

Issue 20 June 2011



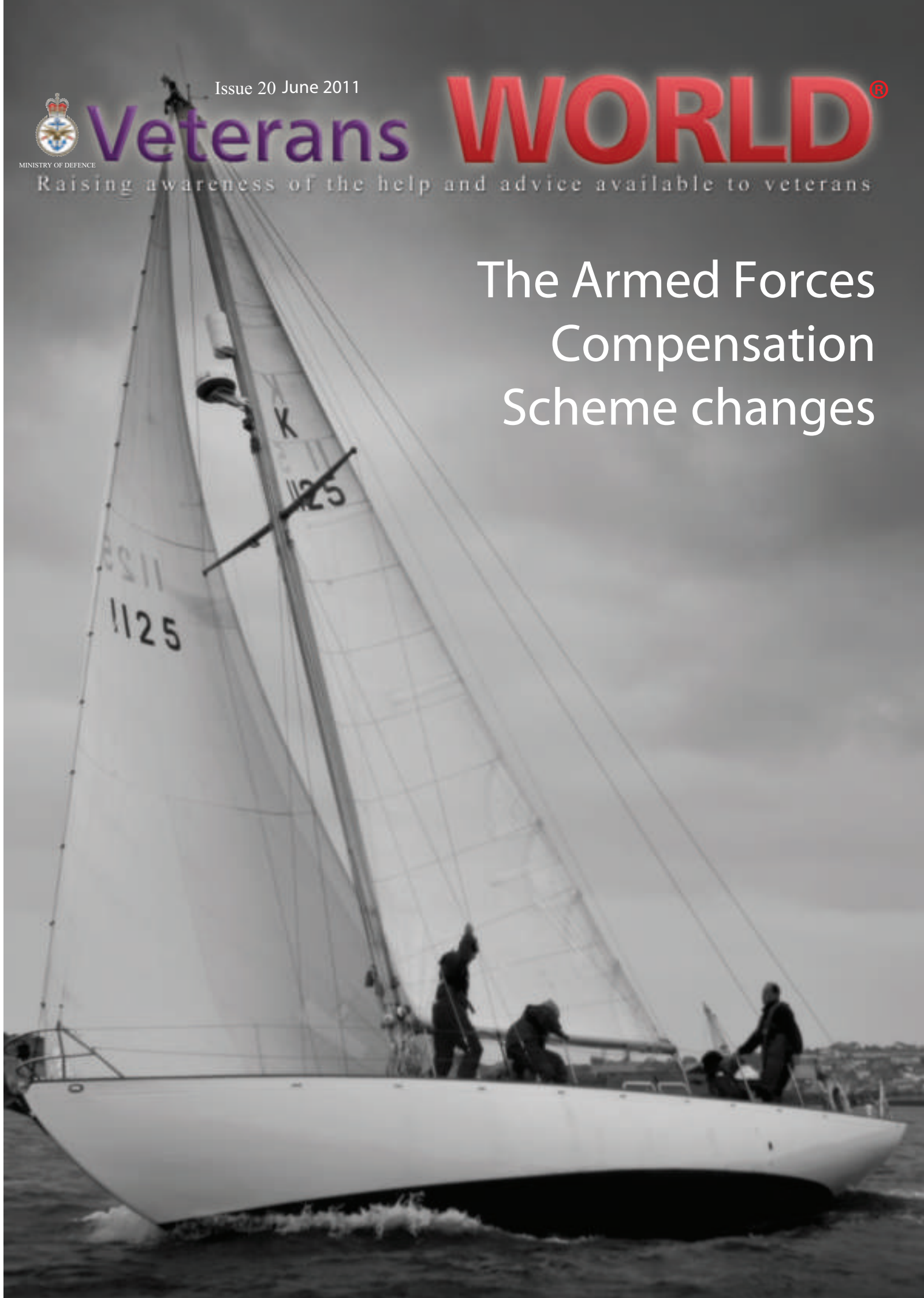
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Veterans

WORLD[®]

Raising awareness of the help and advice available to veterans

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme changes



Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Injured due to service on or after 6 April 2005?
You may be entitled to compensation from the
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

Are you eligible?

Call the free Helpline to find out more.

0800 169 2277 (UK only)

+44 1253 866 043 (overseas)

www.mod.uk/afcs

www.veterans-uk.info



Veterans **WORLD**[®]

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The content of *Veterans WORLD* is provided to raise awareness of help, advice and support available to the veterans community. Publication of articles on services provided or developments affecting the veterans community does not mean that they are endorsed by *Veterans WORLD* or the Ministry of Defence.

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Contributions are most welcome.
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News in brief

Share military history

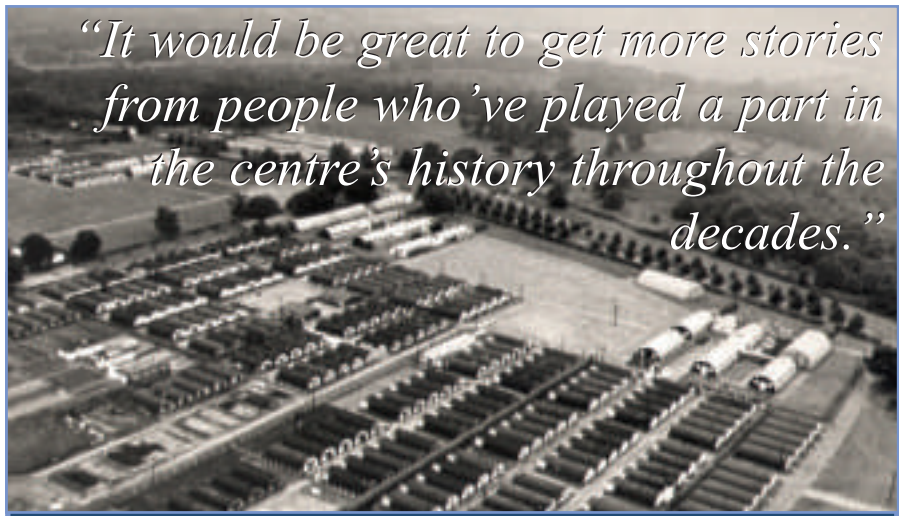
Veterans asked to share memories of the Military Detention Centre in Colchester

Carole McEntee-Taylor is writing a book on the history of Military detention in Colchester focusing on the Centre today and how it has changed since 1947 and needs contributions about time spent there. Carole, who works at the Centre, explained:

"Whether you were a member of staff, a detainee, a visitor or a member of the Armed Forces who escorted someone to the Centre, we'd like to hear your story. However small or irrelevant you think your memory might be, please share your memory and contribute to the history of the centre.

"I've received a great response from staff who worked here in the 1950's, many of whom are now in their 90s. It would be great to get more stories from people who've played a part in the centre's history throughout the decades."

Editor's Note: This is one of the current appeals SPVA have published on the Veterans Community Section of their website – www.veterans-uk.info If you have information that would be of



Aerial view of the centre prior to 1988

"It would be great to get more stories from people who've played a part in the centre's history throughout the decades."

interest to the veterans community, then email details to SPVA-VETERANS-UK@mod.uk and add the address to your press release distribution.



Service Personnel & Veterans Agency

Contacts

To record your memories, email Carole on saahera@tiscali.co.uk or call Pat on 07738 172289. All information will be treated in confidence, details can be kept anonymous.

New scholarships for further education across the UK

Bereaved Service children given head start



A geography lesson at Duke of York's Royal Military School

Veterans WORLD provides an update on the Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme launched in April.

THE scheme delivers the Coalition Government's undertaking to provide university and further education scholarships for the children of Service personnel who have been killed on active duty since 1990.

It's open to all bereaved children whose parent's death was attributable to their service in the UK armed forces. The

scholarships are intended to be a contribution towards the costs of staying in school and of attending university.

Scholarship amounts may vary for each of the countries in the UK, because of the differences in the way that education is funded across the Devolved Administrations. The intention is to provide the equivalent level of support regardless of which home country a family resides in or where a child chooses to study. For the purposes of the Scheme, bereaved children from overseas

will be treated as though they are resident in England.

At the time of going to press, the size of the university scholarships for those in Wales has yet to be agreed. For the 2010 - 11 academic year, the scholarships for a child resident in England are £1,500 per year for further education and £8,240 per year while on a first undergraduate degree course at a UK university. This is likely to rise for academic year 2011 - 12 in line with the increases in tuition fees, when these have been decided.

HM Revenue and Customs have agreed that these scholarships will be free of Income Tax and National Insurance.

Contacts

Information with details of eligibility and how to apply, which goes by the catchy title of 2011DIN01-110, can be found on the MOD website at: <http://bit.ly/scholarshipscheme>

The application form is also available at this address.

Editor's Note: News in Brief continues in page 25

Veterans' mental health helpline launched

Round the clock telephone support for veterans with mental health problems is now being provided following the launch, in March, of the Combat Stress Support Helpline, delivered by Rethink Mental Illness and funded by the Department of Health.

AVAILABLE 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 0800 138 1619, the helpline allows veterans and their families to access expert advice from people trained and experienced in dealing with ex-Service personnel and their mental health needs.

The Department of Health is giving £200,000 to fund the running of a one-year pilot of the helpline, which will provide:

- round-the-clock support for veterans;
- advice on ways to access mental health support across various formats, including advice via telephone, text, email and websites;
- support to veterans' families, whose lives can be affected as a result of mental health problems, with improved support to help them to access mental health services in their local area; and
- assistance in accessing further advice on other social problems affecting veterans, including housing and employment advice.

Health Minister Simon Burns said:

"We are giving £200,000 to provide veterans and their families with a service that will help and support them whenever and wherever they need it. This is part of our commitment to deliver the best possible health outcomes to veterans.

"This is also a great example of how the expertise of charities can be used to foster a stronger and healthier society."



Round the clock telephone support for veterans with mental health problems

"We are working with Combat Stress to deliver to veterans and their families free and impartial advice. The helpline, delivered by Rethink, will provide mental health support to help veterans and their families deal with issues that can seriously blight so much of their lives. This is also a great example of how the expertise of charities can be used to foster a stronger and healthier society."

Andrew Robathan, the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, said:

"The mental health of our personnel and veterans is a top priority of the Government, and it is right that we do all we can to support them and their families. The launch of this 24-hour helpline, specifically designed to support veterans, is further proof of the close working relationship between this country's charities and Government and allows those with the greatest expertise to help those in need whatever the hour."

Dr Andrew Murrison MP, whose independent review into the provision of mental health services for veterans supported the setting up of a veterans mental health helpline added:

"It is great to see that with the help of the Department of Health, Combat Stress and Rethink this 24-hour helpline has been launched. I am confident that it will give ex-Service personnel the support they not only need but deserve, given the sacrifices they have made for this country."

The launch of the new helpline is supported by a range of psychological therapies that veterans experiencing mental health problems will be able to request to help them improve their mental health and well-being.

Alongside the helpline, the Department of Health is also working with the Royal College of General Practitioners to develop training tools for GPs to better recognise the needs of veterans and provide the best support.

The helpline is part of the Government's 'No health without mental health' strategy, which will invest £7.2m to deliver additional mental health services for the Armed Forces community

"The launch of this 24-hour helpline, specifically designed to support veterans, is further proof of the close working relationship between this country's charities and Government..."
Andrew Robathan

Significant Improvements to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Veterans WORLD reports on the changes to the Scheme . . .

From May 9 this year, all current and former members of the Armed Forces can now benefit from significant improvements to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

THE Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) provides compensation for any injury, illness or death which is caused by service, on or after April 6, 2005. The Scheme was recently reviewed by Admiral the Lord Boyce, former Chief of Defence Staff, who made a number of recommendations for its improvement.

The Ministry of Defence worked with the Services and ex-Service organisations such as The Royal British Legion, BLESMA, War Widows' Association, the Confederation of Service Charities (COBSEO), SSAFA FH and the Family Federations, to successfully implement all of the recommendations, within one year of Lord Boyce's report being published.

“The changes to the Scheme have delivered a comprehensive compensation package which should give our Service personnel confidence in the event of injury.”

The Army Pay Colonel, Col Fiona Gardner, summed up the Services' view of these changes, commenting:

“I believe that the changes recommended by Lord Boyce, and implemented in full, represent a significant improvement to the Scheme which now appropriately recognises the totality and severity of injuries suffered by our people, and delivers awards that are both fair and just.

“The changes to the Scheme have delivered a comprehensive compensation package which should give our Service personnel confidence in the event of injury.”

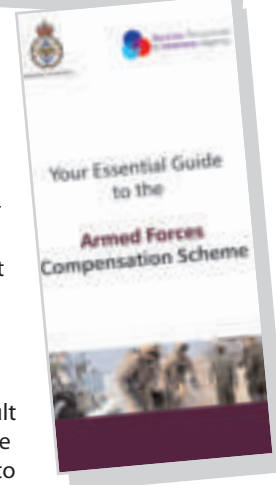
The most significant change is the average increase, which represents around 25 per cent, to all lump sum payments, except the top award which was recently doubled to £570,000. Other awards have also been considerably improved, for example, the maximum lump sum payable for mental health has been almost tripled to £140,000; those receiving payments for the most serious injuries or illnesses, including mental health awards, will also benefit from increases to their monthly income stream.

Lord Boyce's Review took special account of the changing nature of injuries and in particular the serious multiple injuries that some individuals received from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in Iraq and Afghanistan. As such, there has also been a substantial change to how the Scheme calculates payments for those individuals where previously compensation was only awarded for the three most severe injuries; now they will receive some compensation for each of their injuries.

And, the change which Andrew Robathan MP, Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, believes to be 'most notable' is the increase in monthly

payments for those with the most serious injuries. These Guaranteed Income Payments* have been increased to reflect the lasting impact of more serious injuries on likely future promotion prospects as a result of injury and on the ability to work up to age 65.

All of these changes will have a tangible impact. For example, if an individual takes part in service-approved Adventurous Training (AT) and sustains a broken nose, but the bones are still connected, they could receive £1,200; previously this would have been £1,115. At the other end of the scale, the impact of the changes for the more severely injured is even more significant. For example, if an



Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

individual loses both legs below the knee they could receive a lump sum payment of £290,000: this is a 68 per cent increase in the amount paid under the old Scheme, £172,000. As well as the increased lump sum, he or she will receive a Guaranteed Income Payment – a tax-free, index-linked income stream for life.

It is worth stressing that these changes do not just benefit future claimants – exceptionally, all those who have already received an award under the Scheme will see it increased in line with the changes. But do not worry – you don't need to take any action as the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency, who deliver the Scheme, will be notifying the 10,000 plus people who have previously received an award.

Yet, there is still work to be done. The Review also set up an Independent Medical Expert Group, which looks at how the Scheme can best compensate for specific illnesses. This group's recommendations have been published in a report, but they will be doing further work this year on issues including mental health and hearing loss. It will also look at diseases which might be recognised under the Scheme.

These changes, in their entirety, provide a compensation scheme that it is fit for purpose: to provide financial compensation in recognition of the sacrifice made by our Service personnel on the Nation's behalf.

As Andrew Robathan MP stated: "These changes will have a direct and positive impact on our Armed Forces personnel."

Editor's Note: * The Guaranteed Income Payments commence once the individual has left the Services.



Service Personnel
& Veterans Agency

To help provide information on the changes to the Scheme a series of products including leaflets, posters and podcasts have been developed. These can be downloaded at www.veterans-uk.info, click on pensions and compensation. Or alternatively visit www.mod.uk/afcs. The podcasts include an interview with Col Fiona Gardner.

"This is a no-fault scheme open to all Service personnel, covering the whole spectrum of injuries from life-changing operational injuries to a broken toe; and if you have been injured as a result of your service in the Armed Forces you can and should make a claim."

Army Pay Colonel, Col
Fiona Gardner.

AFCS – the facts

What is the AFCS?

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) provides compensation for any injury, illness or death which is caused by service on or after 6 April 2005.

The War Pension Scheme (WPS) compensates for any injury, illness or death which occurs up to this date.

Who is eligible?

All current and former members of the UK Armed Forces, including Reservists, may submit a claim for compensation.

What can I claim for?

You can claim for any injury or illness which has been sustained as a result of service. This includes Adventurous Training (AT), physical exercise and organised sport, for example, inter-Service athletics.

What payments can I receive?

Everyone who receives an award under the AFCS receives a lump sum payment of between £1,200 and £570,000, depending on severity.

For serious injuries, which reduce an individual's ability to earn future income, a monthly tax-free, index-linked income stream is paid as an enhancement to the pension. This is called a Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP).

How do I make a claim?

You will need to submit a claim to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency. You can download a form here: http://www.veterans-uk.info/pensions/claim_forms.html

Where can I get advice?

To request a form or for advice and guidance call the free helpline:

0800 169 22 77 (UK only),
+44 1253 866 043 (overseas)

Or visit: www.mod.uk/afcs or
www.veterans-uk.info



The charities charity

Founded in 1912, The Alexandra Rose charity continues providing support



An Alexandra Rose Charity street collector



Inspired by a visit to her native Denmark, Queen Alexandra created a charity to raise funds for the poor and needy. Today, the charity continues helping over 350 charities, removing the financial and administrative burden and becoming their fundraising arm.

Shortly after King Edward VII's reign ended in 1910, the now elderly (but still beautiful) Queen conceived the idea of her Rose Day. Queen Alexandra had returned to her native Denmark for a holiday. While visiting, she met with a poor priest who turned his house into a home caring for crippled children. The Queen asked how he managed to support the children, he replied that he sold small bunches of roses from his garden. This gave the Queen the idea of how to help the poor and needy of London.

So, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of her arrival in this country, she invited her society friends to sell roses on the streets of London. This was in 1912 and 15,000 ladies collected on the streets, the first rose collection raised a staggering £30,000. The roses sold were silk and made by the "Watercress and Flower Girls Christian Mission". This was a charity set up to help flower sellers of a previous generation. This was the first 'flag day'.

CHARITIES under the Alexandra Rose umbrella can carry out a collection at any time of the year within their community and draw on the experience and advice from the team of dedicated staff.

In 2010, the charity helped 28 veterans' charities across the UK. By collecting with Alexandra Rose and initially raising at least £100 themselves (from a street collection or by selling raffle tickets) charities can then apply to the special appeal fund. The charity then writes a letter to Alexandra Rose explaining how much they need for the specific project each year they participate.

They can get up to £1,000 for a project or £500 for core costs. These requests go before the board at Alexandra Rose in October each year. Alexandra Rose also runs an annual raffle which is totally risk-free.

A lasting tribute

In 2010, the Royal Naval Association Driffield Branch used their grant to make a memorial rose garden. The original idea for the rose bed was put forward by one of their members, who thought it would be a fitting and lasting tribute to remember past members.

After speaking to the East Riding of Yorkshire Council Parks and Gardening Department, permission was obtained. Brass plaques were bought from a local

How to apply

To join Alexandra Rose - The Charities Charity complete their Year 1 Application (Form ARC001), which can be requested by ringing 01252 726 171 or emailing collections@alexandrarose.org.uk or register online at www.alexandrarosecharities.org.uk.

Take time to complete the form, thinking about who your volunteers might be, the best location in your area for this and what dates the collections might take place. Collections take place throughout the year. Return the form to ARC with a payment of £50.

The Rose Collections Manager will then apply for the permit or licences that you have asked for and will assess what equipment you will need, for example collecting buckets, badges, stickers . . . You can ring at any time if you have a question, want to change your dates or need advice.

As soon as the permit or licence comes through, you can finalise what equipment you need and the charity will send all the paperwork that you will need and their Collections Booklet which gives step-by-step advice on what you have to do.

memorial craftsman in Driffield, and plinths were made by a local engineering firm and cemented in place by a local builder. The Council are extremely pleased with the results as they say it

enhances their Green Flag Award status for the Garden of Remembrance.



Editor's Note: The D-Day Normandy Veterans used their grant to visit the National Memorial Arboretum where they laid a wreath.

Edinburgh prepares to host Armed Forces Day 2011

Preparations are in full swing to host a three-day celebration of Britain's Armed Forces in Scotland's Capital this summer



Edinburgh is gearing up for Armed Forces Day national event, the third since the annual celebrations began in 2009, with parades, concerts, exhibitions, aerial displays and a spectacular Massed Pipes and Drums Parade organised by charity DecAid*.

THE weekend of activities from 24 to 26 June sees Edinburgh take on the mantle as the national centrepiece for 2011's Armed Forces Day celebrations. This prestigious role for the city was announced in Cardiff last summer; Council Leader Jenny Dawe visited the national event staged in the Welsh capital and took part in the official handover to Edinburgh. She said:

"Hosting an event on this scale is something for which Edinburgh has become internationally revered - indeed, the city has won a reputation as one of the top events destinations in the world thanks to the success of such major occasions as the visit by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010 and Edinburgh's Hogmanay. Ever since I attended the Armed Forces Day national event in Cardiff last year, I have been looking forward to bringing the celebrations to Scotland's capital, where I know we will put on a sensational three

"Edinburgh has a long and proud tradition of honouring its Armed Forces and this will be a unique opportunity to showcase this to a potentially vast audience worldwide."



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Edinburgh will host the third Armed Forces Day national event

days of activities and entertainment for everyone to get involved with."

Lord Provost George Grubb said:

"It's a tremendous privilege for Edinburgh to be the host city for this year's Armed Forces Day national celebrations and we and our partners and sponsors are working very hard to ensure this year's events are a great success. Edinburgh has a long and proud tradition of honouring its Armed Forces and this will be a unique opportunity to showcase this to a potentially vast audience worldwide. I urge everyone to come along and enjoy a fantastic weekend in support of our Service personnel."

Events will kick off in Leith on the afternoon of Friday 24 June, including tours of HMS Portland and various water-based displays in Leith Docks and culminating in a full display by the Red Arrows over the Firth of Forth. Members of the public will also have the opportunity to try out Red Arrow and Tornado Jet flight simulators at Ocean Terminal.

On Armed Forces Day itself (Saturday, 25 June), a parade of up to 1,500 serving personnel, veterans and cadets will march down the Royal Mile from the Castle Esplanade to Holyrood Park. The parade will end with a short ceremony of thanks and the official handover to the next National host city (yet to be announced). This will be followed by a packed afternoon of events and entertainment for

all the family, including parachute displays, Highland dancing, music and a Veterans' Village. That evening, the Usher Hall will host the Armed Forces Day Concert, featuring a range of performers including military bands.

A Massed Pipes and Drums parade on Sunday, 26 June is being organised by charity DecAid, processing down the Royal Mile to Holyrood Park, followed by an afternoon of music and a Battle of the Bands.

Contacts

As well as the national event in Edinburgh, there are events being held across the UK to celebrate Armed Forces Day, to find out more visit www.armedforcesday.org.uk/

Editor's Note: VIP attendance is still unknown but in previous years there has been attendance by a member of the Royal Family. The event is to be televised. Up to 80,000 people are estimated to attend the weekend of events.

***DecAid is a national, charity appeal that has been set up by students to raise money for service charities through the running of six high profile events during the summer of 2011. Visit www.Decaid.co.uk/**

Charity opens its doors to veterans

Seafaring charity extending its services and accommodation to include veterans



(Photo courtesy of East End Life newspaper)

A special plaque commemorating the opening of the new rooms was unveiled by Jim Fitzpatrick, MP for Poplar & Limehouse [pictured from left] Councillor A M Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Alexander Campbell, chief executive QVSR, Jim Fitzpatrick and Terry Simco, QVSR chair.

The money will be used to upgrade 10 further bedrooms specifically for ex-Service residents.

All initial works have been specifically planned by architects practice Ayshford Sansome - with chartered surveyors HBW Partnership project managing all building and installation work - to temporarily expand the total stock of bedrooms and allow the home to remain fully occupied while the entire building is upgraded. Alexander Campbell said:

"Everyone was delighted with the planning, attention to detail and commitment to quality shown by everyone in the refurbishment team and the speed with which we are improving the lives of our residents.

"In the past up to 15 men had to share a communal bathroom, whereas now they can have more privacy as well as a more comfortable and better equipped bedroom."

Editor's Note: QVSR offers a full programme of activities, support and educational opportunities for all its service users and is also central to London's East End community with many local people dropping in to eat there or for a chat.

Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest charity (QVSR) has extended its service to support ex-Servicemen as well as active or retired seafarers. QVSR in London's East End is the UK's largest seafaring hostel and home to over 160 men: 20 are ex-Army and one is ex-RAF.

IT'S also just opened the second phase of a radical refurbishment, part of a five-year programme designed to give every resident a more spacious and stylish bedroom with its own en-suite shower room.

Although the home was originally founded in 1843 to support seafarers and their families, links with ex-Service charity Veterans Aid and other organisations have resulted in a growing number of referrals and a community of ex-Service residents. Alexander Campbell, chief executive of QVSR explains:

"Over the last few years, we have seen a growing number of ex-Servicemen seeking accommodation at the 'Queen Vic'. We continue to look at the best ways to meet the needs of these residents through the valued partnership working with other organisations such as The Royal British Legion, SSAFA-FH, Veterans' Aid and the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation."

The latest phase in its modernisation has created 18 new bedrooms by reconfiguring and upgrading nine existing bedrooms and three self-contained flats.

"I am happy to move to my new room and looking forward to that day; thank you QVSR for your help and support."

*Joe Smyth, veteran,
86yrs old – QVSR resident
since 1999.*

The Royal British Legion has also recently confirmed a £240,000 investment in QVSR, enabling the next phase of the redevelopment programme to proceed.

Contacts

For further information please visit www.qvsr.org.uk/ or call 020 7987 5466.



(Photo courtesy of East End Life newspaper)

Each new QVSR bedroom is more spacious and comfortable, as well as being finished to an exceptionally high standard and decorated in contemporary colour schemes.

Armed Forces Covenant enshrined in law

The tri-Service Armed Forces Covenant published for first time in May

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The Covenant's core principles will ensure the Armed Forces Community will not suffer disadvantages as a result of their service, and where appropriate they receive special treatment.

With an amendment to the Armed Forces Bill, the Covenant's principles will be enshrined in law. The Covenant is a statement of the moral obligation which exists between the nation, the Government and the Armed Forces.

ITS core principles are that members of the Armed Forces Community do not suffer disadvantages as a result of their service and that they receive special treatment where appropriate.

Announcing its publication, Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

"The Government has no higher duty than the defence of the realm. The ties between the nation, its Government and its Armed Forces are not the product of rules and regulations but are much deeper than that.

"The Armed Forces Covenant does not need to be a long and detailed charter. It should be a simple and timeless statement of the moral obligation that we owe. We are therefore publishing a new version of the Covenant, written for the first time on a tri-Service basis."

The Armed Forces Bill will also require the Defence Secretary to report to Parliament every year on the progress of implementing the principles of the Covenant and specifically report on key areas including healthcare, housing and education.

These measures will also provide a regular review of the policies that will make greater support to the Armed Forces a reality and ensure that Parliament can

"... a simple and timeless statement of the moral obligation that we owe."

scrutinise the review through the annual report, and that the report itself is widely informed, consultative and transparent. Progress already made on measures to rebuild the Covenant include:

- doubling the Operational Allowance;
- including Service children within the Pupil Premium;
- introducing Higher/Further education scholarships for the children of bereaved Service families;
- improvements to mental healthcare; *and*
- Maximising R&R.

Additional measures will tackle some of the problems experienced by serving personnel, their families and veterans. These are:

- a new Community Covenant Grant scheme - with funding of £30 million over the next four years to support action by local communities to support our Armed Forces and veterans;
- a new fund of £3 million per year, over and above the Pupil Premium

arrangements, to support state schools catering for significant numbers of Service children;

- a guarantee that veterans suffering serious genital injuries will have access to three cycles of IVF, wherever they live;
- an increase in the rate of Council Tax Relief for military personnel serving on operations overseas from 25 to 50 per cent;
- Launching a veterans information service to provide support on health issues including mental health;
- Launching a Veterans Card to ease access to commercial discounts
- Working with banks and building societies on how they lend to members of the Armed Forces; *and*
- Launching a Troops to Teachers scheme.

Over the next few months, further announcements, are planned which include:

- ministers chairing a meeting with key stakeholders to discuss and agree ways to improve access to housing for our Service people;
- the Health and Defence Secretaries looking at how to take forward a report on improving further the supply of prosthetics for injured personnel; *and*
- considering how to ensure the Guaranteed Income Payments made under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme are not required to be used to pay for social care provided by the public sector.

Contacts

The Armed Forces Covenant can be downloaded at <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Personnel/Welfare/ArmedForcesCovenant/TheArmedForcesCovenantDocuments.htm>

Unique partnership brings talking therapy to veterans



Attending the launch of VVADS, from left: Andy Wright, Col Peter Sokolow, Heather Raistrick, Karen Lynch, Kathryn Riddle, John Clare, Lt Col Andy Smith, Dr Paul Kitchen and Jon Parkin

Armed Forces veterans in Yorkshire now have better access to the latest psychological therapies, thanks to a new service set up by NHS Yorkshire and the Humber and Catterick Garrison.

THE service is part of Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), an initiative which helps men and women who are experiencing common mental health difficulties including anxiety, depression or more complex conditions such as post traumatic stress.

The IAPT service at Catterick Garrison, provided by NHS North Yorkshire and York, is called *Vulnerable Veterans and Adult Dependants* (VVADS) and has been developed in response to the needs of veterans and armed forces families in the local area. VVADS has deliberately employed therapists who are veterans themselves or are experienced in working within military communities.

One of the main aims of the service is to intervene at the earliest opportunity. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is the main treatment used by clinicians at the Garrison which allows veterans and the families of Service personnel to talk through their problems.

Jason Wem (40) was in the army for nine years and served in the first Gulf war, he said:

“Going for this therapy has helped me a lot. Being an ex-soldier and a man it can be difficult to talk about what is bothering me.

“I was recently accepted into the fire service, I’d passed all the tests, exams and the physical but when it came to using breathing apparatus in basic training I just went into meltdown. I’d used the same equipment in the first Gulf war and it just brought back a lot of memories and feelings.

“I was originally going to therapy once a week, but now I am down to once every two weeks. It has helped me in a number of different ways. I found I couldn’t cope being around people but my therapist has taught me some breathing exercises to help me manage with that. The person I see is ex-military and she totally understands what I would have been doing in active service and she knows about the sorts of problems I have.”

Kathryn Riddle, Chair of NHS Yorkshire and the Humber attended a launch event for the service at Catterick Garrison, she said:

“This is a wonderful service which has been designed to give our veterans the best possible treatment, which is tailored to their needs.

“When we think of veterans the thing that comes to mind is old men or Chelsea pensioners, however that is not the full story. We have, right throughout Yorkshire and the Humber region, and the country as a whole, veterans of a number of conflicts who are as young as 19. This service can help them deal with the problems they may have and move on to a successful next chapter in their lives.”

Problems with depression and anxiety can develop following significant events like bereavement, unemployment, relationship breakdown or traumatic events. For Service families there can be additional challenges that lead people to feel unsettled, unsupported, lonely or unhappy. Some veterans may also find it difficult to ask for help and access mental health services for a wide variety of reasons. VVADS aims to be an integral part of Catterick Garrison, understanding the challenges faced by the local community and provide specially tailored treatments to promote mental wellbeing and recovery.

“This service can help them deal with the problems they may have and move on to a successful next chapter in their lives.”

What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)?

- how you think about yourself, the world and other people
- how what you do affects your thoughts and feelings.

CBT can help you to change how you think (‘Cognitive’) and what you do (‘Behaviour’). These changes can help you to feel better. Unlike some of the other talking treatments, it focuses on the ‘here and now’ problems and difficulties. Instead of focusing on the causes of your distress or symptoms in the past, it looks for ways to improve your state of mind now.

Contacts

For further information or to refer a veteran to the service call 01748 873156

A second chance

How peer advisors can help ex-offenders rebuild their lives



Support is available to help prison leavers get their life back on track

Alongside punishment, rehabilitation support, both in custody and in the community, has a part to play in helping offenders leave crime behind and tackle the barriers that having a criminal record can bring.

CHARITY St Giles Trust helps ex-offenders resettle and break the cycle of re-offending. Operating from a main base in south London with regional offices in Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent and the Thames Valley, its services offer practical support in prison and in the community around issues such as accommodation, training and help to enter the employment market.

The cornerstone of its work is using trained, reformed ex-offenders –called Peer Advisors - to provide services and support for others on the road to rehabilitation. St Giles Trust finds this approach works exceptionally well with people who have been in prison who can be difficult to engage. By using people who have been in the same situation as their clients, services have an added level of credibility and trust to which they can easily relate.

“If I didn’t have his support there’s no way I’d be where I am now.”

St Giles Trust works with a small number of clients who have been in the Armed Forces. They are keen to engage people who have served a prison sentence to train as Peer Advisors to work with other ex-prisoners. This involves training to become a qualified advice worker with the possibility of supported employment, helping prison leavers to resettle in the community. Typically, this means getting people housed on release from prison and linked up with other support services.



Complete turnaround

22 year old Desmond* from Croydon, Surrey, was helped by St Giles Trust when he was released from an eighteen month sentence for burglary. He drifted into petty crime and drugs after being medically discharged from the Army as a result of serious burns gained in an accident during a training exercise. Diagnosed with depression and with nowhere to live after his release, he was supported by a caseworker at St Giles Trust who had himself previously been in prison and knew the challenges Desmond would face.

His caseworker ensured Desmond had a roof over his head and a benefits claim set up on his release and worked intensively with him to pursue positive goals which would keep him crime free. As a result, Desmond went to college to study IT and continues to do well. He attributed his turnaround to his caseworker, saying “If I didn’t have his support there’s no way I’d be where I am now.”

Contacts

Anyone who is interested in finding out more about St Giles Trust can contact them on 020 7703 7000 or visit www.stgilestrust.org.uk

*Name changed to protect the client’s confidentiality.

Veterans Sail into Life . . .



The crew enjoyed the vagaries of the Cornish weather

It's 0830 on a sunny Monday in the port of Falmouth and a group of people are walking along the pontoon towards a classic wooden yacht nestled between two large motor boats. The people have never met each other and yet they are set to spend four days on a yacht together.

DESPITE being unrelated, the five people do have something in common; each of them has opted to receive a very unique method of support for poor mental health and had served in the Armed Forces. In some cases it is depression, others have anxiety and one has been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The yacht, *Leopard*, is operated by Sea Sanctuary, a charity set up to support people with poor mental health and far removed from the more clinical settings

“The programme is carefully planned to work with the sailing experience to ensure the passengers have a balance of activities and actually enjoy the experience.”

often used. Sea Sanctuary has devised a programme of support based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Mindfulness, which is delivered onboard. The programme is carefully planned to work with the sailing experience to ensure the passengers have a balance of activities and actually enjoy the experience.

Sea Sanctuary's yacht operates in arguably one of the most beautiful areas in Britain, with access to some of the most spectacular coastline available. Life afloat is forever changing, where no two days are the same. On some days, a gentle wind will blow and other days a force 7 will keep everyone on their toes and where the yacht and her crew will be pushed to the limit. Teamwork, trust and a respect for the sea are essential in this environment, where the sailing experience enhances the psychological

intervention. None of the passengers have ever sailed before but each person will take the helm during their four days with *Leopard* and be responsible for her.

Each night, *Leopard* returns to her pontoon at Port Pendennis Marina where passengers discuss the day and are invited to reflect on why they are there. This is a familiar theme throughout the week where 'down-time' is a very useful tool in developing personal awareness.

The support extends past the weekly sail as Joe Sabien, Sea Sanctuary Chief Executive, explains:

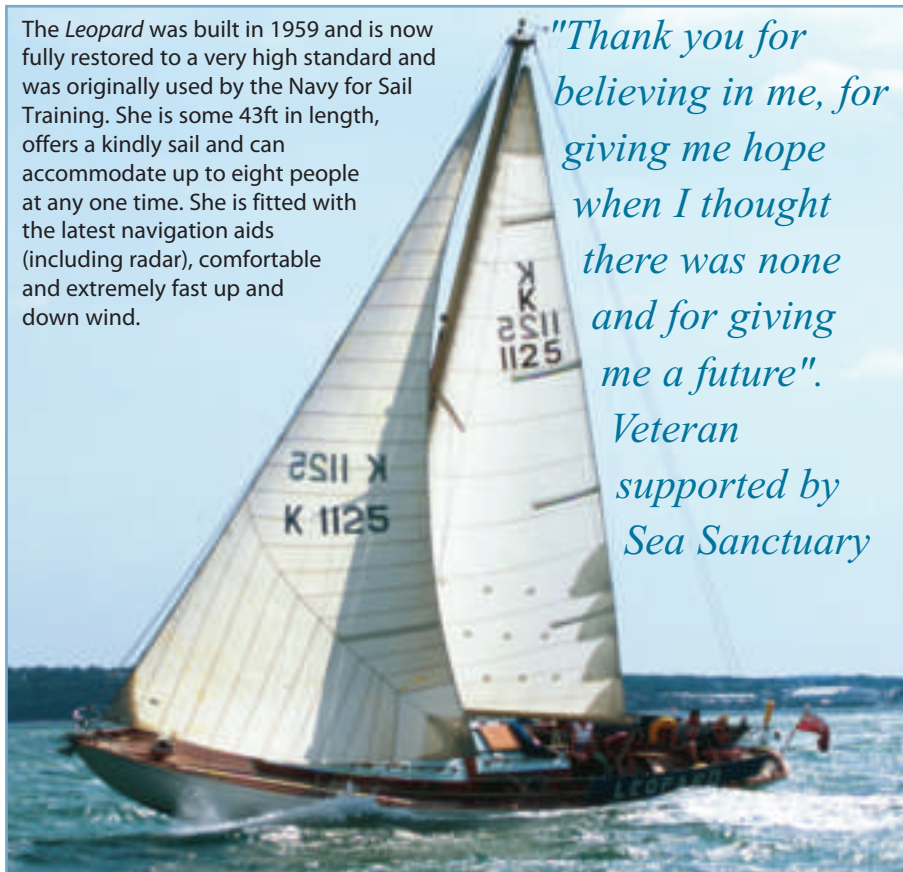
"We have spent considerable time investigating the best method of evaluating our service and our service delivery. To ensure we're meeting the expectations of our clients and achieving results, we routinely carry out entry and exit questionnaires, one-month post sail evaluations, six-month post sail evaluations and one-year post sail evaluations. This robust method of evaluating our service is done to ensure that the intervention offered works beyond the weekly sail.

"We are hoping for an increased sense of well-being, increased soft-skill development, and of equal importance, better coping skills to manage low mood or negative thinking . . .

"Being at sea aids the increase in production of serotonin in the brain, sometimes referred to as the 'feel good chemical'. When this is combined with Sail Training, which develops so-called soft skills and psychological intervention such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Mindfulness, the effects can be quite outstanding."

The charity was set-up to be as inclusive as possible. Despite receiving the majority of referrals from Cornwall and Devon, Sea Sanctuary will support anyone from the wider UK. The referral process is easy enough - either email joesabien@sea-sanctuary.co.uk or call 01326 378919. Once this has been done, the Charity will send a referral form out, requesting further information. Everyone accessing the service will need to be assessed by Sea Sanctuary (or a healthcare professional where necessary). This will ensure the service can meet the expectations of the person referring or being referred. (There is a cost involved but this can sometimes be met if the referral is from a GP in Devon or Cornwall where the NHS Primary Care Trust has commissioned the service or self-financed).

The *Leopard* was built in 1959 and is now fully restored to a very high standard and was originally used by the Navy for Sail Training. She is some 43ft in length, offers a kindly sail and can accommodate up to eight people at any one time. She is fitted with the latest navigation aids (including radar), comfortable and extremely fast up and down wind.



"Thank you for believing in me, for giving me hope when I thought there was none and for giving me a future".
Veteran supported by Sea Sanctuary

NHS Southwest is currently working with NHS and voluntary sector partners to improve access to the full range of NHS and voluntary sector mental health services for veterans and their families. A referral and assessment service for veterans will be in place in the Southwest from the Autumn, with other regions across England following. For details please email doh.armedforcesnetworks@nhs.net

The NHS in Devon and Cornwall has commissioned the Sea Sanctuary service at a local level and have done so since last year. This is the first time a marine-based charity has been commissioned by the NHS for the provision of this type of intervention. The Charity are very proud of this achievement and plan to further expand the role of Sail Training in the health education market place. Sea Sanctuary was also nominated for the "Innovation Award" last year by the NHS Devon and Cornwall as a pioneer of the use of Sail Training in the Southwest. The Charity has also recently been accredited by the Institute for Community Leadership and Management (ICLM).

Individuals may wish to consult their GPs before undergoing or starting a course of treatment.



Sheet-work familiarisation (which operates the sails)

Contacts

If you know a veteran needing support with their mental health and who might benefit from time onboard *Leopard* then contact Sea Sanctuary call 01326 378919 or email joesabien@sea-sanctuary.co.uk

Be The Boss scheme celebrates first anniversary

The Royal British Legion's Be the Boss initiative celebrates its first anniversary this month.



James, one of over 800 clients supported by Be The Boss

Copyright Ocean Barefoot

Here we look back at the first months of operation and look forward to building on the scheme's success over the forthcoming 12 months.

EARLY last year, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), approached the Legion with a request to develop a new programme for entrepreneurship for the ex-Service community, helping Service leavers to set up their own businesses or, if they've recently started a small business, to help them grow it further.

To provide a comprehensive and expert service to clients, the Legion set up an extensive network of partner organisations

across 68 regional offices and over 200 contractors, including The Prince's Trust, specialists in youth training, and Leonard Cheshire Disability, who provide expertise in tackling the particular issues relating to long-term health conditions and injuries.

The three steps

The scheme offers assistance in three vital ways. The first is providing information, advice and guidance on business start-up, looking at areas such as understanding your market, finding new customers, creating a sales plan, pricing your product or service and, ultimately, how to create a robust business plan and a financial forecast.

Once the business plan has been completed and approved, clients are in a position to move from the first stage to the second, which is applying for actual funding. This takes the form of a core funding product that is 25 per cent grant and 75 per cent loan. A new business can apply for up to £7,500 of total funding to get them started. An existing enterprise (that has been trading for more than 12 months and less than 24 months) can apply for up to £30,000 for business development.

Clients who are awarded funding then move to the third area of support, which is mentoring. Be the Boss provides business mentoring support for a year after funding is received. This is designed to help clients tackle early rough patches and to understand how to grow their business further.

These three areas have been identified by the enterprise industry as critical to the success of small businesses. To be able to provide funding as well as training, particularly in this economic climate, sets Be the Boss apart from a number of other training schemes. In addition, mentoring has been proved statistically to improve the likelihood of business success by 50 per cent.

Successes so far . . .

They currently have over 800 active clients, approximately 30 applications for funding of which we have funded 16 to date, with an additional 18 applicants' business plans in review. All successfully funded applicants are now in mentoring and receiving support on actually setting up and growing their businesses. In March, the scheme received its second highest monthly total of registrations in nearly 12 months.

“ . . . take on board all the advice and help offered, and do not be afraid to ask questions and seek help.”

first birthday

James can now 'be the boss'

36 year-old Royal Navy veteran, James Harrison, has received £5,000 from The Royal British Legion's Be The Boss Scheme to set up his own barber's shop in his hometown of Darwen in Lancashire.

James, who served in the 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 scheme will provide a mentor to help him through his first year in business to help him make it a success.

James explained what the Be the Boss process was like for him:

"Initially I found the whole thing daunting. After my first business meeting everything was explained in depth. I then developed a plan and moved forward."

He had a message for anyone considering applying to the scheme,

"Have a plan, stick with it, take on board all the advice and help offered, and do not be afraid to ask questions and seek help."



FROM TAKING ORDERS TO BEING YOUR OWN BOSS, WE MAKE THE TRANSITION EASIER.



If you've left the Armed Services after October 2001 and recently set up a small business or are thinking of doing so, The Royal British Legion's Be the Boss scheme can help you to make a success of your new business venture.

Not only will you learn how to create a business plan, find and keep customers and manage your finances, you'll also receive mentoring and assistance from qualified business advisers.

The scheme also offers up to £7,500 for business start-up funding and up to £30,000 for business expansion.

To find out more, visit www.civvystreet.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 219279



The scheme can support Service leavers set up their own business or help an existing business grow

Recent developments include the introduction of a Be the Boss Feasibility Fund, designed to specifically encourage clients to market test their idea before finalising their business plan. In addition, Be the Boss is about to launch the new Be the Boss Express initiative, which provides a fast track option to funding for those with an existing comprehensive business plan.

Contacts

To find out more, visit www.civvystreet.org/betheboss, where you will find all the information you need on the programme, and the opportunity to apply online or call - 0800 678 5787.

Casework system going from strength to strength

Since first reported by **Veterans WORLD** in 2008, the Casework Management System has grown dramatically



The Casework Management System (CMS) is a web-based system that allows organisations involved in caseworking to work together in a more effective and efficient manner.

WITH clear direction and leadership from SSAFA Forces Help on behalf of The Confederation of Service Charities (COBSEO), case-working charities covering the three Services, (including: The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, ABF The Soldiers' Charity, The RAF Benevolent Fund and The Royal British Legion) have worked together to develop and launch the system. Since it went live in 2009, it's been going from strength to strength, with more charities using the system and an increasing number of Welfare cases for Service and ex-Service people and their families dealt with using CMS.

“Our goal at the moment is to make CMS the de-facto way of managing Armed Forces Community cases.”

Jim Keeley, CMS Project Manager explained:

“There are now 86 COBSEO organisations using CMS and around 25 per cent of all cases are being managed through the system. It’s encouraging to see the number of cases rising quickly.

“The project will receive a real boost when The Royal British Legion goes live for all their cases later in 2011. This will mean that over 75 per cent of cases will be managed in CMS. Our goal at the moment is to make CMS the de-facto way of managing Armed Forces Community cases. Once we are in this position the results will naturally follow and the benefits will be realised.”

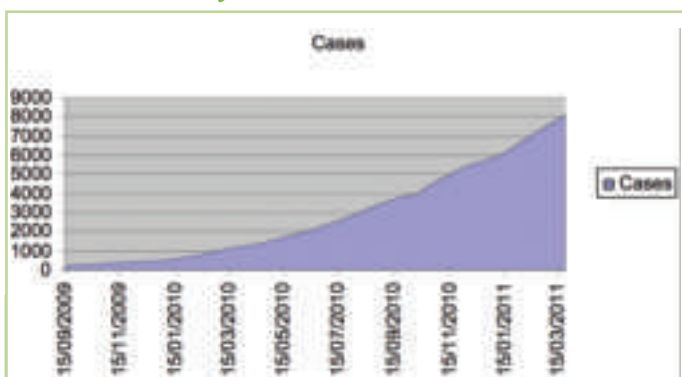
“Using Casework Management System was absolutely brilliant; I needed to establish support for a veteran’s family before Christmas and I was able to present the case to REME and within a matter of minutes received a positive decision. I did the same with The Royal British Legion Women’s Section, who immediately granted funding for the children. Without this facility, everything would have gone by snail mail and no help would have been available until after Christmas. Using the system ensured that the children were well supported over the Christmas period!” **Kath Evans, County Welfare Officer at The Royal British Legion in Warwickshire**

The CMS is improving all the time, with experience and here are a few key areas that are coming along or are already live in 2011:

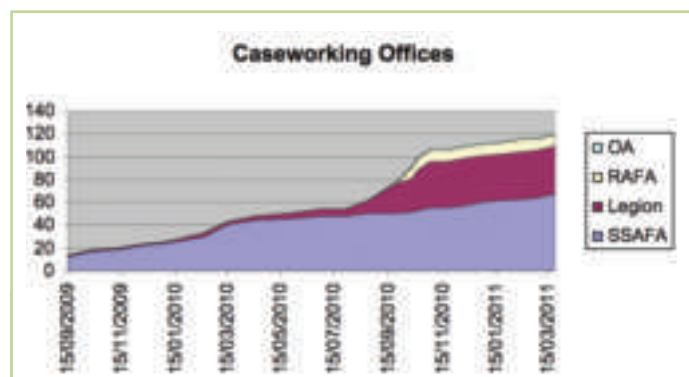
- Improvements to financial information. All financial transactions can be shared; the analysis will be more accurate and comprehensive and will give one consistent picture across all the caseworking organisations of how much is being spent.
- The online SSAFA Directory, available to all those organisations signed up to CMS, is updated daily and reflects the correct information on all assistance providers and caseworking offices.
- The COBSEO organisations involved in casework, but not on the CMS, are being actively encouraged to consider joining, but some have specialist needs that are not yet incorporated in CMS. CMS was always intended to be an evolution not a revolution.
- A key driver to CMS development is Statistical Reporting – accurate, comprehensive and the same figures used for and by all CMS organisations – One case one statistic.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the CMS or would like more details on the system developments, please contact the Project Manager Jim Keeley on jim.k@ssafa.org.uk



Graph highlights the rise in cases being managed by the system since its launch in 2009.



Graph highlights the increase in use, as ex-Service charities join the caseworking system.

Erskine upholds long tradition of employing veterans

For 96 years the veterans' charity Erskine has had a proud history of employing veterans and disabled workers



The new Erskine Garden Centre opened in Spring 2010

In 1916, the first workshops were set up with the aim of placing disabled veterans in employment best suited to ability. The early days offered hairdressing, bee-keeping, boot making, tailoring and French polishing.

TODAY, Erskine's state of the art Social Firms are modern businesses focused on the same aim: offering opportunities for veterans to return to working life. They offer a range of options for veterans to choose, including accommodation, training, rehabilitation and employment, ensuring that maximum potential in life can be reached.

Erskine currently employs 37 disabled people, including veterans, in the Work Choice programme as well as dozens of veterans working throughout the organisation, encompassing the Erskine Garden Centre and Cafe, Erskine Print, Erskine Furniture and their Training and Conference Centre.

There are many career opportunities available including IT, Marketing, Finance, Manufacturing, Care and Retail. Further job opportunities were created in spring 2010 when the existing Erskine Garden Centre was relocated. Army Veteran James Miller aged 30, explained how Erskine helped him:

"I served in the army, for over five years until I received an injury which left me with a disability. As all I had ever wanted to do was be a soldier this was difficult to come to terms with, physically and mentally. I found myself unable to work, living in a flat unable to get up and down stairs, becoming housebound.

"Sometimes it's difficult to admit you need help.

"About two years ago I became a volunteer in the Erskine garden centre one day a week. This got me out the house. I met other veterans in situations similar to my own, while at the same time doing a little to help Erskine. After a few months I was delighted to be offered a part-time job working three days per week. This was a huge morale boost as I had been told by doctors I would not work again. Being in employment also enabled me to move into a cottage where there were no stairs to worry about.

"When the new garden centre opened in May last year, I began working full-time as the Operations Manager.

"If not for Erskine's help and support, I wouldn't like to think of the situation I would be in now. It's a second chance, not only in employment, but in life.

"If not for Erskine's help and support, I wouldn't like to think of the situation I would be in now. It's a second chance, not only in employment, but in life."

"I don't even need to take time off work to attend physio as I can receive it in the Erskine Home's excellent physiotherapy department."

Editor's Note: Erskine and leading Scottish construction company City Building have announced a new partnership, forging a bond between two organizations committed to social enterprise. The partnership will see the two organizations work together to provide more employment for veterans and people with a disability.



James Miller (top) as a new recruit and today, working at Erskine Garden Centre (bottom)

Contacts

There are many veterans who, like James, find it difficult to admit they need help. Erskine offers supported employment throughout the organisation ranging from IT to Retail Management. If you know a veteran Erskine can help, please call 0141 812 1100.

Alabaré supporting Service leavers across Salisbury Plain

Alabaré is providing training to help Service leavers across Salisbury Plain avoid homelessness



Salisbury-based charity Alabaré has been awarded a grant of more than £5,000 by Plain Action towards delivering the Alabaré Home and Money Programme – Take Control, a tenancy and housing related training programme, to those preparing to leave the Armed Forces. The programme will also be available to Service dependants, veterans and civilians living in the Salisbury Plain area.

ALABARÉ'S Home and Money programme will consist of a series of modules covering topics such as Housing Options, Welfare Benefits, Budgeting and Bills, Rent and Rent Arrears and Dealing with Debt. The aim of the programme is to ease the transition from Service to civilian life for those about to leave the Armed Forces, and to support those who are finding it challenging setting up their own home for the first time. It will be a ten week course, dealing with a module a week, and will take place three times a year.

Courses are being planned in Tidworth, Wilton and Devizes, however locations could change depending on need. The first course began in Tidworth, in February.

Alabaré's experience and research in this area shows that many ex-Service

Alabaré has been supporting members of the Armed Forces and veterans through its many projects for almost 20 years. In 2009, the charity opened Alabaré Plymouth Home for Veterans in partnership with The Royal British Legion, a supported housing project exclusively for homeless and vulnerable ex-Service men and women. Over the past few months, Alabaré has opened its Bristol Home for Veterans and a similar project in Weymouth. Beyond this the charity has plans for further Homes for Veterans to meet the need across the South and South West.

personnel and those about to leave the Armed Forces have little knowledge of the responsibilities that come with managing a tenancy. For many, during their time with the Armed Forces, they have not had to deal with these issues and the sudden additional responsibilities can cause distress and result in a loss of confidence or even a family break down.

The charity will work with a range of local agencies, including Unit Welfare Officers, to identify potential candidates who would benefit from the course. Clients will also be referred to the course via local organisations and other Alabaré services. Alabaré's Home and Money Programme would equip those about to leave the Armed Forces and those struggling to set up home with the skills needed to successfully manage their tenancies and prevent eviction.



Course attendees working together to unravel the issues.

Contacts

For more information call 01722 322882 or visit www.alabare.co.uk

Medically Discharged Veterans 'Soldier On!'™ into civilian careers.

New layer of support for resettlement offered by Service charity

soldier on



Crown Copyright MOD

Skills learned in the Armed Forces are transferrable to civilian employment

Finding employment is the next step in the rehabilitation process for Service personnel medically discharged from the Armed Forces. With some funding from the MOD's Veterans' Challenge Fund, the 'Soldier On!'™ charity aims to help injured Service Leavers get a step on the career ladder.

TO complement the well-established career transition initiatives provided by the MOD, a new layer of support is offered by 'Soldier On!'™, providing full employment support to medically discharged Service personnel of all ranks, all units and across the three Services. Nicholas Harrison from 'Soldier On!'™, explained:

"The support is offered regardless of length of service, when or where they were injured during their service in the Armed Forces. Our services are available not only for those wounded in the current conflict in Afghanistan but also for those injured during previous conflicts, or while performing normal daily duties and training."

"The support is offered regardless of length of service . . ."

Together with advertised job vacancies, the charity addresses the three parts of the recruitment cycle: Who am I? Where do I want to go? How do I get there? 'Soldier On!'™ has already assisted many Service leavers and veterans and is supported by some of the leading employers in the UK including: Network Rail, Thames Water, Virgin and Lend-Lease to name a few. It also partners with volunteers who are all professional recruiters from top recruitment companies and so it really is the 'Big Society' in action.

Through the charity's provision of careers and life-long employment support, veterans have the opportunity to live their lives independently, self-sufficiently and with dignity. One veteran, helped by the charity, explained how he was supported.

Stuart, a former Infantry soldier severely wounded in Afghanistan, has recently started a new managerial role at The Athletes' Village, through the charity. He said:

"One star has shone brighter than any other and that is 'Soldier On!'™. I have had a great deal of help and advice with my CV, both developing it and distributing it to industry



Crown Copyright MOD

"It listened to my worries, wants, needs and hopes. 'Soldier On!'™ fits perfectly, it fills the cracks and provides a vital close, personal and planned approach with a specific aim of getting wounded soldiers out into industry with gainful employment.

"It has helped me to believe that a very bright future lies ahead"

"I personally believe that working and feeling a sense of purpose, is the best thing that can happen in recovery for any wounded soldier. 'Soldier On!'™ provides the conditions in which this can happen. The charity has helped and continues to help me, for this I am very grateful. It has helped me to believe that a very bright future lies ahead."

Contacts

For further information, please visit:
www.soldieron.org.uk
or email nicholas@soldieron.org.uk

The Lighthouse Foundation

Support group for families affected by addiction



Kathleen Bryson from Ayrshire-based charity The Lighthouse Foundation explains how they can support veterans and their families dealing with addiction issues.

"The Foundation is an Ayrshire-wide project that offers support to families and children who have a family member addicted to alcohol or drugs. Our families come from diverse backgrounds; addiction can affect



Kathleen Bryson

anyone, it doesn't matter if you live in a tent or a castle you can still have your heart broken by a loved one's addiction issues. If you are lucky enough to never have been affected you may find it very difficult to understand the total devastation addiction causes, every family member is affected from the oldest adult to the youngest child.

"The Project is available to anyone who has concerns about a family member misusing drugs and or alcohol.

"addiction can affect anyone"

"Asking for help isn't easy, we know that. That's why we try to keep our service as informal and relaxed as possible. The first time you visit us we will put the kettle on and have a chat to see if and how we can help . . . sometimes a listening ear is all it takes for families to feel a little bit better.

"All of our activities are aimed at putting coping strategies in place and providing relevant information to help minimise the

impact of a relative's drug misuse on their family."

The Charity launched a project called STOP Drugs - Education Saves Lives, which gives information on basic drug awareness, the legalities of possession and overdose intervention. Over the last five years this project has given this vital information to over 19,000 people in Ayrshire.

The Foundation works in partnership with HMP Kilmarnock, The Scottish Drug Forum and addiction services in Ayrshire including Turningpoint, Turnaround and NHS Addiction service. It's a member of Scottish Families affected by addiction, Families Outside, Scottish Recovery Network and many other organisations. Referrals come from Addiction services, Social Work, NHS, GP's, Community Psychiatric Nurses and self referrals.

Contacts

Visit www.lighthouse-foundation.co.uk, e-mail lighthousekillie@aol.com or call 01563 521 343.

Building a future

New project helps charity provide up-to-date support and services to Scottish veterans with a visual impairment



SCOTTISH WAR BLINDED

Scottish War Blinded provides assistance to people who have been members of the Armed Forces and who have a significant sight loss or are in receipt of a war pension or an award under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme for visual impairment.

THE new Linburn Centre based at Wilkieston to the west of Edinburgh is a brand new building designed to meet the changing needs of its members. It's a registered day centre with the Scottish Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland. Members can visit the centre daily and there is no charge for the services. The charity also has its own minibus and may be able to pick up members living within a 30 minute drive who have difficulty travelling on their own.

The new purpose built Centre can accommodate 35 members daily. The

charity is presently building up the numbers of members attending and has a small waiting list for new members. There is a wide range of leisure and social activities available including workshops, arts & crafts, daily living skills, IT, gym and relaxation in addition to training opportunities. There are also qualified sessional workers ready to assist the Centre's staff and a rehabilitation officer is also there to help people who are adjusting to sight loss. The charity has its own private gardens which can be accessed directly from the Centre.

Outreach

As part of the new development, Scottish War Blinded also has an Outreach Service, initially in Edinburgh, Lothian & Borders region and in Grampian as a pilot project before expanding to cover the whole of Scotland. Outreach workers will provide a



The new Linburn Centre

one-stop contact point for dealing with statutory and voluntary agencies and offer assistance with benefits and daily living skills.

Contacts

For further information, please contact Rosie McLaughlin, Manager of The Linburn Centre, call 0131 333 1369 or email rosie.mclaughlin@scottishwarblinded.org.uk

Editor's Note: The centre provides a three course lunch every day and many members say this is the best part of the day!

The WAY Foundation – “you are not alone”

Working in partnership to support bereaved Service families

There are over 1,700 members about 15 per cent of which are male.



Founded eleven years ago by the sister of a young widow who couldn't find any support, The WAY (Widowed and Young) Foundation is the only national charity for people widowed before they were 50. Members are in their twenties, thirties and forties. Some were not married, some have no children, some were pregnant when they lost their partner, some had young, teenage or grown up children. It provides a social and support network for them and for their children.

WAY is a self-help group run by volunteers, all bereaved young themselves. It offers practical support to all members, whatever their circumstances, through local social activities in local groups across the UK; weekend trips and holidays; a secure, online message board and chatroom for members only; a regular newsletter; information on other organisations and counselling groups; a free book and dvd loaning service; a telephone line for enquiries and information and a residential AGM weekend each year.

Contacts

You can find out more about WAY by emailing info@wayfoundation.org.uk, telephoning 0870 0113450 or visiting the website: www.wayfoundation.org.uk. There is also a members-only group on Facebook.

Some, like Lesley-Ann George-Taylor, are Service widows. Lesley-Ann's husband, a Commander in the Royal Navy, died in December 2005, leaving Lesley-Ann and her son, who was then 11. Lesley-Ann's mother showed her a newspaper article about WAY soon after. "I was desperate to speak to others in the same situation as me, to share feelings about death and grief," she remembers, "and to speak to people who have been there and really understand." Her non-widowed friends were keen for her to "move on" and, though very kind, they were not providing the right kind of support to her.

Initially, she found WAY's newsletter enormously helpful, reading articles that gave her hope for the future. Gradually she ventured out to WAY events.

"I found everyone so welcoming," she says, "and forged lovely friendships."

She also took her son on a WAY holiday which was,

"wonderful – we were all there together and didn't have to face the inevitable question: 'where's your husband then?' It makes a huge difference to be with people who understand."

Lesley-Ann has since established the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Widows Association, reaching out to other Service widows and the two organisations work closely together.



Lesley-Ann and her late husband Steven George-Taylor

“It makes a huge difference to be with people who understand.”



Children enjoy the beach at the WAY summer outing

Building self belief

Helping former Service personnel 'move forward with a renewed purpose'



A launch event gave representatives from Help for Heroes, the Royal Marine Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, The Royal British Legion, Veterans Welfare Service, Combat Stress, Alabare Christian Care Homes and Sport England a taster of the "Moving forward with renewed purpose" course.

Former Servicemen and women are being offered a new way of reintegrating into civilian life with a Devon-based residential course which combines personal development training with social farming.

'Moving forward with a renewed purpose' has been developed to help former military personnel (and serving personnel) forge a new and successful life on 'Civvy Street' by giving them time out in a rural environment to develop a new mindset and new skills.

Hush Farms, a social farm based at Branscombe in East Devon, and ProAction Development C.I.C. (Community Interest Company – a not-for-profit social enterprise) of Somerset has devised the six day residential course in response to the challenge former Service personnel may experience in making the transition to

“... former Servicemen and women can have the time and space they need to reflect and share experiences with others in a similar situation.”

civilian life. The programme aims to support current resettlement services in transitioning former Service personnel into civilian life and employment.

Bernard Genge from ProAction Development served as a medic in the Royal Navy. He explained that the transition from Service to civilian life can be extremely difficult for some; "You go from a life where your purpose was known and you were highly respected, to one of uncertainty with a temporary lack of direction. This can have the effect of lowering self-confidence and self-esteem, and the longer the gap between leaving the Services and getting a civilian job, the harder it may become."

The classroom activities, which are centred around ProAction Development's unique *10 Actions® to Transform Your Life* programme and published book, are complemented by hands-on practical farming experience with husband and wife team Penny and Jon Bond.

Penny explained:

"Our social farm is all about building self-belief, developing new skills and having a good time on the farm. The countryside, animals, nature and good honest outdoor hard-work can have a really therapeutic effect and simply by being away from everyday pressures means that our former Servicemen and women can have the time and space they need to reflect and share experiences with others in a similar



Guests participated in activities including: chain-sawing, quad biking, caring for lambs and horsemanship.

situation. Service personnel who have already been on our course have been amazed at what they are capable of doing. We're still in touch with many of them who say that their experience with Hush Farms and ProAction Development really made a difference."

As well as former Service personnel, Hush Farms also helps full-time carers and people seeking respite and a new direction in life. The *Moving forward* course is also being offered to the families of Service personnel who are facing difficulties in readjusting to their relative leaving the Service.

Contacts

For further information visit www.hushfarms.co.uk where you can watch a short film of a Hush Farms course and hear some first-hand experiences or call Penny Bond on 07791 344216. You can also visit www.proaction-development.com for more details or call Bernard Genge – 01460 61459 or Amanda Mooney – 01460 67480.

SPVA News

The regular feature providing you with updates from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency

Regional Support for Armed Forces Community

SPVA Podcast finds out the latest details on new network launched.

ONE of the Agency's latest podcast provides an update on the launch of the Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees based across the UK.



There are thirteen new Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees (VAPCs), created to take part in a one-year pilot; providing support to the Armed Forces and veterans on a regional basis.

Tony Phillips, Chairman of the Yorkshire and Humber Committee took part in the podcast interview and explained how the Committees are supporting the Armed Forces Community, he said:

"If you are keen to help those in need, advise and influence policy as well as advocate for our Service men and women, or you - or someone close to you - is enduring difficulties as a direct consequence of service and needs local assistance, then I strongly commend this podcast to you."

Editor's Note: At the time of going to print podcasts were launched to support the revision of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. See page 6 for further information.

SPVA Podcasts can be found on the social media hub, visit: www.veterans-uk.info

Events springing forward

With the arrival of spring, the SPVA online events calendar has started to fill up with events planned over the next few months.

The weather is getting warmer, the days are lasting longer and the nights are lighter. So it's the ideal time to start planning events; whether it's an occasion to mark Armed Forces Day 2011 or an Advice Day for veterans.

Take advantage of the free opportunity to raise awareness of your event via our website. If you are planning an event, that may be of interest to the Armed Forces Community, then consider placing details on our online Calendar of Events. All you need to do is complete an online form with all the relevant details, we do the rest.

If you are looking for something to do then take a look at the calendar today, there may be an event near you that's worth checking out.

The national calendar can be found at www.veterans-uk.info



Service Personnel & Veterans Agency

News in brief Help for returning veterans

New Support group created in Warrington to help veterans settling in the town



Councillor Mike Biggin and former Coldstream Guardsman Lance Reah have created a Support Group to bring all the major agencies and organisations together, providing a single point of contact to the sources of help and support for ex-Service personnel and their families in Warrington.

THE aim is to highlight all the services available and show local ex-Service personnel that they always have someone to turn to. Cllr Biggin explained:

"We felt that we have a duty to make the return to Warrington as stress free as possible in light of what Service people

were potentially willing to risk on our behalf.

"Thankfully, there was such enthusiasm for this project that for the first meeting we had to limit the numbers to make it manageable.

"Our first project is to create a "Welcome Home" pack for returning personnel and their families. The Group members, which include: Citizens Advice, Royal British Legion, Police and Fire Authorities, Borough Council Housing and Neighbourhood teams plus the NHS and Job Centre Plus, have all agreed to work together to produce the pack.

"Any advisors in the Warrington area that are or can support veterans, please contact me to see how we can work together to support our local Armed Forces Community."



Former Coldstream Guard Lance Reah, former Grenadier Guard Cllr Colin Oliver and Cllr Mike Biggin

Contacts

For further information call Cllr Biggin on 01925 213612 or email mbiggin@warrington.gov.uk

Tourism for All

Charity provides information on accessible tourism for veterans

Tourism for All UK (TFA) works to help disabled people, including veterans, enjoy leisure opportunities and holidays. TFA provides detailed information about accessible tourism, to help give the confidence to people to get out and travel and enjoy life to the full.

THE Charity's information service is backed by a website, www.tourismforall.org.uk and has a unique helpline - 0845 124 9971.

As well as accommodation, travel, and attractions, TFA provides information about equipment hire; places where care is available; and sources of finance towards the cost of a holiday for people on low income - in particular grant-making Trusts that consider applications from people who have served in the UK Armed Forces.

OPENBRITAIN is a travel guide to accessible Britain published by TFA. The guide costs £9.99 and can be purchased direct from the Charity. There is also a companion website - www.openbritain.info - where information about accessible accommodation in the UK can be found.

Contacts

For further information on Tourism for All UK: visit their Twitter page: [@tourismforalluk](https://twitter.com/tourismforalluk),
E-mail: info@tourismforall.org.uk
or call 0845 124 9971



Proud day as Memorial Gardens are opened

Hundreds gather to mark the official opening of Norwich's historic Memorial Gardens.



The cutting of the ribbon

Second World War veterans proudly wearing their campaign medals stood side-by-side with other members of the public as Victor Howe, president of the Norwich branch of The Royal British Legion, and serving soldier David Heir, of the 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment, cut the ribbon in March.

THE Grade II* listed memorial and gardens have been transformed thanks to a £2.6 million restoration project. This saw the war memorial restored and turned to face St Peter's Street, the structure supporting the gardens repaired and new ramps put in to allow disabled access. Sensory plants have also been laid out in the gardens so that people with mobility problems and sensory disabilities can enjoy them.



The memorial fully restored

In the memorial's former place in the gardens is a new bronze sculpture entitled

'Breath' - the work of award-winning sculptor Paul de Monchoux. His work includes the Wilfred Owen memorial, the BBC Churchill memorial, and the memorial to Second World War slave workers in Jersey.

Breath has been designed to reflect the furtherance of peace, hope and survival, in contrast to the sombre message of the monument. It carries an inscription which reads: "The living honour the dead, only a breath divides them."



Breath, the new bronze sculpture

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Learning animal husbandry skills at a new social farm project supporting veterans - See page 24.