

# Connecting with Remembrance

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Building Remembrance connections  
in your community



Left to right: Michael McGarrigle, Dave Relf, Susan Coleman, Marc Edwards, Sally Shopland  
LGBTQ+ & Allies Branch



Ellie Parke  
Cookstown Branch



Ramanan Suppiah  
Bedford & District Branch

## Your part in Remembrance

We have approximately 2300 Royal British Legion branches across the UK and overseas. As a Member, you become a messenger of Remembrance, with your local branch acting as a focal point for social activity and support.

Every year, you do amazing things to advance the meaningful work we do to provide lifelong support to serving and ex-serving personnel and their families. You have knowledge and understanding of how to honour all those who serve to defend our freedoms and way of life. As part of our vital support network, your dedication and commitment are acknowledged and appreciated. Without you, our national Remembrance messaging wouldn't reach as far and as wide as it does today.

However, we want to do more.  
And we need **your help** to have a wider impact.



Khumi Tonsing, Royal British Legion Supporter,  
with friends at a VE Day 75 street party

# Talking about Remembrance

Remembrance allows people to remember those who fought and lost their lives. It is a time to honour the Armed Forces community who have served and sacrificed to defend our democratic freedoms and way of life.

However, the number of recruits for the Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy is in decline. Consequently, fewer people in your wider community will have a direct connection and understanding of military service.

Therefore, when you talk to non-members about Remembrance, you may find their reasons for remembering are not solely focused on military service. People's thoughts, feelings and attitudes may differ from your interpretation of Remembrance.

To help people understand Remembrance, we've created this resource pack to help you spread the message of Remembrance to people in your community. As you move through this online resource, you will find talking points that:

- **Explain the meaning of Remembrance**
- **Explore changing ideas of Remembrance**
- **Investigate ways to remember together**
- **Identify different acts of Remembrance**
- **Help you invite people to Remembrance**
- **Look at how you can do more to help others remember**



Community poppy knitting  
in Appledore, Devon.



Kingsclere branch, wreath and crosses laid at the Hannover Military Cemetery.

## The meaning of Remembrance

For those of us who feel a deep personal connection to people serving in the Armed Forces, Remembrance can represent loyalty, attachment, pride, loss, respect and the upholding of traditions.

Being in the company of Veterans and military personnel at a commemorative event can feel like a privilege and honour that reminds us of the close bonds between service personnel who live, train and fight together. Feeling a deep sense of togetherness is part of the military culture.

In this context, Remembrance is an opportunity to pause and reflect on giving thanks and honouring the memory of those who gave their lives to defend our democratic freedoms. Remembering others in this way does not glorify conflict. Instead, it aims to unite people across faiths, cultures and backgrounds when we take a moment to commemorate lives lost and celebrate the lives of people that have and do serve.

We participate in Remembrance to never forget. We remember friends, family members and acquaintances who have shown courage, unity and sacrifice during active service from the First World War right up to the present day.

“Every year, members of the Women’s Section ensure that every war grave in Carlisle Cemeteries is marked with a fresh Remembrance cross. Additionally, our branch has organised the School Children’s Remembrance Service, established a Memorial Garden outside St Cuthbert’s Church and organised the annual Festival of Remembrance”.

A spokesperson for the Carlisle and Stanwix Branch



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## Changing perceptions of Remembrance

Some people in your community may not fully comprehend the idea of military service; they may not know someone serving in the Armed Forces. They may feel that Remembrance is only for people who have died in conflict which is not the case. Therefore, when talking to someone with a non-military background, it's important to remind them of the many other ways people serve today.

For example, individuals may recollect the work of volunteers during the pandemic and Emergency Services personnel for their roles in keeping communities safe, attending to the injured, assisting communities during natural disasters and upholding the peace.

In this context, people can use Remembrance to pay tribute to the special contribution of families and the emergency services. One such example is the 'Clap for Heroes', a social movement created as a gesture of appreciation for the workers of the NHS, carers and other key workers that selflessly served the public despite the personal danger during the global Coronavirus pandemic. The military had a significant role supporting public services across the UK as our country responded to COVID-19.

Sarah, a registered nurse and now retired from the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps (QARANC) volunteered to work in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) during the pandemic. On her experience of service at this time, she reflects:

"I found it to be a steep learning curve. Mentally and physically, it was very demanding. The shifts were long and extremely hot due to the weather and layers of PPE. It was very hard to lose patients that we desperately tried to save, but so rewarding to see many going home who had been so dangerously ill. The teamwork was incredible with so much support from the regular ICU staff".



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© ANNA WATSON / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



Key Stage 2 children learning about the symbols of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum.

## Embracing the future of Remembrance

Engaging young people with Remembrance is an important part of our work. Creating affiliations with schools and youth organisations such as Cadets, Scouts and Girl Guiding, we actively encourage the teaching of Remembrance across the UK. Our teaching resources focus on connecting children with how we have remembered in the past, what we do today to honour those in active service and then how we can ensure different types of service and sacrifice are recognised in the future.

Our teaching packs are full of lesson plans, activities and assemblies to support teachers and parents. All our resources are linked to the National Curriculum, and you can download lots of free teaching materials for Key Stage 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 as well as resource packs for Cadets, Girl Guiding and Scouts. We have many resources available in Welsh at each Key Stage Level.

[Click here to see all our learning resources](#)

“This year for Remembrance, we held another ‘family fun’ day. We did a massive amount of work to set up the properly themed event with our volunteers and stall holders dressed in period costume (if they wanted to). We set up a ‘war room’ museum feature and a trench layout outside with our Affiliated Army Cadet Force taking the lead on researching this. Many local people offered artefacts for display”.

Spokesperson for Old Basing Branch



# Remembering together

There is no right or wrong way to remember. We acknowledge that people of varying ages and from different cultures and backgrounds will contextualise Remembrance in meaningful ways. Sharing past, present and future service stories between generations and community groups will keep Remembrance relevant and purposeful.

As the national champions of Remembrance, our aim as the RBL remains steadfast. It is our role to ensure the unique contribution of the Armed Forces, emergency and civilian services are never forgotten. This year, we remember everyone who has stood up to defend our way of life during conflict and national emergencies.

Recently we have created new ways for people to remember.

In partnership with the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, we have created a new Remembrance Glade. Nestled in woodlands within the grounds of the Arboretum, the Glade is a tranquil space for families, individuals, schools, community groups and others to think about what Remembrance means to them.

The glade encourages reflection and contemplation through the purposeful use of symbolic forms, features and plants. Denoting strength, curved oak gateways provide a fitting entrance to the glade. The glade itself is a perfect circle of white stemmed Himalayan birches which create a sense of harmony and peace as you sit looking out to the trees. The use of a mirror in the middle of the glade symbolically reflects truth and brings light.

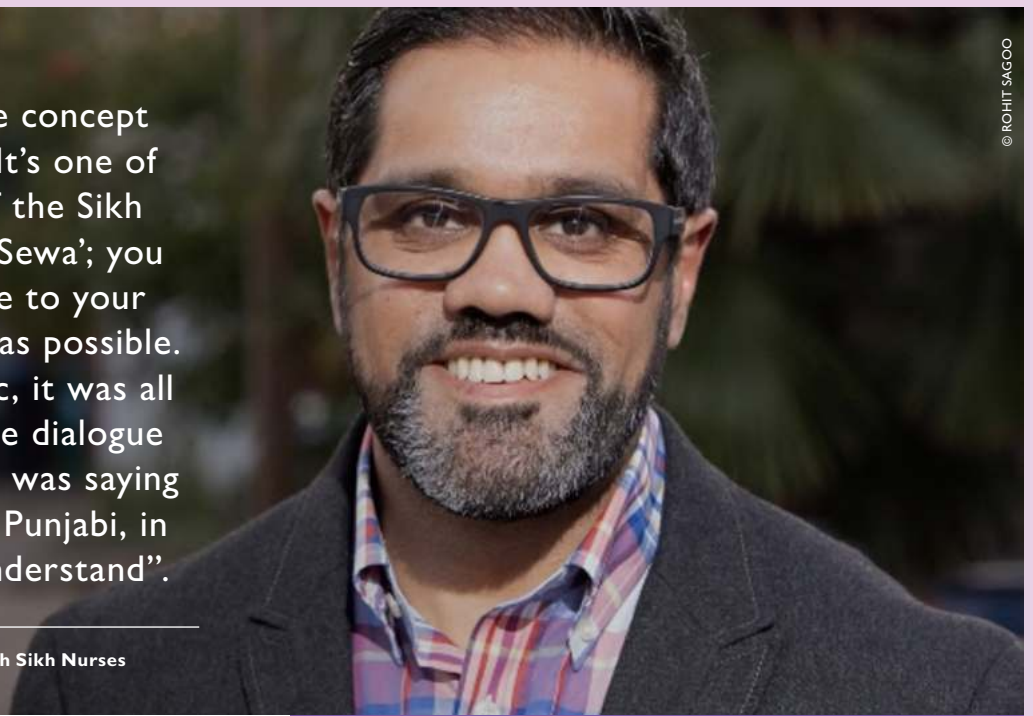
We designed and made this informal living tribute to empower people to find new ways to remember those who have served. We hope our Members and the public will have an opportunity to visit throughout the year's changing seasons.

As told by Officer James Wingrove, Corporal Willie Apiata, Rohit Sagoo and Becky Warren, there are many ways people can serve today. Read their stories to find out how these four individuals have given service.



“I am driven by the concept of selfless service. It’s one of the main tenets of the Sikh religion. It’s called ‘Sewa’; you give selfless service to your community as much as possible. During the pandemic, it was all about translating the dialogue that the government was saying and expressing it in Punjabi, in a way people can understand”.

Rohit Sagoo, Founder of British Sikh Nurses



© ROHIT SAGOO

“Everyone pulled together and worked through very long days. It was humbling to see just how many people did, with some pushing themselves to almost exhaustion to get aid ashore and the people who had been affected by the hurricane”.

Officer James Wingrove, RFA Mount’s Bay Chief Executive Officer talking about the UK’s humanitarian operation to support the Caribbean after Hurricane Dorian, a category five hurricane, struck in September 2019

“We all deal with things differently and its each to their own. You can’t tell a guy how to react. It’s going to be your own personal experience when it goes down. I still don’t think I am a hero. And it’s not easy having people saying you are one. I’m proud of what I did – I saved a man’s life and that’s the best thing that can come out of this whole business”.

Corporal Willie Apiata, New Zealand Special Air Service and first recipient of the Victoria Cross for New Zealand for bravery under fire in Afghanistan

“My role at the Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries (MCSI) is close to my heart, because these patients go through life changing injuries. You feel so proud nursing them because you see them at their worse and then you see them go on to do bigger things”.

Rebecca Warren, Ward Manager, Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries, Clinical Lead Nurse for Vaccination Centre and Reserve Warrant Officer in the Queen Alexandra’s Royal Army Nursing Corps



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# Acts of Remembrance

Every year, as a nation, we unite in a shared Remembrance Act. In this unified moment of quiet reflection we honour the fallen, and those affected by conflict, and show support for veterans, active servicemen and women and their families. Poignant personal moments are found during formal commemorative services such as Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday when we gather together, lay wreaths, wear a poppy and observe the two-minute silence.

However, informal acts of Remembrance can occur at any time of the year when perhaps an anniversary, film, photograph, the news or meeting someone new triggers a thought or feeling. At such times, people acknowledge their grief, sadness and pride as they remember a person or an event. Every act of Remembrance can anchor memories and help people share their thoughts and feelings.

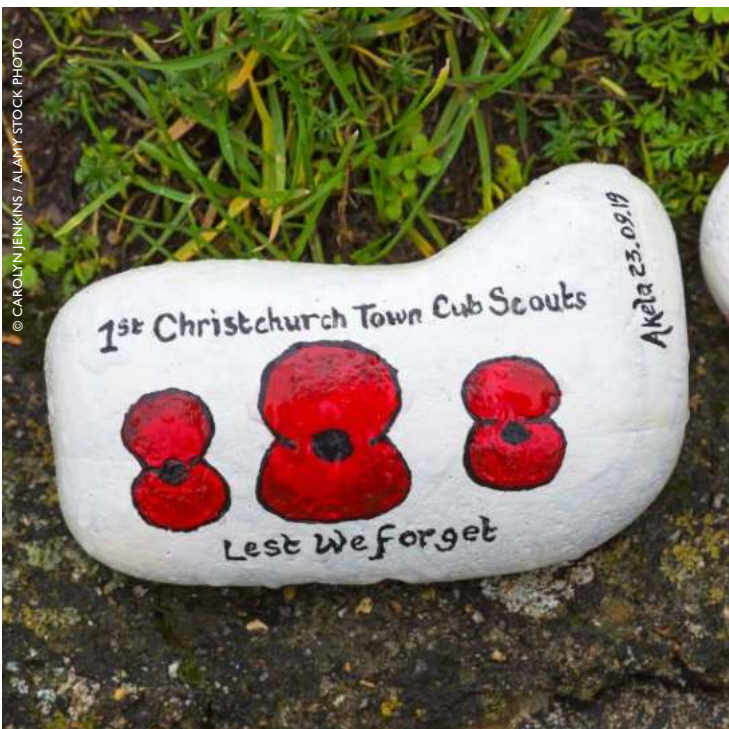
We want you to encourage people in your community to find their way of engaging in Remembrance, whether it's visiting a monument, wearing a poppy, creating a quiet space for reflection, celebrating through music and dance, going on a pilgrimage or having a tattoo as a permanent reminder of a special symbol or message.

Everyone remembers differently, and we need our members to help us raise the awareness of Remembrance to as many people as possible in your community. As the national champion of Remembrance, we want to help people with non-military connections find their unique way to remember loved ones and people in the Armed Forces and Emergency Services who serve them today.



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Participants on the RBL's one-day Poppy trek at Scafell Pike, Cumbria.



© CAROLYN JENKINS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



© CHARLIE CLIFT

Tribute Ink Exhibition



This film explores the service and sacrifice of the Fijian community as told through the service of Staff Sergeant Raymond Baselala.

My name is Raymund Aseela  
Waqairoba Baselala.

## Extending open invitations

Thinking of all the different ways people serve, our hope is for all community groups to come together to honour the men and women who serve, sacrifice and stand ready to face today's challenges.

As England hosted the Commonwealth Games this year, it is inspiring to think about how people from across Commonwealth nations engage with Remembrance. Many people from Commonwealth countries, including in Africa, the Caribbean, Fiji and non-Commonwealth nations such as Nepal, and Muslim and Sikh communities have served alongside the British Armed forces throughout many conflicts.

Looking outward and talking to individuals and groups you've not spoken to creates a space for new conversations about Remembrance. There are a few different talking points you could discuss. For example, is the same symbolism used to honour the fallen? By making connections and building new relationships, it's possible to develop new perspectives of service and sacrifice that represent all of the service we see today.

**"When you see me, remember us"**. We are committed to remembering the millions of people from the Commonwealth who have helped us defend our freedoms and our way of life since the First World War. Today, many of Britain's largest and most vibrant communities are of Commonwealth descent. Their service and sacrifice are integral to our nation's heritage and history.

And still today, many people of Commonwealth descent continue to serve. Starting with his grandfather in 1917, SSgt Raymund Baselala's son will be the fourth generation of his Fijian family to serve in the British Army. Click on the video on this page to listen to his and other service stories from across the Commonwealth.

[Click here to discover more films like these](#)



This film explores the service and sacrifice of the African community as told through the service of retired Grenadier Guards Officer, Folarin Kuku.



This film explores the service and sacrifice of the Sikh community as told through the service of Flight Lieutenant Manveet Dhaliwal.



Maisie Mead is a Poppy Appeal Collector in Plymouth. She has been involved in the Poppy Appeal since the age of four, after her dad was injured and medically discharged when she was three years old.

## Encouraging youth participation

When developing the teaching resources we mentioned earlier, we can see how young people are keen to be involved with Remembrance. More and more schools engage with the RBL. They are using our resources to develop a positive narrative around the idea of Remembrance, why we do it, how we can embrace it, and who it is for.

Over the years, we have seen children write inspirational poems, create special gardens of Remembrance and proudly march as a young Cadet, Beaver, Cub, Scout or Girl Guide.

As we pass the mantle of Remembrance from one generation to another, we must embrace their enthusiasm and interest. One way to do this is to reach out to schools, associations and youth groups to see if you can offer guidance around the concept of Remembrance and support them in organising Acts of Remembrance.

If your branch is not already connecting and developing relationships with schools and community youth groups, starting a conversation with them can be an excellent way to encourage youth participation in Remembrance.

One such example is how Wainfleet and District branch has created a strong affiliation with a local primary school. Collaborative remembrance activities include poetry competitions, encouragement to build a Remembrance area in the school grounds and support with our Poppy Appeal.

### Wainfleet and District branch case study

Since 2009 Magdalen Primary School in Lincolnshire has established close links with their local Wainfleet & District Branch of the RBL through their Year 6 class teacher Mrs T. Wood. As part of the schools' curriculum Year 5 pupils' have always covered the Second World War topic during their autumn term, developing their understanding of vital details on British history. Back in 2009, Mrs Wood contacted Wainfleet's local branch Chairman Mrs P. Nicholas with examples of poems written by her class during their Second World War topic. From this contact, the branch invited some of the pupils to read their poems at the Remembrance Service held in the local church.

Over the years this idea has progressed into a poetry competition for year 5 pupils, with the winning poem being read at the Remembrance Service. As well, the lucky pupil is presented with a lovely trophy presented by Mr Millard, the standard-bearer for the local branch. In recent years, the school has developed its own Remembrance area in the school grounds where the whole school, parents and members of the local British Legion hold a special Remembrance Service each year. Between 2009 and 2017 the school has raised the substantial amount of £1049 for the Poppy Appeal.

On March 16th 2018, Magdalen Primary School was delighted to celebrate becoming the first primary school in Lincolnshire to become affiliated to the RBL through the local Wainfleet & District Branch. A special service was held with pupils, teachers, parents and officials from the local Wainfleet & District branch along with the County Chairman Mr Goodwin and Vice-Chairman Mr Johnson to see Mr Smith (Headteacher) receive a special affiliation certificate from local Chairperson Mrs P. Nicholas. Year 6 pupils and staff received a special affiliated badge in honour of the special occasion. Mrs Wood (Year 6 teacher) said: ***"Each year the new Year 6 pupils will receive an affiliation badge as part of the school Remembrance Service in November."***

Headteacher Mr Smith said, ***"It is a proud day for us to be the first school in Lincolnshire to be affiliated to the Royal British Legion and we are looking forward to working with them in the future."*** These words were echoed by two school councillors: Lucy Robinson (aged 9) said, ***"We are doing this to help the soldiers and their families and make people think about the soldiers who died in the wars."*** Danial Wilkinson (9) told us, ***"It feels quite good to be affiliated to the RBL. We raise lots of money each year."***



## Doing more to remember

Exploring the beliefs and values of individuals and local groups will enable you to create events and activities that are embraced by your community.

There are many different types of events your branch can organise to run alongside traditional commemorative practices. You may feel inspired to introduce new activities like organising themed family days, devising poppy trails, producing creative writing programmes and planning unique Remembrance Gardens or spaces.

Our next resource pack will talk about what makes a good Remembrance event and will be released shortly. In the meantime, can you think of ways to encourage more people to get involved with Remembrance?

**Who do you know that may want to get involved with your branch activities but don't know how? And, if you follow the same programme each year, is there scope to build on what you do to reach more local people?**

