

# GREAT TURNOUT FOR SUMMER GATHERING 2024

See story on page 2



It is with great sadness that  
we report the death of  
Branch Member  
**George Harris**  
**1933-2024**  
May he rest in peace



It is with great sadness that  
we report the death of  
Branch Member  
**Jan Cloughton (nee Duff)**  
**1952-2024**  
May she rest in peace

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Support us through  
**easyfundraising**

Donations creep  
closer to £3000  
See page 4

## SUMMER GATHERING 2024

Our Branch Summer Gathering began on Friday 19 July 2024 with a Branch Committee meeting. The meeting was held in the garden of a cottage in the tiny hamlet of Hamstell Ridware a 15 minute drive from the NMA. This unusual location came courtesy of Branch membership secretary Peter Dereck who had rented the cottage for the weekend. Branch business completed the committee and respective spouses, partners and friends enjoyed an evening of socialising in the nearby Shoulder of Mutton Pub where most of the committee were staying. The morning of Saturday 20 July dawned bright and clear; the peaceful rural scene in Hamstell Ridware being disturbed at regular intervals by the roar of massive tractors thundering from the surrounding fields, past the pub to somewhere not further identified, of agricultural importance.

Around 40 persons assembled at the NMA (not everyone signed the visitors' book) for our annual service of commemoration. The Branch Standard was paraded by Dave Lawrence along with the union flag paraded by Beth Gray the Legion's National Standard bearer. Last Post and Reveille were played by ex-Royal Marines bandsman Adrian Harper. Ellis Page took charge of the recorded march in and march out music, Branch President Bill Nelson gave the address and a wreath was laid by our Branch Community Support rep Karen Brutnell. Vice Chairman Dennis Weir made sure everyone stood in the right positions, Branch Secretary Chris Lowish recited the Exhortation and Steve Palfreyman the Kohima Epitaph. The service, which was ably conducted by our de facto Branch padre, the Reverend John Bird concluded with enthusiastic singing of the National Anthem. Whilst we clearly remember all those members of the Y Services past and present who have died on active service we made a particular point of remembering those who have died in more recent conflicts including:

**Cpl John Aikman, Royal Signals, killed in Northern Ireland**

**Sgt Barry Keen, 14 Signal Regiment, killed in Afghanistan**

**Lcpl Jonathon Hetherington, 14 Signal Regiment, killed in Afghanistan**

**Cpl Peter Thorpe, 14 Signal Regiment, killed in Afghanistan**

**Lcpl Jabron Hashmi, Intelligence Corps, 14 Signal Regiment, killed in Afghanistan**

**Lcpl James Brynin, Intelligence Corps, 7 Bde Recce Force, 14 Signal Regiment, killed in Afghanistan**

**Mrs Ann James (GCHQ) Lt Col John Tobias, Intelligence Corps, Major Roy Pugh, Intelligence Corps. All killed in the 1994 Mull of Kintyre Chinook crash**



**Branch President Bill Nelson delivered the address.**

**...continued on next page**

**SUMMER GATHERING 2024 ...continued**

After the service the opportunity was taken to display a glass trophy representing the Churchill Shield which the Branch won this year (see front cover)

The weather was kind and those attending took the opportunity to tour the NMA followed by lunch. With our well subscribed Friends of the Y Services Memorial and Garden (FOYSM) scheme providing the funds, our Y Services plot is well maintained, providing a peaceful corner for quiet reflection. The Summer Gathering weekend ended with a sort of formal dinner, brief speeches, some barracking and a raffle for the Poppy appeal which raised £50.00. Thanks go to all who attended and we look forward to making the event even bigger and better in 2025.



The Act of Homage



The Padre,  
The bugler  
The Standards



The Y Services Memorial

## DOUBLE STANDARDS EXPLAINED

For both the Legion's D-Day 80 event at the NMA and our own Summer Gathering 2024 we were delighted to welcome Beth Gray from the NMA Branch; but why, you may ask? Well, for the D-Day 80 event, Beth carried the Union standard in her capacity as RBL National Standard Bearer (SB) so could not carry the NMA Branch standard at the same time. Alas, the NMA Deputy Branch SB was unavailable to step in. Their Chairman made special representation to the National Parade Marshal for me to be selected to carry the NMA Branch standard on their behalf – something I have done a few times in the past. There I was then, amongst all of those incredibly talented SBs and me only a 'runner-up' in a District competition! I don't think I did too badly – I even received a "Well Done!" from HRH Prince Edward through an open window as the Royal car moved off through the SB Honour Guard at the end. (I'm pretty sure he said the same to all of us on our side of the road too!)

It was a huge honour to have been invited to participate in the commemoration of such an pivotal event in our Nation's history, especially remembering those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

**Dave Lawrence, Branch Standard Bearer.**



## EASYFUNDRAISING

A reminder that our RBL Y Services Branch is registered with **easyfundraising**, which means you can raise FREE donations for us every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself!

These donations really mount up and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment.

Since we joined the scheme we have raised **£2951.86** for the Poppy appeal and currently have 133 supporters. This month we raised £39.16

You can find details of easyfundraising and sign up as a supporter at:

[https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=pmc&utm\\_content=gs-email1](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=pmc&utm_content=gs-email1)

Thank you



## Chairman's message

Dear Members,

*This has been an eventful month with both highs and lows. Two members died, George Harris and Jan Claughton and we remember them with sadness but also with memories of happier times. Our Summer Gathering was blessed with summer weather and we were pleased to welcome some 40 members, their families and friends to our annual service of commemoration at the Y Services Memorial and Garden at the NMA.*

*In mid July I sent an email to all members outlining improvements to the way Festival of Remembrance tickets could be purchased. This turned out to be false news as the ticket providers were, in fact, despite assurances, unable this year, to make the promised changes. Hopefully anyone in the Branch who wanted tickets was able to obtain them.*

*To date no one has thrust themselves forward to take on the task of producing a monthly Branch newsletter when I stand down as Chairman at the November AGM. The role is still available, contact me direct for further information: [jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com](mailto:jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com)*

Kind regards

**Jim McDermott**, Branch Chairman



## Our Branch Standard - Out and About

On Monday 01 July I attended a Veterans Day event at the Swanshurst Girls School in Birmingham.

The school has around 1,300 students and 95% are Muslim.

It was a very good experience and included talking to small groups of Years 3 and 4 students as well as a Remembrance Parade on the central School green.

A number of veterans were present. One exhibition provided the girls with an opportunity to dress up as WW1 and WW2 soldiers and handle various (deactivated) weapons.

Dave Lawrence

**Branch  
Membership  
remains static at  
443**

**Editor's Note:** Contributions to the Branch Newsletter are always welcome on topics members think will be of general interest. We aim to provide uplifting stories as well as Branch news and attempt not to duplicate material sent from RBL HQ. Copy should be sent by email to the editor at:

[jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com](mailto:jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com) Text to be unformatted in MS Word. Photos, cartoons or pictures should be submitted separately please, as JPEGs.

### COURTS MARTIAL - LONG AGO

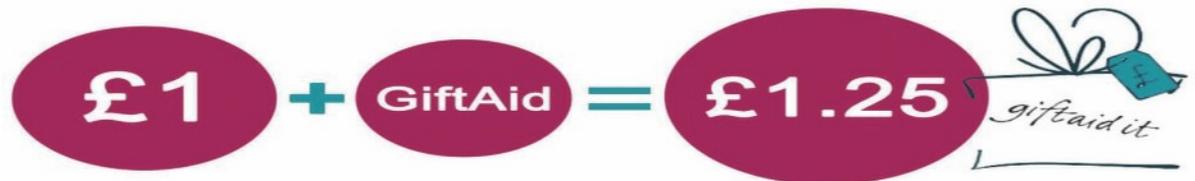
Records of courts martial in the 1850s make for interesting reading. On 29 April 1851 Private Samuel Willey of the 70th Foot, stationed in Cawnpore, India was court martialled for firing at a Lance Sergeant his superior officer in the execution of their duty and killing him. He was sentenced to be 'Shot to death by Musketry.'

In May 1851 Private Joseph Hardachier of the 56th Regiment based in Gibraltar was charged with being drunk - Disobedience of orders - throwing his Forage cap and striking his Captain. His punishment -Transportation for 10 Years. But it was not all bad. On 21 July 1851 Private Michael Hopkins of the 55th Foot, stationed in Gibraltar, was brought before a court martial for 'Making a counterfeit coin.' He was found 'Not Guilty.'

In July 1851 in St George's, Bermuda Lance Corporal William Downes of the 26th Foot was charged with what appeared to be a very common offence then 'Desertion, losing necessaries and Theft'. He was sentenced to 4 Years Penal Servitude (commuted to 2 Years Hard Labour). Officers got into bother too: On 20 Feb 1851 Ensign W.B. Crispin, 2nd W.I. Regt stationed in Spanish Town, Jamaica was charged with being 'Drunk and Drinking with NCOs' He was 'Dismissed Her Majesty's Service'



### 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](#)

## GALANOS HOUSE



RBL GALANOS HOUSE



RESIDENTS REMINISCE

In my role as Chairman I also represent the Branch at National district level. In July the National Branches District held its quarterly meeting this time at Galanos house, a Legion care/nursing home. Galanos House is situated on the edge of Southam, a small market town in the heart of the Warwickshire countryside. The home is set within a number of attractive landscaped gardens. The home organises regular shopping trips in their minibus, as well as visits to the nearby historic towns of Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon and Rugby.

Before the committee meeting I joined others on a guided tour of the facility. If you ever wondered if your Legion donations are being well spent they certainly are here. The atmosphere was unlike that of any care home I have ever visited and I have visited quite a few. Throughout there was a buzz of busy activity, people sitting chatting, playing board games or enjoying the gardens. One resident, total unprompted summed up the place to our visiting group: "It's great here its's like being on holiday and living in a hotel, the staff are brilliant."

The Galanos House staff recognise the importance of residents' shared experiences. People there form special bonds and make new friends. They offer nursing, residential and dementia care, as well as respite and day care. The home is purpose built and opened on its current site in September 2002. It can accommodate 110 residents in spacious single rooms with en-suite facilities. The smaller lounge areas and seating alcoves give the home a cosy, comfortable feeling, where residents can sit and relax with a good book, enjoy a board game or chat with friends over a coffee. The air-conditioned conservatory gives the space an outdoor feel with an indoor temperature. The facility has a CQC 'Outstanding' classification.

The social side to life at Galanos House is very important. Their well being team make sure there's always lots to look forward to, including quizzes, art and craft work, dancing, singing and concerts. Guests are always welcome to join residents for a meal in the dining room. The in-house cinema and bar add to the residents' enjoyment. Camaraderie, social interaction and helping residents pursue their hobbies and interests play a big part in the day-to-day life at Galanos House.

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## MONTHLY GET TOGETHERS

**Gloucester area get together** – Last Thursday of every month.

Location: Wetherspoons (The Regal), Kings Square, Gloucester.

Timings: 1200 hrs onwards

Information: Advertised on the Spec Ops Home & Ex Spec Ops Home Facebook Group. Everybody welcome.

**Lincoln area get together** – Third Friday of every month.

Location: Lion & Snake, 79 Bailgate, Lincoln. LN1 3AR

Timings: 1430 hrs onwards

Information: Advertised on the Spec Ops Home & Ex Spec Ops Home Facebook Group. Everybody welcome.

**Portsmouth area get together** – Second Thursday of every month.

Location: The Isambard Kingdon Brunel (JD Wetherspoon pub), 2 Guildhall Walk, Portsmouth.

Timings: 1200 hrs onwards.

Information: Advertised on the Spec Ops Home & Ex Spec Ops Home Facebook Group. Everybody welcome.

**York area get together** – Second Thursday of every month.

Location: The Punch Bowl (JD Wetherspoons), 5-9 Blossom Street, York. YO24 1AU

Timings: 1130 hrs onwards.

Information: Advertised on the Spec Ops Home & Ex Spec Ops Home Facebook Group. Everybody welcome.

## ANNUAL REUNION

**5 Company/ JSSU (R) reunion** – Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

Location: The Hunting Lodge, Barrow upon Soar. Same location as the Spec Op reunion.

Timings: 1400hrs onwards.

Accommodation: The Hunting Lodge has accommodation available and there are plenty of hotels in Loughborough and the surrounding area.

Information: Further information please contact Rob Wright or Sarah Bagshaw on

[reunionlobo@yahoo.com](mailto:reunionlobo@yahoo.com). Names are required for attendance. All past members are welcome.

Source: Ellis Page

The Legion's Poppy Appeal  
is an all year round activity  
- not just during  
remembrance tide  
(October/early November)



ENDS