



Thank you for supporting us

Your help had a huge impact on so many in 2023.  
We are so grateful.



## Another year serving the Armed Forces community – thanks to you

It is always a pleasure to update our most loyal supporters on the huge difference you are making to so many in our Armed Forces community.

In this leaflet, we celebrate the enormous strides we have made together over the last 12 months, as well as the people we have helped. Plus, we look forward to exciting developments in the year ahead.

Your support is the driving force behind everything we do. We hope this update shows our appreciation and reminds you that your help really does make a big difference.

Thank you.



*Holly Seabrook*

**Holly Seabrook**  
Head of Supporter Development  
Royal British Legion



Watch a video from one of our beneficiaries, Naomi Hall, saying thanks & hear about how you have helped her. Visit [rbl.org.uk/impactreport](https://www.rbl.org.uk/impactreport) or scan the **QR code** on your mobile device.



Titilia 'Tilly' Fisher training for the 2023 Invictus Games at the Battle Back Centre.



Major Ben Tyler OBE with Rhona Hendry, Healthcare Assistant.



Lawrence Phillips, ex-soldier, has received support since 2020.

## You helped Pat when he needed it most

**When Pat lost his mobility following an operation, he turned to RBL for help**

Pat McQuiston loved the Army life. He joined as a cadet in 1969, at the age of 15, and saw four tours of Northern Ireland. But when Pat had to give up his Army career to take care of his parents in 1975, he was devastated. Sadly, they both passed within six months of each other; and although Pat tried to rejoin the Army, he was told he was too old (aged only 21). His Army dreams shattered, he knuckled down to civilian life and went on to do many jobs – including work as a taxi driver, coach driver and security guard.



Pat McQuiston, former Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

Many years later, Pat was looking forward to a long retirement when, unfortunately, he had to go into hospital to have a large section of his lungs removed. After his surgery, he suffered an infection which severely impacted his mobility.

He contacted RBL for help, and we provided the financial support he needed to buy a mobility scooter. When it broke down in 2016, we also replaced it. Plus, we paid for Pat and his wife to go on their first-ever holiday as a couple – a lovely week together in Weston-super-Mare.

Pat was not alone in receiving this kind of support. This year, we gave financial aid and advice to just over 100 veterans and ex-serving men and women dealing with mobility-related issues – including scooter provision and home adaptations.

“Everyone needs a guardian angel and mine was the Royal British Legion.”

Pat McQuiston

# How we helped those in need in 2023

Through our new grant schemes and life-changing support, we helped to make every day easier for those who struggled in 2023. And with your backing, we will continue providing similar services in 2024 to safeguard those affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

 **£1.1m**  
debt relief secured



 **£42.6m**  
spent to support our beneficiaries



 Since October 2022  
**29,215**  
grants awarded,  
distributing  
**£18m**



 **£8m**  
in grants sent out via our new Cost of Living Grants Programme



Since October 2022  
over  
**22,000**  
people helped by our Case Workers



 We helped people aged  
**18-100**  
years old



 Over  
**100**  
participants took part in our arts programme, Bravo 22

## Team UK did us all proud at the 2023 Invictus Games

This year's Invictus Games, held in Düsseldorf, Germany, proved to be a great success for Team UK. It was an honour to see competitors who have trained at our Battle Back Centre do so well, and it was a privilege helping them reach the games.

With 59 veterans competing and 68 medals won, everyone had a fantastic time representing the whole country. We look forward to seeing them compete again at the Invictus Games Vancouver-Whistler 2025.



Emmanuel Akor at the Invictus training camp, Battle Back Centre, Lillehall.

## For so many, it all starts at the Battle Back Centre

Many of this year's Team UK competitors started their recovery at our Battle Back Centre. Participants take part in group activities and sports, such as, wheelchair basketball, archery, mountain biking and more.

These activities encourage teamwork and build camaraderie, so it is a fantastic environment for training competitors. And thanks to supporters like you, our facilities and equipment are now better than ever.



Mikhal Wazir, veteran, playing indoor short tennis at the Battle Back Centre.

## So many lives were changed by the Battle Back Centre this year

Our Battle Back Centre welcomed many new faces in 2023 – and continued to support familiar ones as well.

Whatever their backgrounds or conditions, we were proud to give serving and ex-serving men and women the resources and setting they needed to recover their physical strength and mental wellbeing.

## Battle Back Centre participants – in numbers

# 672

Total for 2023

# 8,000+

Total since opening in 2012



Melissa O'Boyle, RBL helpline staff member.

## Do you need help from RBL?

We are dedicated to supporting not only serving and ex-serving men and women, but the whole of the Armed Forces community, including dependants and carers.

If you need our help and would like to see if you qualify, please get in touch today. Even if you are unsure about your eligibility, it is still worth checking. We are always happy to hear your story.



Call today on **0808 802 8080** from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week.  
Or for more details, visit [rbl.org.uk/who-we-help](https://rbl.org.uk/who-we-help) or scan the **QR code** on your mobile device.

# Your support made Remembrance 2023 very special

2023 was another momentous year of the Poppy Appeal – full of remarkable moments, cherished traditions and exciting new developments. Here are some of the highlights.

## We introduced a plastic-free poppy

Thanks to a generous gift left to RBL in a supporter's Will, we had the opportunity to develop a new plastic-free poppy. We were very proud to have it ready for our supporters to wear in time for this year's Remembrance.

Our objectives were to cut back on single-use plastic and to be economical and sustainable. That is why the new poppy is made from an innovative blend of renewable fibres from responsible sources and can be recycled in ordinary paper recycling collections.

This is the first time in 28 years that a new poppy has been developed – but the iconic poppy design and leaf shape remain. It was very important for us that the poppy continued to be a national symbol of Remembrance for the Service and sacrifices of our Armed Forces community.



Get yours today at [poppyshop.org.uk](https://poppyshop.org.uk) or scan the QR code on your mobile device to go straight to the Poppy Shop.



## We worked together on another wonderful year of the Poppy Appeal

Our annual Poppy Appeal is always an amazing opportunity to rally behind the brave serving and ex-serving men and women in our Armed Forces community.

This year, we remembered the Armed Forces and their families, from Britain and the Commonwealth, the vital role played by the emergency services and those who have lost their lives because of conflict or terrorism.



Jennifer Stephens, Deputy Poppy Appeal Organiser.

## 2023 in numbers



**1,000s**  
of kind  
volunteers

**3,335**  
Poppy Appeal  
Organisers



**21m**  
poppies distributed

## You showed up for more amazing City Poppy Days

As ever, this year's City Poppy Days' brought us all together to meet the public and fundraise. We collected donations in London and Manchester, distributed over 190,000 poppies and showed everyone just what a powerful force for good these communities can be.

**3,160**  
civilian, military &  
staff volunteers  
helped us  
fundraise

Over  
**£1m**  
was raised –  
thanks to  
public support

## We celebrated our vital volunteers

### Anne-Marie Cobley is part of five generations of Poppy Appeal Collectors

Anne-Marie Cobley, from Newport in Wales, has been the city's Poppy Appeal Organiser for the last 10 years. Anne-Marie's family's connection to the Poppy Appeal goes back over 70 years, when her grandfather started volunteering in his local supermarket.

Her mum, Patricia, whose two brothers served in the Royal Navy, first volunteered in 1957 when she was just 15. Anne-Marie's son and daughter both help with the Poppy Appeal and her young granddaughters are just starting to get involved too.

We know Anne-Marie has touched the lives of many people in our Forces family and beyond, especially during the Poppy Appeal.

So we say thanks for her dedication, passion and drive. It is our hope that many others continue to be inspired by her willingness to get involved and support vulnerable ex-Service men and women.



Anne-Marie, long-time Poppy Collector, volunteering in her local supermarket.

“You become part of a huge family when you belong to the RBL. Everyone looks out for everyone. I'm not ex-Service, my mum's not ex-Service; we do this because it's a cause that we're passionate about and we truly believe in.”

Anne-Marie Cobley,  
Poppy Collector



If you would like to follow in Anne-Marie's footsteps and volunteer for next year's Poppy Appeal, visit [rbl.org.uk/volunteer](http://rbl.org.uk/volunteer) or scan the **QR code** on your mobile device.



Field of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum.

## We showed our gratitude at the Festival of Remembrance

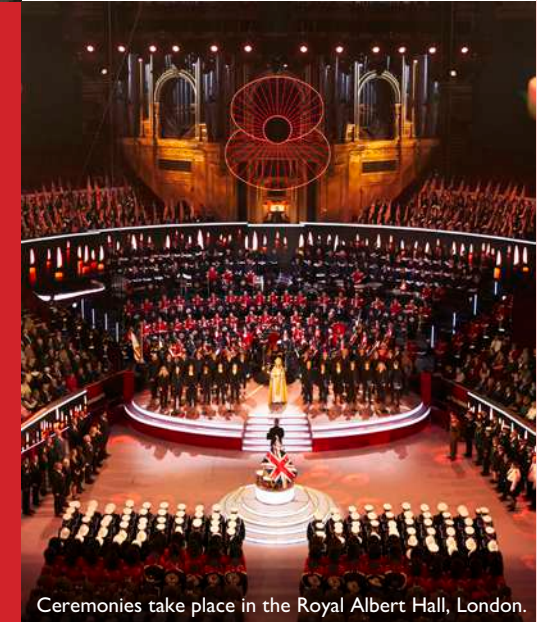
This year's annual Festival of Remembrance, held again in London's Royal Albert Hall, was filled with fantastic performances and moving speeches. The event was dedicated to all those from Britain and the Commonwealth who have served and sacrificed.

It is always our honour to host this extremely important event for our Armed Forces community, supporters like you and esteemed members of the Royal Family. We look forward to seeing everyone again at next year's Festival of Remembrance.

## We planted over 40,000 Tributes to the fallen

This year, we received and planted over 40,000 wooden Tributes in our Fields of Remembrance. It is an important tradition that we are proud to uphold.

With help from 133 volunteers, we planted in Fields of Remembrance at Cardiff, Swindon, the National Memorial Arboretum, Westminster, Belfast and Gateshead. Altogether, thousands of people honoured the fallen with personal messages of gratitude to our Armed Forces.



Ceremonies take place in the Royal Albert Hall, London.



Missed it? Watch the whole festival on the BBC iPlayer. Just visit [bbc.co.uk/iplayer](http://bbc.co.uk/iplayer) or scan the **QR code** on your mobile device.

## Our Count Them In campaign made a real difference

In the past, information on how many men and women made up the UK's Armed Forces community was limited. To resolve this, we launched our **Count Them In** campaign alongside Poppyscotland. It called on the government to include a question on ex-serving personnel in the Census.

It was a success – the most recent Census finally revealed this information.

# 1.85 million

The number of Armed Forces veterans in England and Wales.

Data like this made it possible for us to support even more ex-serving personnel throughout 2023. So we are very grateful for your help in bringing about this historic change. Plus, in terms of long-term support, this result will bolster our manifesto ahead of the UK General Election in 2024.

**Count Them In** was endorsed by:

**257** MPs in Westminster

**67%** of all Members of the Scottish Parliament

**45%** of all councils in the UK

**65%** of all Members of the Welsh Parliament



For more details, visit [rbl.org.uk/count-them-in](https://rbl.org.uk/count-them-in) or scan the **QR code** on your mobile device.



Laurence 'Loz' Moore, former Captain, on duty.



Anthony Cooper, RBL Ambassador, recovered from injury at the Battle Back Centre.

## We are ready to Credit their Service

Following on from other recent successes, you may have seen that we are now championing our **Credit their Service** campaign – with your help.

Every year, 150,000 veterans and their families receive compensation awarded by the government for the pain and loss they endured in Service to HM Armed Forces. This compensation is unjustly considered 'income' when some benefits decisions are made.

By contrast, civil compensation awarded by courts – such as personal injury or medical negligence compensation – is exempt from these means tests. So, some of the poorest members of our Armed Forces community are denied financial support their civilian counterparts receive.

As a result, these affected members wrongly miss out on thousands of pounds in annual compensation. Our Credit their Service campaign demands an end to this unfair treatment. We want to make sure ex-Service men and women are properly compensated and do not experience further disadvantage.



To read more about this campaign, please visit [rbl.org.uk/credit-their-service](https://rbl.org.uk/credit-their-service) or scan the **QR code** on your mobile device.

For those in Scotland, please visit [poppyscotland.org.uk/credit-their-service](https://poppyscotland.org.uk/credit-their-service)

And to write to your local MP about this important issue, please visit [rbl.org.uk/act-now](https://rbl.org.uk/act-now)

# Looking ahead to 2024

The cost-of-living crisis continued to cast a long shadow over the lives of many people in 2023.

Thanks to amazing supporters like you, we will keep providing life-changing care and services to vulnerable members of our Armed Forces community in 2024.

There is a lot to be excited about next year. See how you can get involved.



Participants taking part in our Poppy Run.

## Another year of unforgettable events

We love seeing supporters like you at our various annual and monthly events. There are many fantastic days out planned for 2024 – including Pedal Normandy Beaches, a historical bike ride through Normandy's five D-Day beaches. And the world-famous London Marathon is always a great opportunity for us to raise awareness for our Armed Forces community.



To see what else is planned, visit [rbl.org.uk/events](https://rbl.org.uk/events)

## Build a lasting legacy – with a gift in your Will

In 2024, make plans to safeguard the future of our Armed Forces community with a gift in your Will.

The kind generosity of our supporters helps us improve the lives of thousands of brave men and women as well as their families.

A gift in your Will can keep that vital work going for years to come. To find out more, visit [rbl.org.uk/giftinwill](https://rbl.org.uk/giftinwill)



RBL supported Army veterans, like Graham Wells and his family.

## Volunteer for the Poppy Appeal 2024

For over 100 years, our volunteers have made the Poppy Appeal the cherished tradition it is today.

It is the most important event of the year for our Armed Forces community. And volunteers are the lifeblood of the Poppy Appeal – so we are always looking for more eager volunteers.

If you would like to volunteer for the Poppy Appeal in 2024, we would be so grateful.



For more details, visit [rbl.org.uk/volunteer](https://rbl.org.uk/volunteer) or scan the **QR code** on your mobile device.



Rosalind Campbell and Nancy Tribe, volunteer Poppy Appeal Collectors.

## D-Day 80

It will be 80 years since the D-Day landings on 6th June 2024, and the Royal British Legion will be joining veterans, their families and carers to mark this momentous occasion in Normandy and with events across the UK. All these years later, it is our honour to be able to memorialise the lives lost and the sacrifices made.

**Mark the occasion – so you never forget**



Commemorate the 80-year anniversary with a bespoke lapel pin.

Visit [rbl.org.uk/d-day80](https://rbl.org.uk/d-day80) or scan the **QR code** on your mobile device to go straight to the Poppy Shop.



D-Day Veteran, John Roberts, at the 75th D-Day celebration.





# Thank you

Our ongoing support for the  
Armed Forces community is only  
possible with your help.

Royal British Legion, Haig House, 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA  
[rbl.org.uk](http://rbl.org.uk) | Supporter Care Line: **0345 845 1945** | [supportercare@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@britishlegion.org.uk)  
Registered Charity Number: 219279

