Welcome to the Seventh RAVC Newsletter – August 2026

Dear Friends,

This seventh RAVC Newsletter is for your information.

New Chief Veterinary and Remount Officer appointed. Colonel Mike Robinson L/RAVC assumed the appointment of CVRO and KHVS wef Friday 17th Jul 26. Please see attached Biography.

RAVC Corps Weekend Saturday 19th Sep 26. Defence Animal Training Regiment. Full Programme of Events for the Day is attached; please note serving personnel names have been omitted.

RAVC Ties and RAVC Stable Belts. Are now held by the DATR PRI and are priced at £11 and £37 respectively.

Please note the link to RAVC's Chiron Calling 2026 below:

https://fliphtml5.com/bookcase/jdtrj

RBL Cenotaph Parade

With only three people to date from the RAVC Veteran Community wishing to attend the Cenotaph Parade, if you wish to march please send me your First name (as in your Passport), your Last name (as in Passport), and your current valid email address to me at csmjham451@yahoo.co.uk by 20 Sep 26. I will then send an invite to those who have emailed me for each individual to apply themselves by 30 Sep 26. Please note there are only 15 places. If you apply you are expected to attend. Any questions please ask me on the above email.

"As this is a veterans' parade, currently serving personnel, including full-time and part-time reservists, are not permitted to take part."

Dear Christopher Ham,
Thank you for applying for tickets to participate in the Royal British Legion's March Past the Cenotaph which will be held on Sunday 8th November 2026. We are honoured that your association will be marching at the Parade this year.
As per previous years, the number of spaces on the veterans' parade will remain limited at 10,000 places. We therefore cannot guarantee that associations will receive the number of tickets they initially applied for, but we have matched requests where possible. We are pleased to have received a significant number of new association requests this year, and as a result, associations may not be receiving the same allocation they might have done in previous years. Thank you for your understanding and support.

We are pleased to offer Royal Army Veterinary Corps Association, **15** places at this year's Cenotaph Parade.

We kindly ask that associations register individuals who adequately reflect the depth and breadth

of the veteran community, **with particular priority being given to those who have not marched previously**. Regrettably, we are capped at 10,000 attendees due to the capacity of Horse Guards Parade.
The eligibility criteria are as follows:

Ex-service personnel from the UK and the Commonwealth who have served the Crown.

Retired emergency services personnel from the UK and Commonwealth who have served the Crown.

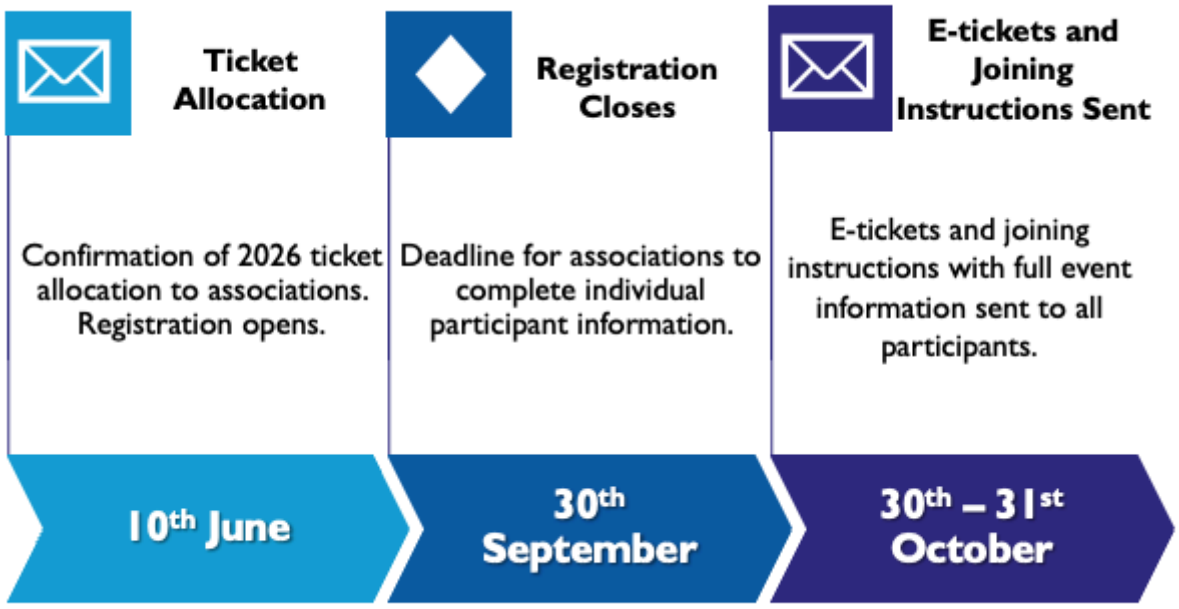
Partners or first-generation family members of those who served in His Majesty's Armed Forces and have died. This **only** includes the following:

Wives, husbands, partners or civil partners, Siblings, Parents and Children

Those marching on behalf of their organisations that have historically played a significant role in times of conflict, supporting the Armed Forces community or who are key organisations in Remembrance.

A carer of a veteran requiring wheelchair assistance.

As this is a veterans' parade, currently serving personnel, including full-time and part-time reservists, are are not permitted to take part. Civilians cannot take part unless they meet the eligibility criteria above.
As any carer accompanying a veteran will be included within the 10,000 attendance-cap; where appropriate, the option of one veteran assisting another for the duration of the dispersal should be considered.



Remembrance Sunday Timings

Event day timings will be communicated in the joining instructions sent out on 30th-31st October.

Due to security reasons, we are not able to share this information before this point.

Individual security checks will take place before entry to Horse Guards Parade. **Ticket holders must bring photographic ID to gain access.**

The Order of March is the order in which the columns march in the parade. All columns will rotate positions on a yearly basis, with the exception of the Youth and Remembrance Columns. The Youth column will continue to conclude the parade.

RAVC Charity 'Gift Aid' via HRMC has been approved as of 22 July 2026. Thus future gifts from UK tax payers will allow our Charity to reclaim an extra 25% in tax on every eligible donation made by that UK tax payer.

Honouring the Royal Army Veterinary Corps – A Memorial for the Future

The Royal Army Veterinary Corps (RAVC) has proudly served alongside our Armed Forces, supporting both personnel and Military Working Animals with unwavering dedication. To commemorate the service and sacrifice of our Corps personnel, we are planning a permanent Memorial at Kendrew Barracks, the home of 1 MWD Regiment from August 2026.

We invite **members of the public, veterans, and friends of the Corps** to play a part in this important tribute:

Share Your Ideas: If you have suggestions or designs for the Memorial, we would love to hear from you. Your input will help shape a fitting tribute. A Committee re the Memorial at Kendrew Barracks is being formed and your ideas will be well received.

Support through Donations: Contributions of any size are warmly welcomed. Your donations will help fund the creation and installation of this lasting tribute. Please do not remit any donations as yet, as it is important the Gift Aid Declaration Form must be completed in order to ensure the Charity can claim back an extra 25% if a UK tax payer. The Gift Aid Declaration Form along with our Charity's receiving bank details will be sent out in the next Newsletter. Please ensure you complete the Declaration form and send to RHQ.

It is heartening I have received several pledges of donations already, some are large, some are small, but no matter the size of the donation it is highly appreciated. Together, we can ensure that the dedication, courage, and service of the RAVC are remembered for generations to come. Join us in creating a legacy that honours those who have served.

RAVC Benevolence.

How to Access Benevolence If you are a serving member, veteran, or family member of the Corps and you need support, we want to make sure you know how to access it.

The most effective route to benevolence is through the Royal British Legion or SSAFA. Both organisations have experienced caseworkers who will assess your situation, put together a case on your behalf, and approach the RAVC Welfare and Benevolence Charity, and other military charities, for funding and support. This caseworker approach means your needs are properly understood and coordinated, rather than dealt with in isolation. We know this process is not always perfect. It can be

slow, it can feel impersonal, and sometimes people fall through the gaps. We are honest about this because we want to improve the system. If you know someone in the RAVC family who might be struggling, please share this post. Sometimes the right support starts with someone else making the connection.

Contact Details: Royal British Legion: 0808 802 8080 (free, confidential) rbl.org.uk SSAFA: 0800 260 6767 (free, confidential) ssafa.org.uk

The Establishment, Development and Deployment of the British Messenger Dog Service in the First World War

NAM Emma Worrall – The Presentation recorded on 18th Jun 26. You can watch the video at this Link



RBL Newsletter Is available to read at this link:

https://e-britishlegion.org.uk/cr/AQjrxgQQ3I62BxiTwbG1AjC9-9BCWhvpURXjRhpu9Re-UtDood6oO34G0H2EKYIbWXvrqi8

No 4 and No 6 Dress Uniform for Gifting

‘’I have a barely worn tropical service dress (No. 4). I believe Officers buy them with a grant, and they are not cheap, in which case someone may like a gift of mine. It would fit a male over 6 foot of medium build: 42L jacket, trousers about 33" waist and leg.

If I have misremembered and it's an issue item, I don't expect anyone would be interested. I also have a No. 6 uniform. That was issued but I always wished I'd had a spare. Anyone is welcome to that too’’. Please contact the under signed and I will put any interested reader in touch with the owner.

Thank you.
Chris Ham.
Lt Col (Retd) Chris Ham MBE - RAVC Regimental Secretary (Interim).

Future Diary Dates Upcoming Events 2026 - 2027

- Thu 1 Oct 2026 – The UK Service Dogs Conference and Awards
- Thu 5 Nov 2026 – St Margaret's Field Remembrance Service, London (nominated personnel only)
- Fri 6 Nov 2026 – Animals in War Memorial Service, Park Lane, London
- Sun 8 Nov 2026 – Remembrance Sunday Parades
- Sun 8 Nov 2026 – Cenotaph Parade (London) – Veterans only (12 RAVC places allocated). (Sadly very limited RAVC attendance during 2025, let's hope for 2026 there will be more of an uptake by our RAVC Veterans, calling requests have been sent out in the summer of 2026 for Sun 8 Nov 2026)
- Sun 8 Nov 2026 – Melton Mowbray Remembrance Parade
- Wed 11 Nov 2026 – RBL Act of Remembrance, Melton Mowbray
- NOTE MANY DATES FOR 2027 ARE TO BE CONFIRMED
- Fri 5 Mar 2027 – Chiron Calling Submission Deadline
- Sat 8 May 2027 TBC – Liam Tasker Memorial Rugby Match, Melton Mowbray TBC
- Fri 1 and Sat 2 May 2027 TBC – ADU NI Association Reunion at National Memorial Arboretum TBC
- Thu 27 May 2027 (TBC) – Founder's Day, Royal Hospital Chelsea TBC
- Sat 5 Jun 2027 (TBC) – The Gathering, Melton Mowbray (organised by Bill Jarvis) TBC
- Fri 18 Jun 2027 (TBC) – Annual RAVC Golf Reunion TBC
- Mon 21 Jun 2027 (TBC) – Fly the Flag Day, Melton Borough Council TBC
- Sat 19 Jun 2027 (TBC) – Armed Forces Day TBC
- Sun 4 July 2027 – RAVC Morning Service, Royal Hospital Chelsea
- Wed 21 July 2027 – Sandringham Flower Show TBC RAVC Association Members accompanied by Veteran MWDs required TBC
- Fri 23 Jul 2027 TBC – LCpl Ken Rowe's Family visit to NAM, Shropshire, wider attendance by serving and RAVC Veterans very welcomed by the Rowe Family TBC
- Thu 11 Nov 2027 TBC – RBL Act of Remembrance, Melton Mowbray TBC
- Thu 11 Nov 2027 TBC – St Margaret's Field Remembrance Service, London (nominated personnel only) TBC
- Fri 12 Nov 2027 TBC – Animals in War Memorial Service, Park Lane, London TBC

Armed Forces Pensions 'Advice of Payment' Notification

Around April and May 2026, those in receipt of an Armed Forces Pension should have received an 'Advice of Payment' letter from Equiniti (the people who pay Armed Forces Pensions on behalf of Veterans UK):

The letter notifies you of the new pension rate for the tax year (in this case 2026/27) which takes into account the CPI increase (based on the previous September's CPI rate announced in **October as 3.8%**)

The letter confirms:

Your current annual pension rate and the increase to be applied (in this year's case 3.8%)

Your new annual pension rate (effective from 6 April)

Details of payments for the next 12 months (gross and net)

Your Tax Code and PAYE reference

Your Pension Reference

The bank account your pension is being paid into

The envelope also contains your P60 End of Year Certificate for the previous tax year, for individual action if you must fill in a tax return. The P60 includes:

Your National Insurance Number

A telephone number for HMRC

Prior to 2025 you would have seen confirmation of the % of Lifetime Tax Allowance (LTA) used. As LTA has been abolished, this was replaced for the first time in 2025 and for subsequent P60's *by 'The Lump Sum and Death Benefit Allowance Used as at the end of the Tax year'.*

For those who crystallised or took their pension from 6 April 2006 to 6 April 2024 only: This will be the amount of LSA usage calculated using the Standard Transitional Calculation method and this method has been automatically applied.

If the member has applied, or will apply, in the future, for a Transitional Tax-Free Allowance Certificate (TTFAC) then, we understand, that figure should be displayed on the P60. The TTFAC should be considered the authoritative document. (A TTFAC may allow you to take more tax-free lump sum that would otherwise be the case if you relied on the standard transitional calculation method. The difference with a TTFAC is that it records the amount of actual tax-free lump sum taken rather than calculating it as 25% of the value of the total pension benefits.

For those taking benefits from 6 April 2024 onwards and who have not previously taken any pension benefit: It will show the actual pension lump sum taken.

Finally, on the back of the letter you will find an instruction to inform Equiniti of any change of name, address, bank or building society details.

This is a useful reminder to all to take the necessary action to inform them should your

circumstances change. If you don't, it could result in the temporary suspension of your pension payments. So, if you need to inform them of any changes or you have not received such a letter, Equiniti can be contacted at:

Equiniti
PO Box 2153
City Square
40 Tithebarn Street
Liverpool L2 2YB Tel: 0345 121 2514

UK Veterans Strategy

The UK's Veterans Strategy was published on 10 November 2025. The new strategy outlines a framework to "celebrate, support and empower" the nation's nearly two million Veterans. It is structured round three themes: Celebrate, Contribute and Support. Each is designed to achieve specific outcomes for Veterans and the UK.

The government recognises it has a moral duty to provide tailored support to Veterans and their families. The strategy's **VALOUR** programme is a £50 million initiative to transform Veteran support services:

VALOUR support centres will give Veterans access to services including housing, employment and healthcare, while collecting data to improve service delivery.

Locally based VALOUR field officers will coordinate support efforts across government, public services and the third sector.

VALOUR HQ, located within the Office for Veterans' Affairs at the MOD, will oversee the programme, ensuring services are designed to meet local needs and providing training and assurance across the VALOUR network.

Other initiatives under the Support theme include specialised care programmes such as **Op COURAGE** for mental health, **Op RESTORE** for physical health,

Op FORTITUDE for Veterans experiencing homelessness and **Op NOVA** for those who are in the justice system. The government also aims to improve financial security for Veterans through better access to pensions and compensation schemes and to provide targeted support for Veterans' families.

Delivery timeline

The strategy outlines a long-term framework, with initial actions planned for the first two years **(2025 to 2027)** and a comprehensive review after five years. The government says the strategy "will be for devolved governments to design, deliver and articulate in the form of their own strategy action plans". Some initiatives will only apply in England.

Launch of the VALOUR programme, including establishing support centres, field officers and VALOUR HQ (May 2025).

Delivery of the digital Veteran Card to simplify access to services and recognition.

Opening of the Catterick Integrated Care Centre (CCIC), a £110 million facility for Veterans' health and wellbeing (summer 2026). There is an article further on in this newsletter concerning the CCIC.

Development of employment pathways in the clean energy sector in a 12-monthpilot programme led by Mission Renewable.

Launch of Female Veterans Transformation Programme (2025) and Women Veterans' Forum (2026) Implementation of NHS national training and education programme to improve healthcare for Veterans and their families (2026).

Veterans' survey to establish baseline measures (2026).

Expansion of the VALOUR programme to include more support centres and Field Officers.

Introduction of Defence Skills Passport to facilitate the transfer of military qualifications to civilian employment.

Formalisation of cross-government approach to Veteran employment through quarterly taskforce meetings involving the MOD, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Business and Trade, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero "and others".

Development of metrics to monitor the impact of the strategy, including a recurring national survey of Veterans and analysis of public perceptions (2026).

Launch of an online performance platform to publish data on the strategy's progress (2026). After five years:

Comprehensive review of the strategy's impact, including an evaluation of outcomes and recommendations for further improvements.

Continued collaboration with devolved governments, charities and civic society to refine and expand support for Veterans.

And what about military pensions?

Stated objectives include measures to ensure that Veterans achieve and sustain financial security, including raising awareness about their financial entitlements such as pensions and compensation. The strategy includes an objective to ensure that Veterans receive the pensions to which they are entitled, including training during Service and transition to encourage long-term financial planning.

Additionally, the government says it will work with partners to analyse and address unclaimed pensions under the War Pensions and Armed Forces Pension Schemes.

The strategy also emphasises the need for further work to establish baseline measures for the percentage of Veterans claiming and receiving pensions to which they are entitled, with new analysis and research planned for 2026.

Conclusion

The Prime Minister has stated: "Our country's near two million Veterans are a national asset, and we are determined to celebrate not only their Service, but also the role they can play in building our nation's future." He has also undertaken to "renew our nation's contract with those who serve and have served".

Why changing the name of the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) is causing controversy

The National Memorial Arboretum, one of the main focal points for remembrance in the UK, announced last month it would have a different name from September - and that decision has caused controversy

The site in Alrewas, Staffordshire, home to more than 400 memorials, will be known instead as the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens.

The arboretum said the move came as part of the site's full integration with the Royal British Legion (RBL), its parent charity since 2003.

However, thousands have signed a petition opposing the change.

Why is the name changing?

Officials said the RBL National Remembrance Gardens name reflected the site's "evolution" over the past 25 years and marked the merging of the site with its parent charity.

"The new name better reflects what the site has become and its role at the centre of the RBL's national remembrance activity, while remaining rooted in the same founding principles and visitor experience," an RBL spokesperson said.

The change would simplify the running of the site, they added, with only one board of trustees across both organisations, cutting administrative duplication, lowering costs and allowing for "greater agility in decision making".

The move also meant more funds could be invested into the site and opened up further fundraising opportunities, they added. "This move also unlocks the ability for further investment in the thriving events and learning programmes," the spokesperson said, "ensuring more people of all backgrounds and communities have access to and can participate in remembrance."

What has the arboretum's founder said?

Commander David Childs, who founded the arboretum, said he supported the changes, including with the name.

He said his original ambition was to create a "living place of remembrance rooted in trees", which offered a "dedicated space" to reflect on service and sacrifice.

"Over time, that vision has grown organically, shaped by those who cared for it and by the many communities who found meaning here," he added.

Childs said the RBL had provided the "care stewardship and investment" needed to help the site "flourish and truly become the nation's year-round place to remember". Mark Atkinson, director general of the RBL, said the arboretum was a "remarkable place" and "held a special place" within the charity.

While Phillipa Rawlinson, director of the arboretum and of remembrance at the RBL, praised the site's team and the wider community who "deeply care" about preserving the stories behind the memorials. She said the merger gave them the "strongest possible foundation for the future" and the site would continue to operate as normal.

Why are some against the name change?

More than 7,000 people have signed a change.org petition calling for the RBL and arboretum to "preserve the name" of the site. Those behind it claim any change to the name would undermine its heritage along with the "deep emotional connections many have with it".

If Branch members feel the name change is controversial then please feel sign a change.org

Online petition to preserve and retain the current name of the NMA.

Volunteer Opportunity: Become a Poppy Appeal Organiser



The Royal British Legion is looking for dedicated volunteers to help lead this year's Poppy Appeal across the UK. Poppy Appeal Organisers are at the heart of local fundraising—bringing communities together to honour and support our Armed Forces community.

If you're organised, community-minded, and passionate about making a real difference, this is a brilliant opportunity to get involved.