

EMBARGOED – 00.01hrs Wednesday 3rd January 2018

THE LEGION INVITES THE NATION TO SAY ‘THANK YOU’

- **The Legion is launching a movement to say ‘Thank You’ to a generation who shaped our society**
- **Activity to take place in the last 100 days from 8th August to 11th November**

To mark the final year of the World War One centenary, The Royal British Legion is inviting the public to take part in a movement to say ‘Thank You’ to the First World War generation who served, sacrificed and changed our world.

The charity is calling on the nation to remember not only the 1.2 million British and Commonwealth Armed Forces who lost their lives, but also those - military and civilian - who played their part on the home front and those who returned to build a better life for the benefit of generations to come.

During the last 100 days of the centenary from 8th of August to 11th of November, the Legion is inviting the British public from all cultures and faiths, community groups, schools, companies and sports clubs to join the movement to express their gratitude to those who gave themselves to the war and its aftermath, and rebuilt a better nation from its darkest hour.

The Legion’s Director General, Charles Byrne, said: “The end of the First World War centenary is a chance for each of us to say thank you in our own ways and in our own words not only to those who gave their lives, but those who returned, those who worked in the factories and on the land, and those who pioneered advances in medicine, technology and the arts in response to the experience of the war.

“Whilst the 100th anniversary of the armistice that ended the fighting 100 years ago marks a poignant time of reflection, it is also a time to look forward to the future with the promise to make it a better place. Everyone living in Britain today has a reason to say ‘Thank You’ to this special generation.”

The Legion is asking the nation to plan their ‘Thank You’ activity to take place from the 8th of August onwards, while the first day of daylight savings – itself an outcome of the First World War – will be a focus for ‘Thank You’ activity on Sunday October 28th.

For updates on the ‘Thank You’ movement, please visit rbl.org.uk/thankyou

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Notes to editors:

For media enquiries please contact Alex Kent, Press Officer on 0203 053 7316 / akent@britishlegion.org.uk or Clio Mackay, Press Officer on 0203 3207 2237 / cmackay@britishlegion.org.uk

'Thank You'

- A video about 'Thank You' can be downloaded here: <https://we.tl/BetB9t9Qm1>

The video is also available on our YouTube channel here: <https://youtu.be/7nuoPt6-9Ps>

- 11am on November 11th 2018 will mark 100 years since the guns fell silent on the first Armistice Day. Key activity for the Legion-led 'Thank You' movement will take place in the last 100 days from 8th August to 11th November.

- The act of saying 'Thank You' is personal to every individual, therefore to encourage the greatest involvement the Legion will suggest a variety of ways of participating in 'Thank You' activity and will provide ideas and share people's planned activity throughout the year.

- In 2018, the Legion will ask the general public to use their extra hour from daylight saving time to say 'Thank You'. Daylight saving time was introduced by Germany and then the UK during 1916 to minimise artificial lighting and save fuel for the war effort, so it feels particularly relevant for the 'Thank You' movement.

- Legacies born out of the First World War include:

- The greater role of women in the workforce and public life which contributed to the first women gaining the right to vote in 1918
- Men without property were also given the right to vote in the same year
- Advancements in medicine such as blood banks, x-rays and reconstructive surgery
- Development of everyday products such as the wrist watch, the trench coat, or the humble teabag
- Inspiration for arts and letters which gave us the great war poets and compositions by Elgar, Vaughan Williams, and Holst - even JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy was inspired by his service on the Somme
- The birth of the poppy as a symbol of sacrifice and of hope – it was the subject of John McCrae's poem *In Flanders Fields*, written following the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915

- The Legion was founded in the aftermath of the First World War and provided a powerful national voice with a local footprint of social clubs and branches. It campaigned for jobs and housing, provided benefit to disabled veterans, widows, and fatherless children, and led the nation in organising Remembrance, as it still does today.

The Royal British Legion's work is encapsulated in its motto: *Live On – to the memory of the fallen and the future of the living*. The Legion is the nation's biggest Armed Forces charity providing care and support to all members of the British Armed Forces past and present and their families. It is the national custodian of Remembrance and safeguards the Military Covenant between the nation and its Armed Forces. It is well known for the annual Poppy Appeal, and its emblem the red poppy.

www.britishlegion.org.uk