

THE ROYAL BRITISH  
**LEGION**



# The Legion in 2011



**Shoulder to shoulder  
with all who Serve**

**This year is the 90th  
anniversary of the Legion**

**Read on to find out how we  
continue to adapt our support  
services and help those in need  
in the Armed Forces family**

# 90 years' service

## Shoulder to shoulder with all who Serve

The Royal British Legion has been helping Service people past and present for 90 years, and although their needs have changed over that time the need for our work is as vital as ever. Thousands of our current beneficiaries are from recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we're there to help them re-build their lives when they return.

The Legion is committed to the welfare, interests and memory of the Service family – those who we feel have made a unique commitment to their country and deserve to be rewarded for that with long-term care.

The Legion provides support services, campaigns on a range of issues affecting Service people, is custodian of Remembrance, runs the annual Poppy Appeal and is one of the UK's largest membership organisations.

First and foremost, the Legion is about people. Over the next few pages, read how the Legion has helped real people whose lives have been affected by conflict, and find out how you can play an important part in the crucial work we do.

As you will see the Legion is not just about poppies in November, but caring for people all year round.



Please contact us:  
Legionline: 08457 725 725  
[www.britishlegion.org.uk/can-we-help](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/can-we-help)

# New horizons

To adapt to the current needs of serving and ex-Service people and their families, the Legion has introduced two new services aimed at making their lives easier. The ***Inquest Advice Service*** and the ***Be the Boss*** scheme appeal to two very different needs, but both offer vital support at an uncertain time for Service people and their families.



## James Harrison

Former Leading Hand James Harrison, 36, has received £5,000 from The Royal British Legion's *Be the Boss* scheme to set up his own small business in his hometown of Darwen, Lancashire.

James, who served in the Royal Navy's Submarine service for 15 years and was deployed to Iraq in 2003, has already opened his traditional barber's shop, which provides gentlemen's haircuts and cut throat shaves. The Legion >

scheme is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and helps recent Service leavers set up their own business. It is also providing a mentor to help James through his first year in business.

James is one of 400 people to receive help from *Be the Boss*. The Legion also provides grants for beneficiaries who want to improve their skills but who aren't able to access state funding.

'Without the help of the Legion my barber's shop wouldn't have happened. Their support, both financial and practical, has been invaluable', says James Harrison.

Helping those leaving the Forces with employment or training is a crucial part of our support services. The Armed Forces is a way of life, and many people need guidance when they leave that behind. Last year we provided a total of £350,000 to fund vocational training, helping 120 unemployed veterans to improve their vocational skills and to gain employment. We also grew the number of active registered users on our *Civvy Street* resettlement website to 6,300.



## Emma-Jayne Webster

Emma-Jayne Webster lost her fiancé, L Cpl Richard James Brandon of the Corps of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, in September 2009 when he was tragically killed in a bomb blast in Afghanistan. Emma had spoken with him just six hours earlier.

In the months following Richard's death, the Legion provided emotional support and financial advice to Emma and her young family.



## People like you?

Each year the annual Poppy Appeal raises millions to help support people like James and Emma-Jayne – Service people and their families. For more real life stories and information about our support services, visit the Legion's website:

[www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)

“My mind was all over the place after losing Richard and the Legion helped me to cover all the bases,” says Emma, “I have been given a lot of advice by the Legion and it has helped me access the support I am entitled to. I tell lots of people to go to the Legion for help because of my positive experience.”

Early in 2010 we spoke out about the need for further support for families of those who have died while serving in the Armed Forces. In July, we launched our

Independent Inquest Advice Service to help bereaved Armed Forces families through the inquest process.

The service provides free, independent and expert advice and assistance, from professionally qualified lawyers, during what can be a painful and frustrating process.

The service is part-funded by the MoD. Many families going through the gruelling inquest process have received help at a difficult time.

# He's got the Power

Sean Power is a reservist with the Royal Marines, who served with 40 Commando for five and a half years. In November 2009, his first collection of photographs went on display in a London gallery, with all proceeds going to the Poppy Appeal. Since then he has been helping the Legion out with various photography assignments.

Sean's first taste of photo-journalism was meeting Times war journalist Anthony Loyd, while stationed in Afghanistan. Inspired by Loyd, and aware of the power of photographs to communicate the realities of modern combat, Sean handed in his notice and enrolled at the London College of Communication.

Although Sean has a natural talent for photography, he admits that, had it not been for The Royal British Legion, his new career may have been over before he'd got started. In December 2007 –



just three months after he began his course – Sean's home was burgled. Thieves got away with £5,000 worth of photography equipment, which Sean had used his life savings to purchase.

When he approached the Legion for help to replace what he'd lost, he wasn't expecting more than 'a couple of quid'. His expectations were exceeded, however; not only did he receive enough to buy all the equipment he needed, the Legion gave him his first big commission, offering him the chance to photograph troops on the front line in Afghanistan.



“I had lunch with the Legion’s head of PR in the summer, and showed him my portfolio. He mentioned the possibility of getting me embedded with the troops for a couple of weeks, but I thought it was an off-the-cuff remark. Then I heard that it was going ahead. It was the biggest opportunity I could imagine.”

Sean has seen front-line service plenty of times as a full-time Marine, completing tours of Iraq, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, but this was the first time he’d experienced a conflict zone as a civilian. Looking back, he feels that his military background gave him a unique advantage. “The soldiers I was with didn’t have to worry about me because I knew the drills and I could just crack on with it. I was, near enough, one of them.”

The results of Sean’s time spent in Afghanistan went on display at Gallery 27 in Mayfair. For the collection, he selected images that portray a different impression of front-line life than had been captured by photo-journalists in the past. He explains: “The photos you see in the papers are nearly all conflict and fighting, and when you do see images of soldiers when they’re not engaged in fighting, it’s normally just after a battle, so he’s tired and looking haggard. It gives this impression that you’re either fighting or you’re miserable, which I never found was the case.”

Sean says: “What the Legion did for me when I needed help was brilliant and it’s great to be able to give something back.”

# Time to do your bit

As the guardian of the Military Covenant, the Legion took full advantage of the General Election in 2010 to launch its own manifesto to raise awareness of the breadth of need in the Armed Forces family, especially amongst young Service personnel, bereaved Armed Forces families and veterans.

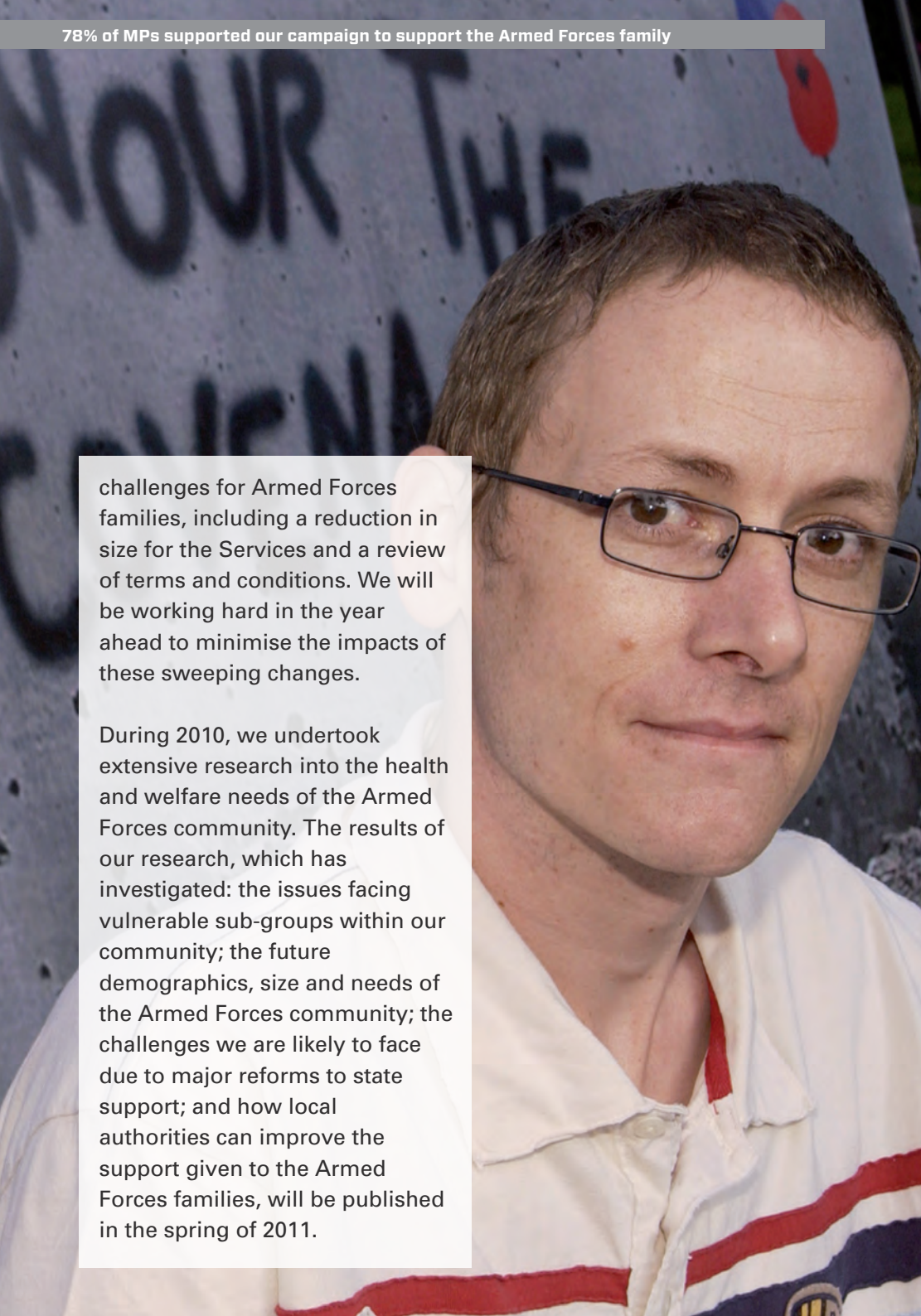
We also launched a parliamentary pledge campaign, *Time to do your bit*, to build tangible support among Potential Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs), MPs and the parliamentary parties for political measures to improve the welfare of the Armed Forces family. We held receptions and photocalls, advertised and conducted face-to-face lobbying. We asked the party leaders to pledge and set an example – they all did. Our online campaign on Facebook and Twitter invited constituents to mail their local MP. In just two days we achieved 2.2 million ‘impressions’, 6,898 ‘likes’ and 278 comments and had ensured that every MP was emailed.

As a result, 1,022 PPCs pledged, and a staggering 453 MPs had pledged in the new Parliament. *Time to do your bit* was the most

recognised and most supported campaign in Parliament, with 78% of MPs saying they support it and 92% rating the Legion as the most effective campaigning charity.

Since the election we have led a campaign to remove the Chief Coroner from the list of bodies to be abolished in the Public Bodies Bill. We mobilised our parliamentary supporters through traditional briefings, face-to-face meetings, a briefing event and press engagement, all under the banner of the *Time to do your bit* campaign. The Government suffered its biggest defeat in the Lords (since the election), when an amendment to the Bill to retain the Chief Coroner was passed with a majority of 112.

The Strategic Defence and Security Review contained some



challenges for Armed Forces families, including a reduction in size for the Services and a review of terms and conditions. We will be working hard in the year ahead to minimise the impacts of these sweeping changes.

During 2010, we undertook extensive research into the health and welfare needs of the Armed Forces community. The results of our research, which has investigated: the issues facing vulnerable sub-groups within our community; the future demographics, size and needs of the Armed Forces community; the challenges we are likely to face due to major reforms to state support; and how local authorities can improve the support given to the Armed Forces families, will be published in the spring of 2011.

# Giving back



Paul McClintock often has a smile on his face, despite the health issues he still faces as a result of his Army service. He was discharged in 2000 with a serious back injury that has left him needing to use a wheelchair.

But the financial and emotional support offered by the Legion has helped Paul enormously, and in return, he has helped raise thousands of pounds for the Legion, helped launch the campaign for politicians to *Honour the Covenant* and now works as a volunteer Caseworker for the Legion.

Paul visits people who ask for help from the Legion, and helps

assess how the Legion can assist them. Volunteer caseworkers, visitors and poppy collectors are the face of the Legion, helping deliver support services, and raise funds to support people like Paul.

As a Legion member, Carol Bratty knew first hand the crucial role played by volunteers. She signed up to be a visitor eight years ago and hasn't looked back: "It's a

very rewarding job. I get a tremendous amount of satisfaction from seeing the difference a couple of hours of my time has made to older veterans and the younger generation of Service leavers returning to civvy street with little idea of where their life is heading.”

Carol gives up much of her free time to visit those in need of support. This kind of selflessness is what makes volunteering so rewarding.

As an economist working for a law firm in London, 27 year-old James Lambert does not have much free time, but each year he and many other city workers take time out of their busy work schedules to collect for the Poppy Appeal.

“I enjoy meeting members of the public and discussing the important work of the Legion. Last Poppy Appeal I raised over £2,000, double last year; which is testament to the growing support for the Legion.”

James also helps to recruit other collectors and in 2009 fifteen law firms signed up, raising a massive £30,000.

Paul, Carol and James are very different people, but each gets something uniquely rewarding from their volunteer work. For James it’s spreading a message, for Carol it’s making a difference, and for Paul it’s a way to say thank you: “The Legion has been there for me when I’ve needed the help, and I wanted to give something back.”



## Do you want to give something back?

If you have the special qualities it takes to be a volunteer, why not contact the Legion today? We need volunteers all year round, not just for Poppy Appeal. Your support and understanding could change someone’s life. Call us today!

**Legionline: 08457 725 725**

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