




Ministry
of Defence

Issue 31 March 2014

Veterans **WORLD**[®]

Raising awareness of the range of help and advice available to veterans



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Veterans UK Helpline**

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HELP AND SUPPORT FROM SERVICE PERSONNEL AND VETERANS AGENCY



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Email: veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.veterans-uk.info

Facebook: Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (MOD)

Twitter: @SPVAmoD

* Calls from mobiles may be charged depending on the contract and network provider.

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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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Want to make an editorial contribution?

Contributions are most welcome.
To raise awareness of an initiative, scheme or organisation that offers help, advice or support to veterans, contact the Editorial Team by email: SPVA-VeteransWorld@mod.uk or by calling: 01253 338816

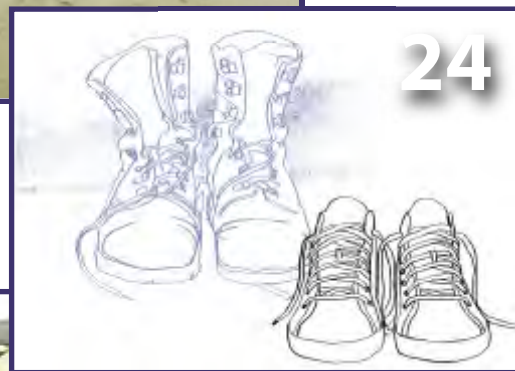
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News in brief

Coach company recruiting for Service leavers



A Derbyshire coach company is encouraging veterans to apply for new driving vacancies after National Express pledged to guarantee job interviews for Service leavers.

Heanor-based YourBus, which operates around a hundred services on behalf of National Express, has driving vacancies on offer and Driver Training Officer Peter Jones is particularly keen for ex-Service personnel to apply.

This follows a groundbreaking promise made by the UK's largest coach operator to interview all Service leavers for its driving roles. Earlier this year, National Express became the first company in the country to sign the government's Corporate Covenant, a commitment to support people who have served in the Armed Forces, put in place to ensure nobody faces disadvantage in civilian life through having served.

All people – whether ex-Service or not – are welcome to apply for the roles, but veterans are eligible for a guaranteed interview for the roles.

Veterans simply need to meet minimum criteria including holding a valid PCV license and, for safety reasons, living within an hour of the depot.

While a guaranteed interview does not automatically mean a guaranteed job, it is hoped the chance to be interviewed professionally with constructive feedback, gives a valuable leg-up to ex-Service personnel, many of whom will not have had an interview since joining the Forces.

Candidates can apply via the websites at www.ctp.org.uk, www.catchyourbus.co.uk, or in writing to YourBus, Heanor Gate Road, Heanor Gate Industrial Estate, Heanor, Derbyshire, DE75 7RJ, or telephone 01773 549093.



Haig Housing



From October 2013, Haig Homes and Haig Housing Trust amalgamated and the

organisation is now known as Haig Housing.

Haig Housing is the leading provider of housing assistance for the Service and ex-Service Community and is the Strategic Housing Partner of Help for Heroes. The main focus of the Trust is the provision of a range of good quality general needs rented property throughout the UK. The Trust also advises on housing options and gives specialist assistance to severely wounded and disabled Service and ex-Service personnel on adaptations, property purchase and has a Shared Ownership Scheme for those with Armed Forces Compensation Funds.

www.haighousing.org.uk

New Horticultural Therapy Service

HighGround, the charity which provides land-based career advice and opportunities for veterans has announced the appointment of Carol Sales as its first Horticultural Therapist. Based at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) at Headley Court, Carol will provide a year-round service to a delegated caseload of patients with a range of minor to complex needs.

Carol has excellent credentials for her new post, having been involved in horticulture for more than 30 years. She said, "I feel greatly honoured to have been given this role with HighGround and I want to see the people I work with get really hooked and so absorbed that they want to do more."

Anna Baker Cresswell, HighGround Development Director said, "I am thrilled to welcome Carol to the HighGround team and can't wait to get started."

The new role has been made possible with funding from ABF the Soldiers' Charity and the Westminster Foundation, to provide a Horticultural Therapy service for DMRC's patients. www.highground-uk.org

The ReMemBrIn Study



Veterans are invited to take part in a research study on head injuries.

Rehabilitation of Memory following Brain Injuries (ReMemBrIn) is a scientific study investigating the effectiveness of memory rehabilitation for civilians and military personnel with memory problems following traumatic brain injury. The study is being coordinated by Dr Roshan das Nair (Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust) and Professor Nadina Lincoln (University of Nottingham).

The study looks to see how much the rehabilitation programme helps people with memory problems following traumatic brain injury and will hopefully improve treatment for these individuals in the future.

Around six per cent of patients are admitted to Accident and Emergency



The University of Nottingham

departments in the UK as a result of a head injury. A study in the United States also found that 25 per cent of soldiers experienced a head injury during their Army career. Following this type of injury, a lot of these people will find that they have long lasting problems with their memory, affecting their life in a negative way.

The study is comparing a memory rehabilitation programme with current clinical care. It will assess the usefulness of memory rehabilitation in reducing problems with memory and in addition, how much it would cost to the NHS to provide such a service. The study has centres in Nottingham, Leicester, Derby, Birmingham, Chester and Liverpool. The study is sponsored by Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust and is funded by the National Institute of Health Research.

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

Any veterans who would like further information can contact Mrs Sandip Stapleton (Trial Manager) on 0115 8844930 or sandip.stapleton@nottingham.ac.uk <http://www.remembrin.org/>

Major new research project into military charities unveiled

The Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) is funding the Directory of Social Change (DSC) to conduct an independent and comprehensive review of the military charity sector, and to produce an authoritative online *Guide to the Military Charity Sector*.

There is currently no single independent source of information on charities in the UK that cater for serving and ex-Service personnel and their families – known as the Armed Forces Community. The recently published Transition Mapping Study, and other studies, have highlighted a number of areas where this lack of understanding causes confusion, affecting policy makers, funders and the charities themselves, as well as those individual members of the Armed Forces Community who are seeking help.

The DSC/FiMT Guide will include: a breakdown and analysis of money raised; good practice; distribution of funding for grant-making versus service delivery; types of organisations within the sector; an analysis of geographical distribution of support versus need; performance comparisons with other sectors and contact information.

www.fim-trust.org/

New HQ for SSAFA

On Friday November 8, Her Majesty The Queen, SSAFA's Patron, accompanied by His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, formally opened the new headquarters of SSAFA at Queen Elizabeth House, St Dunstan's Hill, London.

The Queen and The Duke were received by His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent, President of SSAFA, who presented General Sir Kevin O'Donoghue, Chairman of SSAFA.

The Royal party were told of the current work of the charity before attending a reception where guests included beneficiaries, volunteers and staff from across SSAFA's range of services.

The Queen unveiled a plaque to mark the opening and was presented with a badge to mark the 60 years of Her Majesty's support as Patron.

www.ssafa.org.uk

Crawley veterans benefit from welcome scheme



Crawley is backing a national campaign to make sure the Armed Forces Community are given the warmest of welcomes with the support of local businesses across the town.

The Heroes Welcome scheme aims to raise awareness of and support for the Armed Forces community and highlight the outstanding contribution they make to this country.

The initiative first started in Scarborough when a few local businesses grouped together in order to offer visiting Service personnel special discounts. It's now backed by over 500 businesses in a growing network of towns and cities across the United Kingdom.

The scheme, which officially launched in Crawley in November,

encourages local businesses to display a window sticker showing they are happy to offer a discount, service upgrade or special acknowledgement to military personnel on production of an ID card or veterans' badge.

Crawley's participation in the scheme is one of the first actions from its Community Covenant, signed at the Armed Forces Day event in July 2013.

Retailers and organisations can give as much or as little support to Servicemen and women as they're able, be it a discount or simply a warm welcome.

Organisations interested in committing to the scheme should contact Toby Shaw on 01293 438655 or email toby.shaw@crawley.gov.uk



www.crawley.gov.uk/heroeswelcome

Jobs4Reservists and Veterans go live on new web site

South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (SERFCA), based in Aldershot, Hampshire, offer support to veterans and current members of the Reserve Forces from all three Services. This includes members of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the Army, the Royal Air Force, and Cadets, including all their adult volunteers, in the South East Region of the UK.

In 2013, the Association went a step further developing and introducing an innovative employment web site called Jobs4Reservists.

The web site is set up to support all those Reservists who are seeking employment and put them together with employers who have vacancies to fill.



Ex-Service personnel or veterans may also apply for jobs on the site which is free to use for both employers and job-seeking reservists or veterans.

Fred Hughes, SERFCA's Corporate Communications Officer based at Seely House said, "If you are an ex-Serviceman or woman, reservist or veteran, who is looking for a job, then visit the site and take a look, if you are an employer the site is free to advertise."

He added, "So far we have had some very positive feedback and to date we have advertised over 1,000 jobs, and hits on the site are increasing each week."

“ . . . to date we have advertised over 1,000 jobs, and hits on the site are increasing each week.”

If you are interested in finding out more visit www.jobs4reservists.org.uk

Bereavement support for the Military Family

Project aimed at supporting the bereaved



Photo © Jacky Chapman

Amersham Cruse bereavement support group

Cruse Bereavement Care has been granted funding by the Ministry of Defence to develop and raise awareness of bereavement services available for the Military Family.

THE BEREAVEMENT IN THE MILITARY FAMILY PROJECT will support bereaved Serving personnel, their families and the veterans community.

Cruse Bereavement Care is a registered charity offering bereavement support, advice and information to children, young people and adults. Working to enhance society's care of bereaved people, their services are free of charge and are available by telephone, online and face to face. Supporting anyone who has been bereaved wherever or however the death has occurred, all services are delivered by trained bereavement volunteers through 70 Areas and Branches including the National Helpline.

The two-year project is being

funded by the Armed Forces Covenant LIBOR Fund. The intention of the LIBOR Fund is to support the two key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are that the Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services, and that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most, such as the injured and the bereaved.

Cruse Chief Executive, Debbie Kerslake said: "The death of a loved one is devastating, no matter what the circumstances, and a military bereavement brings with it many additional factors that can complicate the bereavement process. We are delighted that Cruse is now able to build on its existing Military work and develop new training and resources to support all areas of the Military Family".

"A military bereavement brings with it many additional factors that can complicate the bereavement process."

The project will:

- train more volunteers to support bereaved Military Family members;
- develop and distribute self help bereavement resources across the



Photo © Jacky Chapman

Support is provided by telephone, online and face-to-face meetings

- Military Family; and
- pilot a peer support module training Military Family members to support each other.

Over the two-year period the project will expand its services supporting bereaved serving personnel, their families and the ex-Service community. Training more volunteers to support the military family, expanding the online section of their website alongside an extensive distribution of self-help resources to military family members. They will also be piloting a peer-to-peer support service.

Phone	0844 477 9400
Web	www.cruse.org.uk
email	helpline@cruse.org.uk
Facebook	www.facebook.com/pages/Cruse-Bereavement-Care/54500061511
Twitter	@CruseCare

Healing Hidden Wounds

£2.7 million LIBOR funding for new mental wellbeing support

Help for Heroes is launching a new early intervention service which will help veterans and their families who are suffering from the early symptoms of potentially more serious mental health injuries.

HELP FOR HEROES is also allocating £4.8 million to the new service and has been granted £2.7 million over five years to help fund the project.

The new Help for Heroes Hidden Wounds psychological support programme provides a crucial enhancement to treatment already available and will help identify and treat symptoms such as stress, depression and anxiety before they develop into more serious mental health conditions.

Help for Heroes is working in partnership with Exeter University CEDAR Centre to develop specific treatment plans for the Forces which will be used at Help for Heroes Hidden Wounds Centres.

Immediate and specialist support which recognises the culture and unique challenges faced by the

military will offer treatment to help prevent a decline into chronic mental illnesses. For mental illnesses requiring high-intensity treatment such as PTSD, existing high-intensity support provided by Combat Stress and the NHS will be used.

The new service will be available to all veterans of the Armed Forces and their family members and the family members/ carers of serving personnel. Those who are serving are offered mental health support by the Armed Forces.

Bryn Parry, Co-Founder and CEO of Help for Heroes said:

"It can take real courage to access support for mental injuries and the Help for Heroes Hidden Wounds programme is designed to offer easily accessible and friendly support which prevents a spiral of decline. Those who have remained at home while their loved one is serving face similar challenges and this new service will offer them access to specialist support they so desperately need."

Ali Richmond, the wife of a wounded veteran, said:

"As the wife of someone who was wounded I know that Service affects the whole family, whether it is worrying if they will be alright or if it is worrying about how you and your children are coping. This new service will provide somewhere to turn and a vital life-line for the families of those who serve and those who have served."

"This new service will provide somewhere to turn and a vital life-line for the families of those who serve and those who have served."

Professor Neil Greenberg, Academic Centre for Defence Mental Health, King's College London, said:

"This programme will engage with veterans, and their families, early and deliver evidence based support from an organisation that they trust. The new service will also gather scientific evidence to allow it to develop best practice guidelines for this important group of people."

The service will launch later this year.



The Hidden Wounds programme will support members of the Armed Forces community including families

Phone	01980 844224
Web	www.helpforheroes.org.uk
Facebook	www.facebook.com/HelpforHeroesOfficial
Twitter	@HelpforHeroes
YouTube	www.youtube.com/user/HelpforHeroesTV

Strength to Strength

East Lancashire veterans' charity expands outreach

It's been a busy first year for the Veterans in Communities (VIC) charity, topped off with the opening of its own centre

VETERANS, serving personnel and their families now have new help and support offered across East Lancashire and Rochdale.

VIC took over their new centre in Rossendale on Armistice Day. Manager Bob Elliott said: "Having a permanent home helps us to really establish and expand our services. The work we have pioneered in Rossendale has given us an amazing platform to be able to spread out across many different areas.

"Now we have a proper base we can have rooms dedicated to the work of VIC. Our successful art group can have its own room, without having to clear the work and paints away after each session."

VIC has secured the funding from the East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group to help develop outreach in a number of areas. More help will soon be offered in Pendle, Accrington, Blackburn and Darwen and Ribble Valley to complement established services in Rossendale and Heywood.

Outreach in Heywood has been further supported by a Lottery "Awards For All" grant which will enable the service to be expanded in 2014.

Veterans In Communities has also opened a drop-in at Burnley Retreat



VIC members visiting Lee Quarry



The Opening of the VIC centre in Burnley

and Recover Centre on Hammerton Street, which is run every Tuesday from 10am to 1pm.

It is manned by veterans Peter Webster and Danny Flaherty, both of whom have a wealth of experience and are currently taking a Level Three Information Advice and Guidance college course.

Peter, 43, is a former military musician. He played French horn in the Queen Royal Irish Hussars and left the Forces in 1997 but has struggled to hold down a full-time job.

The transition between army life in the Royal Ordnance Corps and Civvy Street also proved a stumbling block for Danny. He was discharged on medical grounds in 1991 with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and, although he is a trained carpenter and joiner, is still looking for work.

Peter said: "We can help people who have transitional issues and can signpost them to where they can receive help and we can offer support for people who are seeking employment.

"The SPVA Veterans Welfare Service, Burnley Veterans' Association UK and Burnley and District Services' Club are also here, so people can get help with issues like housing and also get involved with the social side.

"As well as offering outreach, any veteran and their family will be able to access the other activities offered by VIC; including fishing, walks and an art club.

"Joining VIC helps members tackle difficulties they may have with confidence, self esteem and motivation."

Accolade for new charity

Veterans In Communities won the non profit making category at the prestigious Rossendale Business Awards in November.

Award sponsors said the organisation had 'hit the ground running' and achieved an incredible amount in a very short space of time.



A recent VIC art exhibition

Phone 07961 554 006

Web www.veteransincommunities.org

email info@veteransincommunities.org

Facebook www.facebook.com/VeteransInCommunities

Legion invites veterans to 'Pop In'

Armed Forces Minister "pops in" to Merseyside to celebrate new improved Legion services



The Liverpool 'Pop In' centre is the first Legion centre to open in 2014

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Rt Hon Mark Francois MP, formally opened The Royal British Legion's new public "Pop In" Advice and Information Centre in the heart of the city centre.

BASED on Williamson Street in Liverpool, it is the first of 16 brand new centres that the Legion will open in major cities across the UK, as part of its biggest ever transformation to bring its work closer to the Armed Forces community. Each centre will offer a welcoming space for Service personnel and veterans to get practical help and advice, and for members of the public to find out more about the wide range of services and community activities provided by the Legion. The Legion has also made office space available to partner charities Combat Stress and the Regular Forces Employment Association (RFEA). Through this collaborative approach the aim is to provide a more seamless beneficiary service.

To coincide with the opening, the Legion also announced a new national Freephone helpline number, **0808 802 8080**, which will allow people to get help and support from a

trained adviser over the phone, as well as the launch of a new online information service via its website.

During the event, the Minister met current and former Service personnel, Legion beneficiaries, staff, members and volunteers. Mr Francois said "This is an area with a very strong Service tradition and currently over half a million veterans live in and around this region, so the demand for this service is not in question.

"The Legion does a remarkable job and offers tangible proof of what can be achieved when communities work together. The Royal British Legion has become an effective first point of contact by making its services more immediately accessible and is working alongside other welfare service providers and Armed Forces charities in the best interests of the Armed Forces community. The range of practical advice and support available through this new facility is extremely impressive."

Gillian McKinnon, the Legion's Manager for Cheshire and Merseyside, added: "Both nationally and locally, the Legion recognises that the profile of our beneficiaries is constantly changing and that we must continue

to improve our services to reflect that need.

"Being able to pick up a phone to a trained adviser via our brand new national Freephone number, also launched from today; looking online for information; or coming along to an office like this where they can talk face to face, represents major progress.

"My team is totally committed to providing the best possible service for the Armed Forces community, past and present, in Cheshire and Merseyside. From today it will be easier than ever before for people to find the help and support they need so if you want to know more, please do "Pop In"."

"... it will be easier than ever before for people to find the help and support they need so if you want to know more, please do "Pop In"."

A further 15 Legion "Pop In" Advice and Information Centres will open during 2014.

The Legion's new "Pop In" Advice and Information Centre to serve the Cheshire and Merseyside area is based at 25 – 31 Williamson Street, Liverpool L1 1EB. Its normal hours of opening will be Monday – Friday from 10am – 4 pm.

Phone 0808 802 8080

Web www.britishlegion.org.uk

Facebook www.facebook.com/OfficialPoppyLegion

Twitter @PoppyLegion

YouTube www.youtube.com/royalbritishlegion

Ready for your call

New and Improved Services from Veterans UK Helpline

SPVA's Veterans UK helpline has changed its freephone* telephone number. The new number **0808 1914 2 18** includes key dates of the Great War - 1914 to 1918. It is hoped that the link to such an historic event will create a more memorable number in the 100th anniversary year of the First World War.

TO COINCIDE with the recent announcements on improving support for veterans from Defence Minister Anna Soubry [see page 12], the Veterans UK helpline has made significant changes to improve the services it provides to veterans and the wider veterans community.

As well as the new more memorable number, the Veterans UK helpline has also extended its opening hours to take calls in the early evening and outside of normal business hours. The helpline is now open from 0730 to 1830 (1700 Fridays) on all working days.

Previously, those calling the helpline out of hours would get through to an answer phone service enabling a message to be left and advising of a next working day call-back.

Now SPVA, as part of the new improvements is working in partnership with Combat Stress and with the Samaritans, whose helpline operates 24-hours 7-days a week. This new formed partnership will allow out-of-hours callers to the SPVA Veterans UK helpline to opt to be routed to Combat Stress or the Samaritans; providing callers in need access to help out of hours.

Jon Parkin, SPVA Head of Veterans services, said: "We are constantly striving to improve our services to veterans, the new more memorable number, extended hours and the facility to speak out of hours to Combat Stress or the Samaritans helpline takes us further in better



The extended hours provide more flexibility for veterans to contact SPVA outside normal business hours

supporting our veterans. We are very pleased to be working with these other key partners to provide a better service to our customers."

"... the new more memorable number, extended hours and the facility to speak out of hours to Combat Stress or the Samaritans helpline takes us further in better supporting our veterans."

Peter Poole, Director of Strategic Planning and Partnerships at Combat Stress said: "Veterans in need of support can have a variety of concerns that need to be addressed, and the SPVA is an obvious place to turn for many of these.

"Working with the SPVA to make sure callers who need to speak to Combat Stress are put in touch with us is vital. Partnerships like this are key to making sure that serving personnel, veterans and their families get access to the mental health support that they need."

"Partnerships like this are key to making sure that serving personnel, veterans and their families get access to the mental health support that they need."

The Veterans UK Helpline handles approximately 16,000 phone calls and 1,900 emails per month from veterans, their families or representative in respect of a wide range of veterans related issues.

The advice requested through the Veterans UK Helpline is predominantly focused on pensions and compensation schemes administered by SPVA and medals concerns; however, veterans do call to seek help on a wide range of topics, some of whom are in urgent need of help. During helpline opening hours, these callers are helped by SPVA operators.

Phone

0808 1914 2 18
Dedicated Bereavement Line
0800 169 3458

Web

www.veterans-uk.info

* Calls from mobiles may be charged depending on the contract and network provider.

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To find out more visit the
SPVA Social Media Hub at
www.veterans-uk.info/social_media.html

New Veterans Accommodation

Government is establishing a new scheme to support housing needs



Anna Soubry MP meets blind veteran Norman Perry

“
... it is only right that we help meet their housing needs when they have fallen on hard times, been wounded in Service or need day-to-day care and support once they have left the Armed Forces.
”

The new £40 million Veterans Accommodation Fund will specifically help fund projects that address a particular housing need for the veterans community. The money is being used in support of the Armed Forces Covenant, which seeks to ensure that the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged as a result of their Service.

THE £40 million Veterans Accommodation Fund forms part of the spending announced by the Chancellor in his Autumn Statement to support Military and Emergency Services charities. The money for these projects comes from fines levied on banks for manipulating the LIBOR, and comes on top of some £35 million that has already been spent from the LIBOR fund, in support of the Armed Forces Covenant. In his Autumn

Statement, the Chancellor said that, “it is right that money paid in fines by people who demonstrated the worst of the values in our society is now being used to help and support those who demonstrate the very best”.

The Fund will specifically seek to fund projects which support veterans with a housing need, with a particular focus on homeless veterans, veterans who are wounded, injured and sick, and those with long term care needs or other social housing needs. This support can take a number of forms, and it is expected that funding will go to support building new veterans’ accommodation facilities, purchasing new properties, leasing new properties and facilities, and providing refurbishments for existing support facilities that are in need of upgrading.

Another important element of the new scheme is the intention to support projects that promote collaborative working across the veterans housing sector. Charities and other service providers bidding to the Fund are encouraged to work together to help provide more comprehensive and consistent support to veterans. The scheme is designed to support veterans across the whole of the UK, and make sure that veterans in different parts of the country have access to similar levels of support. By promoting a cross-UK approach and linking charities in different parts of the country together, the Veterans’ Accommodation Fund aims to forge new, strong working relationships amongst charities, and encourage them to share experience and best practice, to the benefit of the veterans community.

odation Fund Announced

The Veterans Minister, Anna Soubry, officially launched the scheme last month when she visited Blind Veterans UK in Brighton. During her visit, the Minister said:

“The men and women of our Armed Forces have served their country with honour and bravery so it is only right that we help meet their housing needs when they have fallen on hard times, been wounded in Service or need day-to-day care and support once they have left the Armed Forces.

“I am delighted that we have been able to double the amount we have already invested in projects through the LIBOR fines. This new funding demonstrates our unwavering commitment to our Armed Forces community and will help transform thousands of lives across the UK.”

The establishment of the new Fund shows how important veterans’ accommodation is to the government. The new Fund comes on top of LIBOR money that has already been spent to support veterans’ housing needs. Charities such as Blind Veterans UK

are an organisation that exists to provide care, training and support for ex-Servicemen and women with sight loss, and their families have benefitted from the funding. In 2013, they received £1 million in LIBOR funding to renovate and refurbish their existing accommodation in Brighton. Last year, Houses for Heroes Scotland also received £1.94 million to build 38 special-needs houses in seven Scottish Local Authority areas. These houses will be allocated to the younger disabled ex-Service personnel, wounded in recent conflicts, and their families, providing them with low-rented homes for life and for the generations that follow.

Bidding to the Fund is now open, and bids can be submitted to the gov.uk website until Friday June 13, 2014. Bids to the fund can be for projects anywhere from £10,000 to £10 million which do not exceed two years in length. Successful bids will be announced in August and September. For more information, visit www.mod.uk/covenant



Anna Soubry MP meets blind veteran John Cunnington at the Blind Veterans UK centre in Brighton which is benefitting from LIBOR funding



Anna Soubry MP meets blind veteran Sybil Henderson

“
Bids to the fund can be for projects anywhere from £10,000 to £10 million which do not exceed two years in length.
”

Web www.mod.uk/covenant

Veterans shaping unique lifestyle course

Funding boost for service helping Scottish veterans support each other



A Scottish charity is expanding its work with ex-Servicemen and women, thanks to a funding boost from the Scottish Government.

THE THISTLE FOUNDATION, a Health and Wellbeing charity, supports veterans struggling with issues such as depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and anxiety through unique lifestyle management courses and support sessions.

Alongside Thistle staff facilitators, veterans who have been through the course themselves, help deliver them to other ex-Servicemen and women. No one knows more about the issues facing a veteran than a fellow Service member who has first-hand military experience.

Thistle created the programme by involving veterans in shaping the course to meet the specific and unique challenges and needs of ex-Service members. It is based on the more general lifestyle management courses developed by Thistle that aim to help those with long term health conditions live the life they want.

The programme, which helps veterans cope with moving on in civilian life, will now be able to double the number of veterans it works with, thanks to a grant of £155,877 over two years from the Scottish Government's Self Management Impact Fund, administered by the Health and Social Care Alliance.

Diana Noel-Paton, Chief Executive of the Thistle Foundation said: "The Veterans Self Management Service works because veterans are there for each other. They can relate to each other. And once they have completed it successfully veterans go on to support others who are experiencing similar struggles. We know that a 'peer support' approach is hugely successful as individuals can say 'me too' and share how they coped with what was going on in their lives."



Brian Brown is a co-facilitator on the courses supporting other veterans

"The Veterans Self Management Service works because veterans are there for each other."

Brian Brown (46) is from the East End of Glasgow where he grew up with his mum and four brothers and sisters.

Brian joined the Royal Highland Fusilliers when he was 18. His military history included two tours of Northern Ireland, dealing with the aftermath of the Lockerbie air disaster in 1989, posts in Belize and a post in Riyadh during the Gulf War. In 1994 he joined the Royal Scots and in 1998 he was discharged.

Brian was diagnosed with chronic PTSD and had a problem with alcohol. He was also suffering from cirrhosis of the liver. However, 18 months ago he heard about Thistle Foundation's Lifestyle Management course for veterans and he joined the course. Brian has given up alcohol and through the course he has learned how to deal with things. Brian now helps to co-facilitate courses as a volunteer.

It took 10 years for Brian's PTSD to appear and he now wants to help other veterans who are struggling.

Phone	0131 656 9933
Web	www.thistle.org.uk
email	pat.mackinnon@thistle.org.uk
Facebook	www.facebook.com/thistlefoundation
Twitter	@thistlecharity

Helping with stress the TRiM way

Enduring support for all Royal Marine veterans

A new project will provide a new tier of assistance to the Royal Marines community from the Scottish Government.



THE Royal Marine veteran community, the Operational Stress Management (OSM) Cell of the Naval Command, the Royal Marines Association (RMA) and the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund (RMCTF) have come together to support and implement a new project called 'T4V' (TRiM for Veterans). 'TRiM' (Trauma, Risk Management) has been established in the Royal Marines for over 16 years.

James Fowler, TriM Practitioner for the North West Region explained: "Within the Royal Marines and in society as a whole, it is right and proper that we are all concerned about the short and long term consequences of operational military service.

"Personnel who are members of the RMA who have volunteered to become T4V Practitioners will be trained in dealing with a wide range of physiological support issues, interviewing skills and casework. T4V



The T4V practitioner's role is to act as the first responder to a veteran

Practitioners are not trained therapists or counsellors. Their role is to act as the initial responders to the veteran.

"In simple terms their task is to Engage-Befriend-Signpost. The signposting process is designed to ensure that the veterans are directed to the appropriate support agency with the minimum of delay."

The TRiM Practitioner is trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress and give advice to individuals on coping strategies that will best assist the veteran with their issues. Should it be necessary the practitioner will refer and support the veteran in

accessing the appropriate service or agency.

"Engage-Befriend-Signpost"

Every Royal Marine leaving the Corp has a TRiM interview and he is expected to attend a 2nd interview with a T4V Practitioner one year later. He will be offered two years free membership to the RMA, as this is believed to be the best way for him to be in touch with the Corp. It is important to remember that while the Royal Marines has the least incidence of PTSD in all the Armed Forces, it is no reason to take these important issues and responsibilities less seriously. Finally, T4V will provide enduring support for ALL Royal Marine Veterans.

James added: "If you would like to be considered to become a T4V Practitioner, visit our website, click on the Our Team link and you can click on the tab for the application form."



Members of the new T4V project

Web <http://www.trim4veterans.org/>

email info@trim4veterans.org

Support for working life after the Armed Forces

Harnessing skills and expertise for business



Chris Heaton (left), Montrose Group – discussing logistics with a colleague

Buckinghamshire businesses are supporting moves to make it easier for Service personnel to get civilian jobs when they leave the Armed Forces.

THE initiative is the latest under the Buckinghamshire Armed Forces Community Covenant, signed in 2012 by the County Council, which is drawing closer links between Service and civilian communities.

Two conferences, supported by a £4,000 grant from the Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant Scheme, and arranged by Buckinghamshire



Chris Heaton [pictured at work] is able to use skills learnt in the Armed Forces in his civilian job

Business First, have been held to promote the advantages of employing ex-Service personnel and reservists among employers in Buckinghamshire.

Recruiting ex-Service personnel

Around 200 Service personnel leave RAF High Wycombe and RAF Halton each year, and the aim is to make local employers aware of the skills and expertise they could offer the local economy.

Many find work within the county with companies who are pleased to harness their abilities. Others move into the area, which is exactly what Chris Heaton did.

Chris, who spent 24 years in the Commandos, is now Operations Manager at one of Europe's major manufacturing suppliers, The Montrose Group based in High Wycombe. His journey into civilian life took in a stint as Logistics Manager at Heathrow Airport as part of the team that built Terminal 5.

Chris's career path provides just one example that the transferable skills needed to transition from military life to civilian life are more common than many believe.

"When you think of the Armed Forces you might not think of things like invoicing and stock control," said Chris, "but although we are ordering in ammunition and armoured vehicles,

the principle is exactly the same.

"When you consider the logistical dilemma that is running an entire Army, you get an appreciation for how capable and skilled these men and women are. We deal with importing, exporting, human resources, training and development, and advanced IT systems. Which business doesn't need experts in those fields?"

"When you consider the logistical dilemma that is running an entire Army, you get an appreciation for how capable and skilled these men and women are."

"If somebody in the Army asks you to do something - whether it be the accounts, stock checking or project planning - you do it. You don't say 'that's not in my job spec'. You add it to your job spec!"

Every business is on the lookout for differing skill sets in their staff depending on their line of work, but every business needs the same kind of characteristics; hard-working, loyal, disciplined, adaptable, dependable team players, with leadership qualities to boot.

Chris exemplifies these qualities - and his Managing Director, Charles Ainsworth, would agree. These are qualities that have become bywords for Armed Forces personnel as they live, train and work to these ideals every day.

And they're good for business, too. "Our business does suit military formality: a sense of discipline, logical mind, and a good eye for detail," said Charles.

Phone 01296 382829

Web www.buckscc.gov.uk/community/armed-forces

The Government's commitment to the covenant in Scotland

Working in partnership to make the covenant real

As the Scotland Office Minister with responsibility for veterans issues, David Mundell is working to ensure veterans in Scotland are represented by a strong voice in the UK Government.

WHEN the Coalition Government came into office in 2010, it made a commitment to rebuild the Armed Forces Covenant. Since then, the UK Government, the Scottish Government and partner charities have been very busy. The Armed Forces Covenant was published in May 2011 and the legislation setting out its principles received Royal Assent in November 2011. The Government published the second Covenant Annual Report in December 2013, describing some of the key achievements of the past year, including under the Community Covenant, the Covenant LIBOR fund and the newly established Corporate Covenant.

Mr Mundell explained: "Since the Mr Community Covenant was launched in 2011, all 32 Scottish local authorities have pledged to work to bring the civilian and Armed Forces communities closer together. Almost £600,000 of Community Covenant grants have been awarded to 29 local causes in Scotland. Funded causes include: a log cabin near Dumfries to accommodate week long visits by injured veterans; a mobility-adapted mini bus to provide access to local facilities for elderly and disabled people from the local and Armed Forces communities in Edinburgh; and £50,000 for the Glasgow City Council veterans' employment programme, paying subsidies to firms which take on former members of the Armed Forces.

"... all 32 Scottish local authorities have pledged to work to bring the civilian and Armed Forces communities closer together."



The Minister (centre) with veterans at a service at Westminster Abbey

"I was delighted that, in 2013, twelve Scottish charitable organisations working to support veterans were awarded over £5.4 million from the Covenant LIBOR Fund. Veteran's F1rst Point, which aims to provide a one-stop shop for veterans and their families, will receive over £2.5 million to roll out their service at new centres in Inverness, Dundee, and Aberdeen.

Over £1.9 million is being provided to Houses for Heroes to fund 38 adapted houses in seven Scottish local authorities for younger, disabled, ex-Service personnel wounded in conflict. A further £230,000 will be used by Scottish Veterans Residences to provide accommodation for veterans. In addition to these projects, LIBOR funding is supporting veterans in Scotland through work undertaken by: Dame Agnes Weston's Royal Sailors' Rests; Horseback UK; the HMS Neptune

Welfare Fund; Rothiemurchus Lodge; Aviemore Gardening Leave; RBL Scotland; Southclyde Councils and Partner Agencies; and Cathcart Old Parish Church.

"These are just some examples of what the UK Government has been doing in support of veterans in Scotland and across the United Kingdom. Serving personnel, veterans and their families have made an immense contribution to this country.

The UK Government's commitment to rebuild the Armed Forces Covenant has made a real difference, and we are committed to doing much more."

Web

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/scotland-office>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/fulfilling-the-commitments-of-the-armed-forces-covenant>

Special delivery

From delivering Logistics in the Royal Navy to delivering gifts for troops

Having served in the Royal Navy for over 20 years, Sarah Clewes opted to take voluntary redundancy in order to pursue a second career in the charity sector and joined uk4u, as the Fundraising and Projects Manager. As a former Logistics Officer she has a sound appreciation of the enormous feat getting the Christmas boxes to deployed Service personnel entails.

SINCE forming in 2005, uk4u has gone from strength to strength; the charity has delivered over 180,000 Christmas boxes to Service personnel deployed at Christmas, whether in the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force, serving in operational theatre such as Afghanistan, in ships, submarines, Air stations or are in hospital over the Christmas period as a 'gift from the Nation' to thank them for sacrificing time away from their families and loved ones.



Lorraine Kelly with Service personnel and the Christmas 2013 box

Soldiers Christmas Fund'. There was an overwhelming response, and the money raised was used to provide an embossed brass box, with a variety of contents. For officers and men on active service afloat or at the frontline the box contained a pipe, lighter, 1oz of tobacco and 20 cigarettes. Non-smokers and boys received a bullet pencil and a packet of sweets. More than 355,000 gifts were successfully delivered in time for Christmas, but as time went on there was a shortage of brass and some did not receive their box until as late as summer 1916. Even in January 1919, a 'considerable number' had still not been distributed.

The fund finally closed in 1920, by which time almost £200,000 had been donated to provide more than two and a half million boxes with contents.

The present day Christmas box is a huge success due to the support of the MOD and the charity's sponsors and supporters. The contents include both novelties (a Christmas hat and Carol sheet) and good quality useful items (a Spork, wind up torch and earphones); indeed the box becomes a useful storage tin on completion of tours for medals, photographs and gizzits.

Sarah said "As 2014 marks 100 years of the giving of Christmas boxes to our troops, uk4u is scoping opportunities to contrast the old and the new and is keen to promote stories from Service veterans about the gifts they received while deployed. So please contact me with your stories and dits."

"2014 marks 100 years of the giving of Christmas boxes to our troops . . ."



The 1914 box

Sending gifts to our troops follows the example of HRH Princess Mary, who first suggested the idea in 1914.

Princess Mary, the seventeen year old daughter of King George V and Queen Mary wanted to send a 'gift from the Nation' to all wearing the King's uniform and serving overseas on Christmas Day 1914.

In November 1914, an advertisement in the national press invited contributions for a 'Sailors &



Sarah Clewes in her new role at the UK4U charity (above) and in uniform



Web	www.uk4u.org
email	sarah.clewes@uk4u.org
Facebook	www.facebook.com/uk4ucharity
Twitter	@uk4uCharity

On reserve

Reserve Forces proving to be assets to civilian workforces



SPVA's Veterans Welfare Service has been recognised for their support of a valued reservist

The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) is one of the many employers supporting staff in the Reserve Forces and reaping the benefits of the transferable skills of the Armed Forces.

SaBRE, Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers acknowledged the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency's Veterans Welfare Service for their support as a valued Reservist employer during a formal awards ceremony in 2013.

David Chauvelin is a Welfare Manager for SPVA's Veterans Welfare Service, and a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR). Having the full support of SPVA, David has so far completed two deployments in the last five years, as well as providing continuous support to the fleet and the wider RNR.

Alison Davies, Officer in Charge of the Welfare Service, collected the award on behalf of the SPVA and said: "I am honoured to collect this award on behalf of the Veterans Welfare



David Chauvelin has been in the Reserve Forces for five years and undertaken two tours on operations overseas

Service and proud that the SPVA supports our Reserve Forces"

Lieutenant Commander

Chauvelin has been a reservist since 1991 and a Welfare Manager with the Veterans Welfare Service since 2007. He said of his two deployments: "I am grateful that the Veterans Welfare Service facilitated both my recent tours and I have found that my experiences were extremely useful as a Welfare Manager when dealing with serving and ex-Service personnel for day-to-day SPVA business. These types of experiences helped me develop myself personally and professionally and can only be beneficial to the SPVA."

"... I have found that my experiences were extremely useful as a Welfare Manager when dealing with serving and ex-Service personnel for day-to-day SPVA business."

Brian Finch, Regional Welfare Manager, Veterans Welfare Service said "It is always difficult when a staff member is absent from the workplace but the long term benefits can outweigh the short term difficulties and these experiences have helped David to become a more effective Welfare Manager. The Military will be relying more and more on the essential work of the Reservists across the country and it is imperative that organisations, like ourselves, support those who risk their lives for their country. The Veterans Welfare Service, if required, is here to assist once that role has finished."

Reservists develop a broad range of skills through their military training which help them in their civilian jobs and which are valuable to their employers.



David, a Royal Navy Officer proudly holds his Afghanistan Medal

SaBRE is an organisation that aims to build support for members of the Reserve Forces from employers. It does this by explaining to employers the benefits, rights and obligations associated with employing a Reservist, as well as promoting the transferable skills that they receive through their military training and bring back to the workplace. SaBRE is funded by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and as such is a central conduit for feeding back employer views to the MOD on the employment of Reservists.

Did you know? Since January 2003 there have been over 27,000 mobilisations. Reservists have been mobilised for full time service, serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and other operations.

Did you know? According to SaBRE research conducted in 2010 amongst employers, 83 per cent of Reservist employers agreed that Reservists gain transferable skills that could never be learnt in their own job.

Phone SABRE 0800 389 5459
SPVA Veterans UK Helpline
0808 1914 2 18

Web www.sabre.mod.uk
www.veterans-uk.info/welfaresupportcontact.htm

Normandy 70

MOD announces support to the 70th anniversary of the Normandy landings



Crown Copyright/MOD

British Paras from 1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment hear a few old war stories from a D-Day veteran as they prepared for the 60th anniversary celebrations in 2004 at Ranville where the 6th Airborne Division landed.

The Ministry of Defence will support commemorations this summer to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings in France, taking place 5-6 June 2014.

PERSONNEL from all three Services will provide logistic and ceremonial support to the commemorations, known as "Normandy 70", and will assist veterans of the campaign as they mark this historic anniversary in Normandy. Work is being led by a specialist logistics unit, Force Troops Command, and 3rd (UK) Division of the Army, the division that led the assault on Sword Beach seventy years ago.

The Armed Forces will support a range of events taking place in the Normandy region. Major commemorations will include ceremonies on June 5 to mark the liberation of Ranville by the British 13th Parachute Battalion, the first village to be liberated on D-Day. Members of 16 Air Assault Brigade will mount a mass parachute drop to mark this occasion, which will be followed by a memorial service at the Statue of Field Marshal Montgomery at Colleville Montgomery.

On June 6, a United Kingdom-France Service of Remembrance will take place at Bayeux Cathedral organised by The Royal British Legion and the Normandy Veterans Association, followed by a special event at the Bayeux Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Cemetery.

A number of veterans will also attend an international ceremony organised by the French Government, and a service held by the Normandy Veterans Association at Arromanches.

The Ministry of Defence is working closely with partners across Government and with external agencies to deliver a fitting programme of commemorations to mark the anniversary. These include the Normandy Veterans Association, for whom this year will be of particular significance, as they have indicated it will be the last that they will officially mark. Later this year, the Association plans to officially disband and lay up their National Standard at a service at St Margaret's, Westminster, London. Working with the MOD on events and support to veterans will be The Royal British Legion. Another partner is the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the organisation that

commemorates Commonwealth Forces who died in the two World Wars, and custodians of the cemeteries where Commonwealth casualties of D-Day are buried.

Veterans wishing to return to Normandy in June will be able to apply for financial support from the Big Lottery Fund, who last February extended their "Heroes' Return 2 Scheme" till December 2015. This scheme enables veterans and their spouses, widows and widowers, and accompanying helpers to undertake the journey. Details of the scheme can be found at

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_heroes_return.

Veterans wishing to return to Normandy in June will be able to apply for financial support from the Big Lottery Fund

Further details, including information on the form and content of events for the anniversary, will be announced in due course.



Crown Copyright/MOD

Dennis Abbot, a former member of the Royal Army Service Corps, reflects on his D-Day memories as two fellow veterans walk past on the sands of what was Omaha beach during the 65th anniversary of D-Day in June 2009.

Applying first aid to mental health

Armed Forces Mental Health programme continues to roll out



Lt Col Dorney

LT COL RICHARD DORNEY MBE is highly experienced around the subject of military mental health, with a Master's degree in War and Psychiatry and a wealth of certificates in psychotraumatology, trauma risk management, suicide intervention skills and other related subjects. Add to this the 37 years of service he has in supporting the welfare of serving personnel and it becomes clear that this senior Army officer was an ideal candidate for delivering the Armed Forces Mental Health First Aid (AFMHFA) training, launched in 2013.

EXPLAINING why he chose to apply to become an AFMHFA Instructor, 53 year old Richard said:

"I am very motivated when it comes to the subject of mental health and this is reflected in the choices I've made throughout my career in the Army and also the qualifications I have chosen to pursue in my personal time. When I heard about the AFMHFA programme I thought it would be a very worthwhile course to attend and would bring a very positive benefit to the Armed Forces community."

"... a very positive benefit to the Armed Forces community."

Richard downloaded the application forms from the Mental Health First Aid England website, completed and submitted them via email and was successful in securing a place on the first AFMHFA Instructor training course which was held in London and took seven days to complete. Speaking about what he learnt on the course he said:

"Although I do have extensive experience in the non-clinical aspects of military mental health I still found the AFMHFA to be extremely useful in many ways. For instance, the course covers some of the rarer conditions which we don't see a great deal of in military personnel, but it was nonetheless useful to gain an understanding on how these might present and the course taught us how to recognise some of the signs and symptoms of these conditions. I also learnt how my style of teaching would need to be adapted to the wider Armed Forces community which includes civilians. Ultimately I will be delivering the AFMHFA to those members of the Armed Forces community supporting recovery and the wider veteran community. To put the training into this context was extremely helpful."

In his current post as a Senior Operations and Plans Officer in the Personnel Recovery Branch, Army HQ, Richard is responsible for managing the recovery pathway for personnel who have been wounded, injured or become sick while serving. This role involves ensuring that the individual can access all of the activities and opportunities that will enable the



The training will benefit members of the Armed Forces Community including families

swiftest return to duty or transition to a suitable skilled and supported civilian life. Within this role, Richard regularly deals with organisations such as SSAFA, Combat Stress and the Royal British Legion - all of whom have been key players in the development of the AFMHFA.

It will be these networks that Richard uses to generate interest in attending the two day course and every person that he teaches will become one of the 6,600 members of the Armed Forces community who will be AFMHFA trained by 2015.

Part of the criteria for being accepted onto the AFMHFA course is the Instructor's ability to roll out the training to the wider Armed Forces community.

Phone 0207 250 8062/3

Web www.mhfaengland.org/first-aid-courses/first-aid-armed-forces

email info@mhfaengland.org

Never too old to 'start up' again

Britain's oldest entrepreneurial couple secure start-up loan at 73 and 71



Royal Navy veteran David Pledger, 71 and wife Sandra, 73 have become Britain's oldest entrepreneurs by securing a loan of £25,000 to start-up their new company

'Full House Marketing' following support received from X-Forces, a Social Enterprise launched to help veterans and their families realise their entrepreneurial ambitions.

THE husband and wife business team, who have been married for nearly 45 years, were told their business loan had been approved in December and launched their business with the help of X-Forces early in 2014.

"David and Sandra are an inspiration to all of us, the lift on the age cap for start-up loans which previously constrained so many has meant that more people can now get into business and do their part to help the UK's economic recovery. Age should be no barrier to realising one's potential and for those veterans who have served the UK so loyally and with such selfless commitment this is a real success story", commented Ren Kapur, Managing Director, X-Forces.

"Age should be no barrier to realising one's potential..."

They've spent the last three months under the expert guidance of X-Forces, a Social Enterprise established to help veterans and the wider Forces community become



David and Sandra on their wedding day in 1966

entrepreneurs. X-Forces was launched by Lord Young in 2013 and has the backing of several high profile sponsors including CISCO and Barclays. It offers complete business support to anyone with a connection to the military community whether a recent leaver, or an older veteran like David Pledger.

David and Sandra Pledger were mentored by X-Forces' Director of Transition and former Royal Navy Officer, Mike Mackenzie;

"When David and Sandra got in touch, we could immediately see that they had a great concept and a viable business idea. We provided them with in-depth advice and expert business mentoring which helped them to shape their business plan and accurately forecast the financing they

would need to get the company up and running".

The Pledgers launched 'Full House Marketing' in February 2014. Their concept builds on their years of experience as hoteliers turning around failing B&B's and small scale hotels in the West Country, where they live. They have pioneered a hotel booking system that is tailored to increase the profitability of small and independent inns and guest houses by improving occupancy rates.

"X-Forces were on the ball throughout the whole business planning process and when submitting our loan request. The entire process took less than three months and I can't thank them enough for their help and support in making our dream a reality.

"For small hotels, using commercial packages to improve occupancy such as LateRooms doesn't provide a good return on investment because of the high commission rates. Our technology will offer a package to family-run and independent hoteliers that is both affordable and profitable", added David.



David and Sandra Pledger today

Web	www.startuploans.co.uk/start-up-loans-and-the-ex-forces/
Facebook	facebook.com/X-Forces
Twitter	@OfficialXforces

Creating a legacy

National Memorial Arboretum seeks new customer service volunteers

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire is looking to recruit customer service-oriented volunteers to join their visitor welcome team. As the UK's year-round Centre of Remembrance, the Arboretum, which is part of The Royal British Legion family of charities, is a spiritually uplifting place which honours the fallen, recognises service and sacrifice and fosters pride in our country.

THE new recruits will join an award winning team of over 180 volunteers. They are a vital part of the Arboretum; contributing both time and energy to ensuring visitors have a memorable experience, and helping the site to flourish and grow for the benefit of future generations.

Reflecting the broad cross-section of the UK population it serves, the Arboretum will be particularly welcoming of applications from people in currently under-represented groups, including those with a disability or from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Customer service volunteers get involved in all aspects of meeting and greeting visitors, leading guided tours of the Arboretum and providing information to visitors. Successful applicants will receive training and advice from both senior volunteers and external bodies and the chance to work alongside an experienced

volunteer mentor.

Volunteering opportunities are also available in other areas of the Arboretum, including the education, retail, catering and grounds departments. There are also limited weekend places for Duke of Edinburgh students who are working towards their silver or gold award.

People decide to get involved in volunteering at the Arboretum for a variety of reasons but all find it a rewarding and inspiring experience.

“ People decide to get involved in volunteering at the Arboretum for a variety of reasons but all find it a rewarding and inspiring experience. ”

One of the Arboretum's current volunteers is Sue Plant, daughter of Jack Plant - a Second World War veteran who was held as a Japanese prisoner of war from 1942 to 1945. During his time in captivity, he was forced to work on constructing the Sumatra Railway; the railway line constructed on and around the equator by 5,000 Allied prisoners of war and 30,000 local people. The



Jack Plant's daughter Sue is one of the volunteers supporting the Arboretum

conditions were terrible and inhumane and many thousands lost their lives.

Sue's father was responsible for the Sumatra Railway memorial which was dedicated at the National Memorial Arboretum in 2001. He volunteered regularly at the Arboretum's education centre until his death in 2011. Sue, a former teacher, continues his legacy by teaching the story of the Sumatra Railway and the far east prisoners of war to secondary school children.



Jack Plant

Sue says; "My father coped with an awful situation and never became bitter and twisted. He never spoke of the atrocities he experienced, of which we know there were

many. He wanted to take something positive from the experience, and constructing the Sumatra Railway memorial and volunteering at the Arboretum was part of that. I am privileged to be able to carry on his legacy."



The Sumatra Railway memorial

Phone	Kim Riley, Volunteers & Training Co-ordinator 01283 792333
Web	www.thenma.org.uk
email	kriley@thenma.org.uk
Facebook	www.facebook.com/NationalMemorialArboretum
Twitter	@Nat_Mem_Arb

Veterans standing Shoulder to Shoulder

TimeBank extends its support to veterans' families



Andy Foster, Programme Manager in Birmingham, talking to an ex-Servicewoman

The national volunteering charity TimeBank is extending its Shoulder to Shoulder project in Birmingham, which recruits volunteer mentors to support ex-Servicemen and women who are struggling to adjust to civilian life.

PROGRAMME MANAGER Andy Forster says: "During our work with Shoulder to Shoulder, we saw that family members don't always receive the support they need to manage and understand the needs of partners, sons or daughters who are adjusting to civilian life. Their lives can unravel once they leave the Forces.

"Families face unique challenges in dealing with these issues and we'll be recruiting and training up to 30 volunteers to act as mentors to support them. They'll play an active role in helping family members tackle isolation and signpost them to services to help."

The charity's Shoulder to Shoulder Families project will work across the West Midlands, and aims to recruit and train up to 30 volunteers to support 60 family members over two years, both through mentoring and a drop-in centre in the city.

A mentor's story

Karen, a social worker, started mentoring on TimeBank's Shoulder to Shoulder project last February. During her time in the Officer Training Corps she'd heard about PTSD, but it wasn't until it affected a friend of hers that

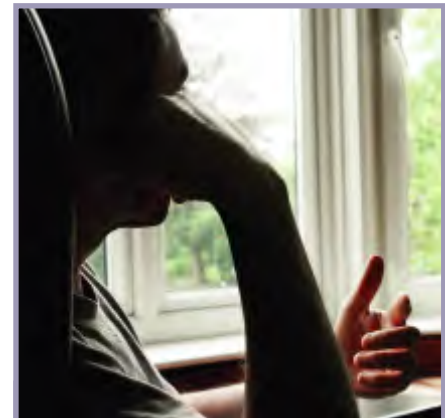


she saw its full impact.

"That inspired me to volunteer for Shoulder to Shoulder, as a way to offer practical support to someone who'd been through a bad time and now wanted to move forward in her life. You're not there as a professional adviser or counsellor, but to offer practical help and encouragement."

Karen was matched with a young woman who had served in the Royal Artillery in Iraq, and who felt isolated and depressed. They met for a few hours every month, getting to know each other and identifying future goals. "There's no set pattern - it very much depends on what your mentee wants to achieve," says Karen.

"There's no set pattern - it very much depends on what your mentee wants to achieve."



A young Serviceman takes part in the project

"We got on really well and it's been terrific to see her confidence grow as we've tackled different situations, like making journeys to new places or trying social activities.

"The training and support provided by TimeBank staff has been excellent. They are always ready to answer any questions so you never feel alone. It's been a really positive experience and I've enjoyed it tremendously. Best of all, I've made a wonderful new friend. Even though our mentoring relationship is now over, we'll keep in touch."

Shoulder to Shoulder London is now drawing to an end but if you live in Birmingham or the West Midlands and would like support – or would like to volunteer as a mentor - get in touch with janed@timebank.org.uk



Karen is one of Shoulder to Shoulder's mentors

- Web** www.timebank.org.uk/shoulder-to-shoulder
- email** janed@timebank.org.uk
- Facebook** www.facebook.com/volunteeruk
- Twitter** @timebank
- YouTube** www.youtube.com/timebankvolunteering

SPVA to join Defence Business Services

From 1 April, the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency will become part of the MOD's 'Defence Business Services' (DBS) organisation - one of the Governments three Shared Service Centres that are bringing together HR, Finance and other support functions across Government.

Within the MOD, SPVA currently provides pay and HR functions for the Armed Forces and provides support for those who have left the services by paying Armed Forces Pensions, compensation for injury/ bereavement due to Service and Veterans Welfare Support via a dedicated helpline and Veterans Welfare Service. DBS already

provides very similar functions for the MOD's civilian employees, as well as MOD finance and national security and vetting services. The coming together of these two similar functions will therefore allow the new organisation to share best practice and provide a better overall service.

So what difference will this mean for SPVA customers and stakeholders?

The good news is that as far as veterans support is concerned, it's business as usual and veterans will still be able to access exactly the same services, delivered by the same dedicated team of people, as they do now. The merger will, however, see some changes to names. SPVA's current Veterans Services functions

will become known as 'Veterans UK', taking the name of the current Veterans UK website and Veterans UK helpline. While the SPVA logo will gradually be lost from April, veterans will start to see the main Ministry of Defence brand used for business products and a new Veterans UK logo for promoting MOD's package of support for the veterans community. [pictured].



For more information on the MOD's support for veterans, visit www.veterans-uk.info



Meeting the standard

SPVA have responsibility for the Ilford Park Polish Home in Devon. It's home to 98 residents who live in the 81 bed residential care wing, the 14 bed nursing home and the three independent bungalows. As a care home in the UK, the Home is inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and must comply with all the standards laid down by the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

The home has recently undergone a routine inspection to look at whether it meets the standards required by the CQC; covering care

and welfare of the residents, requirements for the staff at the home and record keeping. The Home met all the standards set out by CQC. During the inspection, residents, carers, family members and staff talked to the inspectors, to discuss their care. The report found that residents 'were treated respectfully, had agreed to care being provided and been involved in their care.' Family members were also happy with the care of their relatives with one stating 'they had "more peace of mind"'

The full report can be viewed at www.veterans-uk.info.

SPVA help veterans discover their history

SPVA staff were exhibitors at the annual *Who do you think you are?* Live 2014 event held in London during February. Second World War and other official medals issued by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) were placed on display with experts on hand to answer questions and to take applications for medals.

The staff were also available to provide information on SPVA's wider work including Government compensation payments for those injured/bereaved by Armed Forces Service, the one-to-one support for veterans provided by the Veterans Welfare Service and information on how to apply for the popular HM Armed Forces Veterans Badge.



Council partnership receives LIBOR fund boost

Councils team up to help out heroes

East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire councils have teamed up for a new initiative helping Armed Forces veterans, supported by £87,000 funding from the Armed Forces Covenant (LIBOR) Fund.

THE THREE Councils, working with the SPVA Veterans Welfare Service, have introduced a new customer service initiative designed to make sure veterans get the help they need.

Customer service advisors at all authorities have been trained to ask the right questions to identify veterans and 'signpost' them to specialist advice in housing, employment, benefits or medical treatment.

Each of the three councils has signed the covenant in the past year and all participate in the Firmbase initiative to coordinate veterans' support across the west of Scotland.

The customer service initiative was launched in December when elected members from the three councils met with Lt Col Neil Russell of the Army Personnel Centre. Lt Col Russell also spoke with Stacey Stuart, customer service advisor at Renfrewshire Council, to try out the new service.

Lt Col Russell said: "I'm in uniform today so it's immediately obvious that I'm with the Armed Forces. But if someone walks in off the street and into a council office, how would you know if they've served in the Forces? It seems so simple, but unless an advisor



Representatives from all three councils attended the launch event

asks, then they might not get to the heart of what the person needs."

"Initiatives like this are so important to supporting veterans and I'm very appreciative of the resources all three councils have invested in making this happen."

Brian Finch, Scottish regional manager for the SPVA's Veterans Welfare Service, said: "We provide advice to the ex-Service community and Service personnel. Young or old, they can get advice and help from us.

"It's crucial that people in other agencies coming into regular contact with veterans understand this and can signpost them to us. We're delighted to be contributing to this initiative and believe it will be of real benefit to our

veterans."

Cllr Anne Hall, Renfrewshire's Provost, said: "Renfrewshire has a proud tradition of support for the Armed Forces and for service veterans. We know it can be difficult for those who have served to make the adjustment to civilian life."

"I'm glad to see that we're still finding new ways of helping our veterans and I hope this new initiative goes from strength to strength."

Cllr Jim Fletcher, leader of East Renfrewshire Council, said: "This funding will enable us to continue to assist our community fully and further strengthen the support given to East Renfrewshire's serving and ex-Service personnel."

Cllr David Wilson, depute Provost of Inverclyde Council, said: "I am delighted we are part of this service offering help and support.

"It is also an opportunity to promote better understanding and awareness of the issues facing veterans and their families and will be of real benefit to them."



The Firmbase veterans support initiative receives the £87,000 funding boost

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