

# MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL EAST REGION REPRESENTATIVE



“Chimneys”

Old Cromer Road

High Kelling

HOLT

Norfolk NR25 6AJ

Telephone: 01263 715818 (direct - office)

01263 711582 (direct - home)

Email: [ckemp@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:ckemp@britishlegion.org.uk)

*By e-mail*

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Head of Membership

Copy to: Chairman Membership Council

Director Finance

Director Welfare

MP - Head of Membership Planning and Co-ordination

Regional Manager East

## **INCIDENTS OF CASH BEING OBTAINED THROUGH LEGION SOURCES BY DECEPTION**

On behalf of myself and Kate Williams with whom I have discussed this matter, I wish to draw attention to a spate of deception cases in and around this Region where Legion Funds have been sought by, and in some cases given out to, unscrupulous individuals in dubious circumstances.

Though not novel, during the past fortnight, there have been many attempts to obtain money by deception from Legion members over a wide area, including one notorious individual. Avon and Somerset Police have issued a “Wanted” notice for this person who is now operating here in the East of England, where there have been cases reported in Nottinghamshire, Essex and Norfolk.

Certainly, Branches are vulnerable especially due to the insignificant sums sought, which may well have been handed over in good faith, no doubt in some cases as a refund from the County should be forthcoming, given the alleged circumstances of the individual.

Whilst County Staff throughout this region and beyond have alerted Branches to the scams perpetrated, it may be prudent to remind all Branches that members need to be aware of the welfare procedures for cases where individuals seek urgent financial support to get out of a difficulty. Also, it seems necessary to reiterate that the Royal British Legion is not an emergency service, and reassure both Branches and Clubs that there is help available for anyone in dire need from statutory authorities, such as the local Police or Adult Social Services (0344 8008014), who have the facility to arrange rail warrants or deposit of funds from next of kin.

Recent Cases: In the past week there have been reports of a man by the name of David Thomson scamming RBL outlets in different counties. A resume of these incidents is attached as Enclosure 1. For completeness, the Avon and Somerset Police “Wanted” notice is at Enclosure 2.

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It is likely that these incidents are only examples of the overall range of unsavoury incidents across the country, so the true sums "lost" may never come to light. Clearly, over the years, the devious, less scrupulous members of society have been known to take advantage of our advertised benevolence, and probably due to naivety, there have been many instances where Members have given Legion Funds or even their own money, which of course is not the way we should be operating and it seems lessons learned have not been passed on to fellow members

It follows that Branches and Clubs need to be very cautious about giving funds to support individuals in such spurious circumstances. In the last 2 weeks, within this Region and in neighbouring Counties, County Managers, County Secretaries and our Regional Manager (Kate Williams) have flagged up this trend on several occasions, but it appears more reports are coming out of the woodwork, so this may indicate that the scam has taken place many more times in recent weeks than has been reported.

We recommend strongly the release of a general policy reminder, drawing attention to the need for a Form A in all cases in an attempt to guard the Legion coffers around the country, not least because these deceptions are taking place in a wider area, week on week, and are probably not confined to one Region.

**Kind Regards**

*Colin Kemp*

CS KEMP

Eastern Region Representative  
Membership Council

# MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL EAST REGION REPRESENTATIVE

ENCLOSURE 1

TO MC REP EAST LETTER

DATED 24 JANUARY 2012

## INCIDENTS OF CASH BEING OBTAINED THROUGH LEGION SOURCES BY DECEPTION

1. **Rayleigh – Essex.** Lynnette Francis reported on 13 January 2012 that there had been an incident in the previous week involving the total of £ 400 and a David Thomson was involved. (The local Police and both Branches and Clubs within Essex had been informed).
2. **Peterborough – Cambridgeshire.** On 13 Jan 2012, Alan Levy reported that the same person who had been scamming RBL Branches/Clubs was in Peterborough, and acting under the name of David Thomson.

On this occasion, his MO was to approach RBL Branches/Clubs stating that he is serving in Northern Ireland and had been discharged from Hospital and as his Rail Warrant was faulty, he required assistance to get a flight back to NI.

Alan Levy reported that this man had attempted the same in Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire during the last 6 months.

3. **Balderton Branch - Nottingham.** On 13 January 2012, Paul Mulingani reported that Balderton Branch had been approached on Thursday 12 January and scammed (£40) by said person, David Thomson, using same name story and destination.

Due to the time of the call (2000hrs) the matter was reported to the police and an officer with them to meet the person in need him off the train. Although he seemed very flustered at the presence of the Police officer he held his nerve and story, convincing the Branch members of his need.

4. **Yarmouth – Norfolk.** Something similar occurred in Great Yarmouth last week, however this gentleman used the name **Stephen Young** date of birth 29/08/59.

After obtaining details of the local branch officer, this gentleman was directed to a local RBL/SSAFA caseworker and that evening turned up at his home address!

The said Stephen Young was very plausible and provided details of his service. He stated he had served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Gordon Highlanders, service number 24411154, and had that day been discharged from hospital, had managed to find accommodation at a local hotel, but didn't have any money. He gave his home address as Glasgow.

The next day the caseworker received two phone calls from two different 'Officers' purporting to be from the Gordon Highlanders confirming the need for more assistance that Mr Young needed to get home to Scotland and the offender returned to the caseworkers address and was, unfortunately, given money from the caseworker.

On investigation in daylight hours, it was established that Army Records have a Stephen Young with that date of birth, but he served in the Royal Irish and was dismissed as undesirable.

# MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL EAST REGION REPRESENTATIVE

ENCLOSURE 2

TO MC REP EAST LETTER

DATED 24 JANUARY 2012



## AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

**Police wish to speak to a male shown in the photo below in connection with a series of fraud offences.**

**Have you seen this male?**



**This male may attend local churches and try to identify potential parish members who he can contact and request money from.**

If you have any information about this male,  
please contact 999