed Forces operate cohesively, leveraging their combined strengths to enhance national security and defence capabilities.



Strategic Command

Part of Ministry of Defence

Headquarters Northwood
Headquarters,
Hertfordshire

Commander General Sir
James Hockenhull

Deputy Commander
Lieutenant General
Thomas Copinger-Symes

Active April 2012 –
December 2019 (as
Joint Forces Command)
· December 2019 –
present (as Strategic
Command)

Country United
Kingdom

Branch Royal Navy ·
British Army · Royal
Air Force

Type Joint Command

New Newsletter editor Needed Apply Here!

A reminder, again, that the current newsletter editor is stepping down at the November 2024 AGM leaving the post vacant.

The Branch newsletter is read by a large percentage of our membership with many opening the document within seconds of it being transmitted. So, we need a member, please, to take on the role to produce 'a newsletter'.

The current format is published monthly but it could be less frequent and set out in a design or format which suits the new editor.

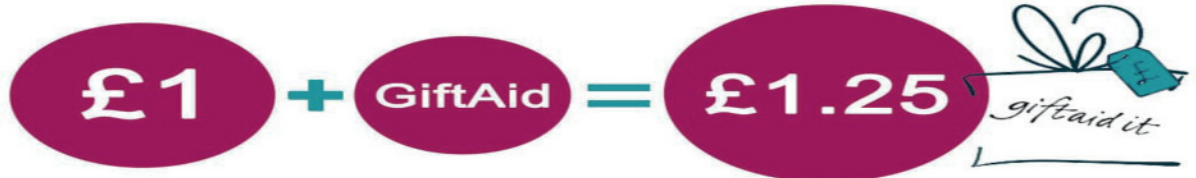
The current newsletter is distributed using Mailchimp software which is free, easy to install and easy to use.

Anyone interested in taking on the role or for further information, please contact the editor direct by email:

jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com



GIFT AID



Make your donations go further with Gift Aid

Gift Aid is given by the government on donations to charities at a rate of 25p in the pound, so for every £1 you donate the government will give the charity a further 25p if you are a UK tax payer. This means that a £20 donation will be worth £25.

Most importantly your annual Legion membership subscription counts as a donation. Currently we have just under 50% of our membership signed up to Gift Aid, it would be great if we could increase this percentage. This is yet another easy and painless way of contributing to the Poppy appeal. For full details of how to sign up for Gift Aid go to the link below.

[Gift Aid | Royal British Legion](#)

Chairman's message

Dear members,

After the excitements of Christmas and New Year February is usually a slow news month for the Branch. However, in this issue, you will see an interesting update from MOD Garats Hay, described in a recent newspaper article as a remote army base, and our front cover feature announces a concerted effort throughout the month of March to attract and recruit more members using various Facebook sites.

*Despite our best efforts we still come across folk from the Y Services world who do not know of our existence. If you have something nice to say about our Branch or the Legion in general please take the opportunity to join in the fun we expect to generate when we launch OP NEWBIES 2024 on 1 March 2024 on Facebook. However, If you want to complain about anything (Legionwise, not personal, domestic or household) please feel free to email our Branch Secretary Chris Lowish on:
yservices.secretary@rbl.community*

Chris would also be delighted to hear from if you have any new ideas for attracting new members.

Also in this issue a correction and an apology from me for having demoted Branch member and former Legion Chairman from CBE to OBE. It is interesting that for such a relatively small Branch we have over the years provided the Legion with two National chairmen, one chairman of the NMA and two members who have served on the Membership Council.

Grateful for your support with our recruiting efforts online throughout March.

Regards to all

Jim McDermott,
Branch Chairman

**A warm Y Services
Branch welcome to
new members**

**Darren Edge
Martin Goodson
Richard Harding
Kevin Bamforth
Dick Pickup
John Lander**



Branch Memorial event at the NMA July 2024

**A key Branch event will be our annual service of commemoration at the Y Services Memorial and Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA).
Date: 20 July commencing at 1030.**

Legion D-Day 80 commemorative events

This year, the Legion will mark the 80th anniversaries of D-Day and the other battles that helped the Allies on their path to victory.

The Legion is inviting Normandy and WW2 veterans, families of the fallen, descendants, and members of the public to join us in commemorating D-Day 80. Full details of each event can be found [on our D-Day 80 webpage](#).

Wednesday 5th June - Remembrance Service, Bayeux War Cemetery, France

Thursday 6th June - Remembrance Service, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

Thursday 6th June - National Remembrance Event and Legacies of D-Day Exhibition, British Normandy Memorial, France



Registration will close on Monday 25th March or when capacity is reached. Spaces at each event are limited, so please [visit our website](#) to register your details as a veteran or descendant, or enter the public ballot.

The Legion will be sharing more information about the other battles that helped the Allies on their path to victory in the coming months.

If you have any questions about these events, please contact the Remembrance Events team at RemembranceEvents@britishlegion.org.uk.

