



JIM MCGOVERN

The marathon runner

AIRBORNE SIGNALS 16TH PARACHUTE BRIGADE

Six hours in, and the bashing of black boots against the concrete was taking its toll. But the softly-spoken Scot would never give up. After all, such tenacity was about to raise almost £10,000

No sooner had he become a Legion member than Chelsea Pensioner Jim McGovern was asked to go the extra 26 miles to raise some cash.



Rita Orange, a Legion County Standard Bearer who works at the Royal Hospital, approached Jim with the challenge of completing the London Marathon.

He was 68 years old at the time, but with 34 years of Army service behind him, he was ready to tackle this arduous challenge in style.

On 13 April 2003, Jim marched the Marathon in his 'scarlets' and a pair of black boots. "I couldn't wear the running shoes with my uniform," he explains. "I also had to march as my knees wouldn't stand up to running now."

Jim completed the course in six-and-a-half hours and his eye-catching efforts raised an astonishing £9,600, with cheques arriving from as far away as Sierra Leone and Canada. He gave £1,000 to the Legion while the rest went to the Royal Hospital.

Now 70, Jim remains a Legion member and is part of one of just six National Branches, belonging to the Weston-on-the-Green Branch for former members of the Airborne Signals. He will soon receive the PJM medal for his efforts with the 2nd Battalion Parachute Regiment in 1965-66 in Malaysia.

Jim retired at 60, moved into the Royal Hospital in 2001 and considers it his home. "I had no problems at all fitting in here. I felt a little self-conscious initially with all the attention that you receive as a Chelsea Pensioner, but you soon get used to people taking photographs."