

Veterans WORLD

Issue 35

HEALING HIDDEN WOUNDS

www.gov.uk/veterans-uk

You can now find information about Veterans UK on GOV.UK.



Whether you want information about how to apply for a medal, or need more urgent assistance as a veteran in a crisis, the **Veterans UK** webpages have information to help you.

For further information please email **veterans-uk@mod.uk** or call the **Veterans UK Helpline** on 0808 1914 2 18.



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**“However old you are,
pick up the phone and get
support. What’s the worst
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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.

Veterans World is distributed to those who work in an advisory role.
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MOD AWARDS MULTI-MILLION POUND RESETTLEMENT CONTRACT

Right Management Ltd has been awarded the Career Transition Partnership contract.

The new contract will ensure that Armed Forces personnel are well supported when they leave Service and can translate the skills, experience and qualifications into a successful civilian career.

The contract for the programme – known as the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) – has been awarded to Right Management, which has successfully run the scheme for the past decade. Commencing on 1 October 2015 it will run for at least six years.

Multiple independent programmes have previously supported the varying needs of Service leavers. From 1 October 2015, all elements of delivery will be brought within the new CTP contract to provide more seamless support and for the first

time all Service leavers, regardless of how long they have served or their reason for discharge, will benefit from the scheme.

The new contract also provides additional elements which will initially run as two-year trials, the details of which are now being developed:

- The Partner Employment Programme - designed to offer employment support for eligible Service spouses and partners; and
- The Reservists Employment Support Programme – eligible Reservists will be entitled to some job-finding support through this trial, regardless of whether they are in civilian employment or not.

Mark Lancaster, Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans, said:

"A career in the Armed Forces provides a



wealth of benefits and transferable skills. Awarding this contract will allow our Service leavers to continue to access outstanding support, enabling them to transition successfully into civilian life and apply their skills and attributes in a new environment.

"The provisions under the CTP are another example of our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, ensuring Service personnel and their families should not face disadvantage because of their Military careers."

GROUNDINGS FOR COMPLAINT



For all those who have left the Armed Forces and had administrative action taken against them as a result of a police caution between December 2008 and September 2011, it may be that there are grounds for a complaint.

The MOD has written to serving and former serving personnel because of changes to the law which took effect in December 2008 that meant such cautions should not have been taken into account after that date. However, whilst action has been taken to contact those affected directly, it is apparent that the MOD have not managed to reach some people and they will be unaware of efforts to contact

them about this issue.

The letters sent out on 10 March 2015 informed personnel that they may wish to consider a service complaint if they believe they have been wronged in a matter relating to their Service. Information about service complaints is contained in the Joint Service Publication 831 which can be found on the Gov.UK website see:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/jsp-831-redress-of-individual-grievances-service-complaints

Under the relevant legislation, service complaints generally need to be submitted within three months of the act that is being complained about. However, this time limit may be extended at the discretion of the prescribed officer dealing with the complaint if, in all the circumstances of the case, he or she considers it just and equitable to do so.

Any complaints received in connection with this issue will be considered entirely on their own merits, but the date on

which personnel received a letter or were first made aware of this issue may be one of the factors taken into account when considering whether to allow a complaint to proceed.

Should you wish to find out more information then please contact the relevant office as detailed below:

Naval Service
ROA Casework, CNLS, M-P 4-2 Leach Building, Whale Island, Portsmouth, PO2 8BY
Email: NAVYLEGAL-ROACASEWORKMAILBOX@mod.uk

Army
Email: ArmyPersSvc-PS2-SC-Helpline@mod.uk
or phone 01264 382 746

RAF
Air Personnel Casework, 1E11 Hurricane Building, HQ Air Cmd, RAF High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP14 4UE
Email: Air-COSPERS-POL-APCSWRK-MLBX@mod.uk

CALLING ALL VJ DAY VETERANS

A programme of commemorative events is planned for this year's 70th anniversary of VJ Day. The events pay tribute to all those who served in the UK Armed Forces in the Far East, including those who served in the famous 14th Army in Burma, who helped secure victory. Prisoners of War and civilian internees from the conflict will also be recognised.

In London, the following national events will take place on Saturday, 15 August with members of the public invited to observe the service and parade:

- 2.00pm - a flypast and traditional Drumhead Service on Horse Guards Parade attended by senior political and Military representatives from the UK and her Allies, veterans of the Far East campaign, former Prisoners of War, civilian internees and their families

followed by current members of the Armed Forces leading veterans and their families in a VJ Parade down Whitehall.

- There will also be a reception for Veterans and their families, hosted by The Royal British Legion.
- The Royal British Legion is sending invitations to all major Service associations including the Burma Star Association, which will include accreditation forms.

For further information visit:
www.britishlegion.org.uk/remembrance/vj-day

Any enquiries please call 020 3053 7015 or email VJDay70@britishlegion.org.uk

The following anniversary events are also being held:

- A commemoration service at St-Martins- in-the-Fields Church on Saturday 15 August, organised by the National Far East Prisoners of War (FEPOW) Fellowship Welfare Remembrance Association (NFFWRA) representing Prisoners of War, civilian internees, their widows and families and all those involved in the Far East conflict. This is a ticketed event, for details contact: enquiries@nationalfepowfellowship.org.uk
- At the National Memorial Arboretum on Saturday 15 August, The Malayan Volunteers Group will hold a service in the Millenium Chapel followed by wreath laying, and then on Sunday 16 August, The Far East Prisoner of War (FEPOW) Memorial Building will be rededicated followed by wreath laying at the FEPOW Grove. Go to: www.thenma.org.uk

WEB PORTAL TO SUPPORT VETERANS IN ESSEX

A new web portal which will act as a one stop shop for veterans in Essex has launched.

www.theviptree.co.uk

The Veterans Information Portal has been launched at the Royal British Legion pop-in centre in Colchester.

The aim of the portal is to overcome the difficulties in reaching the veteran community and to assist Armed Forces veterans in establishing their independence. The portal provides a range of practical information and support covering employment, education and training, health and welfare, finances, housing, and product services and discounts.

The portal has been designed for simple replication, and forms the basis for all 15 Councils in Essex to undertake Covenant activity as part of a provider community. It will also offer the ability for all Corporate Covenant signatories to 'pitch what they pledge' by registering and subscribing to become a Provider.

The portal was funded by a Community Covenant grant of £38,000 with an intention of rolling it out across the country.

Cllr Derrick Louis TD, Chairman of the Essex Civil Military Partnership Board, said:
"As a member of the Army Reserve myself, I know of many people who have needed assistance when rejoining 'civvy street' and I really hope this new portal will reach out to them so they can find the support they need and which they deserve."

FINDING THE RIGHT HOUSE IN THE RIGHT PLACE IN SCOTLAND



Military Matters is a specialist project within Housing Options Scotland providing an independent housing brokerage service to veterans and their family members in Scotland.

With financial support from the Scottish Government and Poppyscotland, Military Matters provide detailed housing information and advice to dozens of serving personnel and veterans.

A Military Matters film has been created about the services they provide and can be viewed at: www.housingoptionsscotland.org.uk/projects-programmes/military-matters

A new range of leaflets about civilian housing in Scotland will be available soon.

If you think that Military Matters could help you, or know someone who could be helped then please contact the voicemail service on: **0131 247 1400** or by emailing: militarymatters@housingoptionsscotland.org.uk

For updates on Military Matters activities follow them on: [twitter@HousingOpsScot](https://twitter.com/HousingOpsScot)

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT



Armed Forces
Covenant

Following on from the article published in *Veterans World* Issue 34 about the 2014 Armed Forces Covenant annual report, Chris Wilcox from the MOD Armed Forces Covenant team, provides a further update.

I think it's really important to re-iterate the key principles that underpin the Armed Forces Covenant, because they are enshrined in law, and they drive everything the Government does to provide the support and recognition veterans dedication and sacrifice deserves.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.

Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured and the bereaved.

The Covenant recognises that the whole of society has a moral obligation to support the Armed Forces Community and establishes how they should expect to be treated. We work closely with Other Government Departments, Local Authorities, the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Administrations, the business world, Families Federations, and Service charities to help make this happen.

The Armed Forces Covenant is supported by the Community and Corporate Covenants. The Community Covenant, encourages Local Authorities to support the Armed Forces Community in their area and promote public understanding and awareness. Every Local Authority in Great Britain has signed a Community Covenant. The Corporate Covenant is a pledge of support from the business world to members of the Armed Forces Community who work for and use their services.



What's being done to help Veterans?

- £40 million has been awarded to 16 Veteran's accommodation projects across the UK.
- We have, through the Department of Health, established a long-term solution for prosthetics provision, including a network of multi-disciplinary prosthetic and rehabilitation centres in England. The Welsh Government has agreed to issue a Defence Privilege Card for Veterans in Wales, they have been working collaboratively with the Defence Discount Scheme to promote the card.
- In Scotland, a Veteran's Commissioner has been appointed to help raise the profile of Veterans within Scottish society. His strategy and work plan for 2015 will focus on improving support for housing and employability.
- The Scottish Government increased funding for the Scottish Veterans Fund to £120,000 per annum from 2013-14. They have also given £200,000 over three years to Veterans Scotland.
- In Northern Ireland, a Veterans support forum (along the lines of COBSEO – The Confederation of Service Charities) has been set up with the intention of bringing together MOD, Service Charities, and Veterans support organisations to pool information and resources to ensure those in need can be effectively signposted towards the most effective help.
- The commitment of £75 million of LIBOR fines over the next five years to support Military charities and other good causes [including a £25 million healthcare fund for aged veterans].

The Community Covenant.

In early 2015, we hosted three National Community Covenant conferences in Bristol, Leicester and Manchester. We met with representatives from Local Authorities, other Government Departments, the Armed Forces Community, Service Charities and Families Federations. As well as hearing about the excellent programmes that were being delivered, we discussed how to improve support for ex-Service personnel, and the challenges faced such as; resource constraints and the pressure on local resources that re-basing will bring.

The messages we took away from these events were; organisations, particularly Local Authorities, want to understand better the size and complexity of their local Veterans community; they want to do more to reach out to veterans, but they would really welcome it if veterans would do more to reach out to them. Also, better communications are important so that if

veterans need support, they can be signposted in the right direction. We need to make sure that we spread a consistent policy message about the Covenant throughout all Local Authorities, so that when veterans approach theirs, they already understand the challenges veterans may face and how the Covenant applies to the services they provide. We will continue working closely with them to provide support as they deliver the Covenant in their local communities.

The Corporate Covenant.

Over 600 companies and organisations have signed the Corporate Covenant. Recent key signatories have included Vodafone, construction service providers Laing O'Rourke and The Lloyds Banking Group. The pledges they have made will have a positive impact on the Armed Forces Community.

You can see the full list of all the companies/organisations who have signed up here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-force-corporate-covenant-signed-pledges>.

We will continue working closely with these companies to hold them to their pledges. In the meantime, we would encourage veterans, to let service providers and Local Authorities know that they are a veteran. This is, of course, entirely voluntary, but if veterans do tell their Local Authority, or their NHS GP for example, it will help them provide a better service.

If you speak to people and they are unaware about the Covenant, or if you feel veterans have been disadvantaged, you should report this to *Veterans UK* at Veterans-uk@mod.uk or call the *Veterans UK* helpline on 0808 1914 218.

Further information about the good work the Covenant has achieved or is committed to achieve, can be found in the 2014 Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report, which you can access at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-covenant-annual-report>

Contacts:

Stay in touch with Covenant developments by joining our Facebook community and keep up to date with events or share ideas at: www.facebook.com/ArmedForcesCovenant

You can find more about the Armed Forces Covenant at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/fulfilling-the-commitments-of-the-armed-forces-covenant>

You can contact the Armed Forces Covenant Team direct via: Parlibranch-Treat-Officials@mod.uk



SUPPORTING, ENABLING AND EMPOWERING

The Take2 project has been set up by South Yorkshire Community Foundation in partnership with Action Housing and Support, MIND and Sheffield City Council. The project is funded through the Ministry of Defence Community Covenant Partnership Funds.



Take2 has been designed to support vulnerable former Service personnel who are finding it difficult to adapt to life after finishing their period of Service. Work experience, education, training, volunteering, life skills lessons and wellbeing support are available to all participants. Additionally, the project will also be able to offer housing to those struggling to find a safe and secure place of residence.

All participants will be supported according to their individual needs and aims to help each person achieve long term employment and housing security. The wide range of support also encourages independence, wellbeing and confidence.

This is a 12-month pilot programme which, upon successful completion of an evaluation, has huge potential to become a permanent part of the support network for former Service personnel. What makes it different from other schemes is the encouragement for participants to become actively involved in the process of their own life change.

Anyone who has served in the Army and lives in or has connections to Sheffield is eligible to apply. Participants do not need any qualifications or experience to take part and need to be able to attend a minimum of two days per week over a twelve week programme.

The project currently has two mentors; Richard Parker and Steve Lowe. When asked about his involvement with the Project, Richard Parker said, "I have



experienced some of the difficulties faced when leaving the Army and feel that services need to be easier to access. Within Sheffield, it was very difficult to find appropriate support. Take2 offers the complete package that veterans need and I am really pleased to offer mentor support and share my experiences with people leaving the Forces."

If you think you could benefit from the Take2 project, or would be willing to become a mentor, then please:

Visit www.take2project.co.uk

Telephone Paula Martin 01709 821 251 or 07825056227

Look at twitter @Take2Project



PENSIONS FOR LIFE

Widows, widowers and surviving civil partners of all members of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme will now retain their pensions for life.

From 1 April 2015 the rules on remarriage for all Forces widows have been harmonised so that they are no longer forced to surrender their pensions should they decide to remarry, cohabit or form a civil partnership after this date.

The decision highlights the Government's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant by recognising the difficulties many partners of Armed Forces personnel face in earning their own occupational pensions, often due to having to relocate their homes within the UK as well as overseas.

The rule change means that all widows will retain their Armed Forces pension for life regardless of any change to their social status. This includes; widows

currently in receipt of a Forces families pension under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 75 (AFPS 75) and all war widows receiving a pension under the War Pensions Scheme, and all those married to AFPS 75 personnel (either serving or retired) who may yet become widows.

Although the change will not lead to the reinstatement of pensions for those who have already surrendered them until their current relationship ends (for whatever reason), from 1 April 2015 the means test used to decide whether AFPS '75 widows' pensions will be restored or not, has been abolished. Most importantly, those who previously applied for restoration of their AFPS '75 pension and were refused under the means test, and who were not in a marriage or cohabiting from 1 April 2015, can re-apply to *Veterans UK* for restoration of their widow's pension effective from 1 April 2015. Restoration will be automatic upon re-application.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said:

"It's vital that we do right by those who put their lives on the line for their country – that's why this Government enshrined the Armed Forces Covenant in law. These changes reflect the huge commitment surviving civil partners of members of the Armed Forces at a disadvantage."

This change has come into force in conjunction with the new Armed Forces Pensions Scheme 15.

**For help and information on your Armed Forces pension contact *Veterans UK* on 0800 085 3600 or
The Forces Pension Society on 020 7820 9988**

HEALING HIDDEN WOUNDS

By Alexandra Hodges, Help for Heroes.



When people think of wounded or sick Servicemen and women they often think of those recovering from severe physical and psychological issues caused by IED-blasts and firefights, but this isn't the full story.

Help for Heroes beneficiaries have long been telling us that there is another internal battle faced by countless veterans and Armed Forces families on the home front, which has now been backed up by recognised research.

Stress, worry and low mood can affect anyone in a variety of ways – it can be a sudden lack of motivation or interest in everyday activities; an uncontrollable sense of worry or fear; it could be physical tension in the head or shoulders, or any number of other symptoms.

Help for Heroes' new psychological wellbeing Service, H4H Hidden Wounds, can help veterans and service families with many of these common mental health issues by teaching skills to help understand and manage their emotions.

Free and confidential support is delivered by Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWPs) by phone, Skype or face-to-face (in Wiltshire and Yorkshire), so that help can be easily accessed from around the country.



Dave Latimer

Dave Latimer, 54, started to feel depressed shortly after leaving the Navy in 2001. Often working from home, Dave would struggle with loneliness and sleeplessness which impacted his work. He would often express his emotions through frustration and anger, distancing him from his family and friends.

When he burst into tears on the way to work one day, Dave knew he needed a helping hand. He reached out to Help for Heroes and was given an appointment with H4H Hidden Wounds within days.

He says: "The first time I went to one of the Help for Heroes Recovery Centres, I felt like a fraud. I haven't lost a limb and I'm not sitting in a wheelchair... but H4H Hidden Wounds showed me that it's just as important to get help for mental health problems as it is for physical ones.

"However old you are, pick up the phone and get support. What's the worst that could happen?"

Dave is now working on managing his depression by keeping a diary focussing particularly on how each activity, both routine and leisure, makes him feel to understand and predict his emotions more readily. Using a workbook and regular sessions with his PWP, Dave has learnt a series of tools that can be used in everyday situations to rationalise what he's feeling and communicate this to those around him.

Dave's story illustrates one type of support delivered by H4H Hidden Wounds to help individuals with a range of psychological wellbeing challenges, such as anxiety, depression and stress.

Support is available to veterans, their families and the families of those currently serving and can be accessed either by self-referral or third party referral. The team also works closely with other organisations and charities to make sure that anyone in need of mental health support receives the right help.

To chat to someone about whether H4H Hidden Wounds can help you or someone you know, please get in touch with the team between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday:

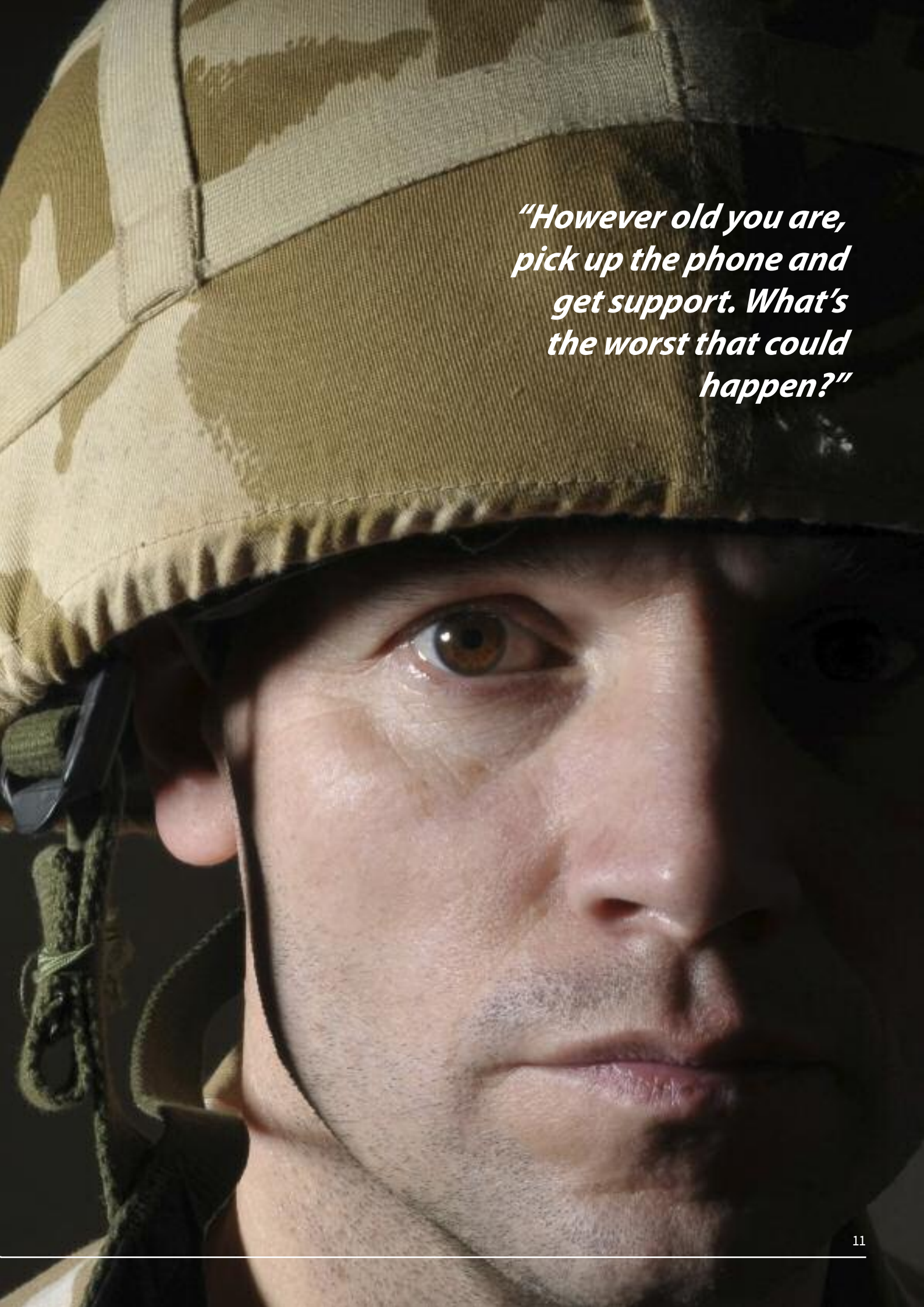
Tel: 01980 844 300

Email:

hidden.wounds@helpforheroes.org.uk

Web:

www.helpforheroes.org.uk/hidden-wounds



*“However old you are,
pick up the phone and
get support. What’s
the worst that could
happen?”*

DRIVING FORWARD EMPLOYMENT



National Express have committed to support the Armed Forces and Veterans as part of their 'Military Promise'. Through this they have formed an association with the Poppy Factory.

As part of its work with the charity, which provides employment support for disabled veterans and produces millions of Remembrance poppies every year, National Express is supporting Poppy Factory 'clients' with tailored job interview training sessions and paid work placements at coach stations across the UK. Veterans then get the chance to interview for a position with the coach company.

Often Service leavers, some of whom may never have had a job interview prior to signing up, find the transition to civilian life challenging and the National Express scheme is designed to explain the interview process and give people support around CV building, as well as work experience.

The beauty of the scheme, which is a first for both The Poppy Factory and National Express, is seen in its innovative blend of practical and theoretical experience for veterans. Indeed, The Poppy Factory has now taken forward this model as a best-practice example to work with other businesses.

Staff at National Express have embraced the scheme engaging staff throughout the business. Veterans have benefited from training sessions which have been delivered in Birmingham, Manchester, London and Leeds and work placements at some of National Express' busiest sites.

One such person who has benefited is Dwayne Deare.

Dwayne, served as an infantry soldier in Afghanistan before being discharged after an IED explosion left him with serious injuries. He spent over a year in

rehabilitation undergoing intensive physiotherapy but found life difficult after being discharged. Dwayne registered with The Poppy Factory who organised for him to attend a National Express open day. He received interview skills training and a paid placement soon followed at the firm's Start Hill depot near Stansted Airport.

Dwayne said, "Being in the army was my life and it was shattering to go from having a career and knowing your path, to being injured and out of work. My physical recovery was a long process but it also took a long time to figure out what I wanted to do as my original life plan was derailed.

"Working with The Poppy Factory has helped me turn my life back on track and they've put me in touch with companies like National Express whose training scheme has given me real confidence. The work experience was fantastic, I was welcomed as part of the team and it really helped me gain an insight into re-entering work, almost like try before you buy. I now know that I want to be a coach driver, I've thought long and hard about my options and realise I like being outside, not at a desk so the freedom of the road and the chance to see different places really appeals. It's been a long road but I'm so excited about the next chapter in my life."

Sheffield Coach Station Manager Nick Edwards explains working with veterans is a two-way street for businesses, that can gain from the tremendous skills they have to offer. Nick, himself an RAF veteran, has supported the workshops by helping to outline the challenges common to all veterans on leaving Service.

Nick said, "Life in the Armed Forces equips you with loads of transferrable skills but often people don't realise it. In Service, you can get thrown into literally anything and you need to rise to the challenge, think on your feet and pull together as part of a team. This sort of initiative is hugely beneficial for businesses. It makes me really proud that National Express has launched this scheme and it's fantastic to join forces with The Poppy Factory to help support veterans."

The scheme is part of a wider package of benefits, including guaranteed job interviews to Service leavers, offered by National Express as part of its 'Military Promise' to honour the commitment it made when it was handpicked by the Government as the first company to sign its Armed Forces Corporate Covenant.

The Poppy Factory welcomes applications from any ex-Servicemen and women with a medical barrier to employment, provided they are no longer supported through the CTP. Registration forms and details about how you can support their cause are available from www.poppyfactory.org



EMPLOYABILITY FOR VETERANS



“The work experience was fantastic... it really helped me to gain an insight into re-entering work.”

Dwayne Deare

TURN TO STARBOARD T

A former Royal Military Policeman who was injured in Afghanistan is getting his life back on track with the help of a sailing charity.



They say life is like sailing as you can use the wind to go in any direction, and it's a saying veteran Roy Newport found to be true when he discovered the *Turn to Starboard* charity.

Roy, 42, suffered a spinal compression injury after his vehicle went over a landmine in 2010. In addition to living with the physical effects of the incident, he suffered from severe post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which he found impacted on his recovery process and the lives of his wife and two young children.

After being medically discharged in 2014 and serving at Hasler Company, the Royal Navy's rehabilitation unit, Roy was introduced to *Turn to Starboard*, a sailing charity based in Falmouth. The charity is founded from the belief that sailing has a therapeutic and calming effect on participants. He received funding from Help for Heroes and the Poppy Factory.

Roy said, "At first, I couldn't even talk to anyone, I really struggled. I didn't know what was wrong

with me; I'd have long panic attacks and no control over my own body. Once I discovered *Turn to Starboard*, I found that sailing had a therapeutic effect and there's no time to sit and ponder. Everything is completely different when you are at sea to when you're on land."

Turn to Starboard uses the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) sailing courses to support serving, retired personnel and their families and last year helped 139 former Armed Forces personnel get out on to the water. The organisation additionally offers training courses for veterans to gain internationally recognised qualifications from the RYA, which can potentially help veterans start new careers anywhere in the world.

People like Roy and their families are assisted on accompanied sailing trips lasting from a few hours to a few days. Sailing from Falmouth, destinations include France, the Isles of Scilly and excursions along the Cornish coast.

DO GET BACK ON TRACK

“A lot of the guys on the scheme have PTSD and it is encouraging for them to see how far I’ve come.”

Roy Newport,
former Military Policeman



Sailing is known to provide elements that mirror the ethos of Armed Forces life, such as team cohesion and leadership skills. This can help participants gradually adjust to civilian life while gaining comfort from those in a similar situation.

Roy added, “I’m at a point now where I can control how I feel and have a normal conversation but it took a long time to get there. I’m now working towards gaining Yachtmaster qualifications and I’m currently acting as a volunteer co-ordinator and mentor. A lot of the guys on the scheme have PTSD and it is encouraging for them to see how far I’ve come.”

Turn to Starboard was created from the personal experiences of its founder; Squadron Leader (Retired) Shaun Pascoe in 2012. Shaun served on numerous tours during his sixteen years in the RAF, including Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Iraq and repeatedly to Afghanistan as Officer Commanding (OC) of the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT).

MERT is the medical team that flies ahead using the Chinook aircraft to retrieve those significantly injured, often under heavy enemy fire. The high-intensity nature of his operational work meant the transition on coming home became an increasing challenge.

Shaun decided to spend his resettlement time

and money on an RYA Yachtmaster Offshore course and within two weeks of sailing he felt in a better place.

Shaun said, “Learning new skills, achieving qualifications, forging new friendships and experiencing adventure is what we offer and it is incredibly powerful in aiding recovery. We’ve had veterans complete our courses saying they found an increased sense of purpose and pride which ultimately boosts their self-esteem. People sail with us to benefit from a shared experience, helping them re-engage after leaving the Service.

“We also help individuals who are completing operational tours or those requiring resettlement assistance through a Zero to Hero training programme designed to build confidence and self esteem through learning new skills. This is a sixteen week programme with flexible, expert tuition meeting the individual needs of participants who are guided through nineteen RYA courses, culminating in an RYA Yachtmaster and commercially endorsed Cruising Instructor qualification.”

The charity has recently launched a campaign to find a Cornwall based veteran for a scholarship award, worth more than £8000.

Web: www.turntostarboard.co.uk
Tel: 01326 314262

RAF VETERANS AIDED BY NEW ADVICE SERVICE



The RAF Benevolent Fund has launched a new advice and advocacy service to help veterans navigate the many welfare benefits, NHS and local council services. The new scheme aims to identify the benefits and care services to which a veteran, his or her partner, and dependent family members are entitled to and, if necessary, take up the case directly on their behalf.

Veteran RAF Regiment Gunner Malcolm “Geordie” Wallace said, “Mum’s health took a turn for the worse and taking care of her was my first priority. We left our jobs and home and moved from the Shetlands to Northumberland to be closer to her and our family. The RAF Benevolent Fund’s Advice and Advocacy Service really helped us land on our feet and made a difficult time so much easier.”

Paul Hughesdon, RAF Benevolent Fund Director of Welfare and Policy, said, “We know that younger veterans, such as those who served in Afghanistan, have very different needs from older veterans, who perhaps fought in WWII or served in the RAF during their National Service years. Our new service is able to provide advice on the benefits and services

available to each individual – from retraining and childcare assistance to funding for home adaptations and care home fees.”

The RAF Benevolent Fund has seen a growing need for such a service and will offer assistance to the entire RAF family, from Afghanistan veterans transitioning to ‘civvy street’ to the National Service veterans who need elder care services.

Anyone who served in the RAF is eligible to use this service; there is no requirement to already be in receipt of benefits or demonstrate financial need. Additionally, carers of elderly veterans are welcome to reach out on their behalf and the service is available to widows and widowers of RAF veterans.

Paul Hughesdon also added, “RAF veterans and their families served this country and it is a shame that all too often they don’t receive the benefits and services to which they are really entitled. Often, they are just grateful to receive some support from the State, not all of the support available. This new service aims to identify their entitlements and, if necessary, advocate on the veteran’s behalf to secure them.”

For assistance from the Advice and Advocacy Service, please email: advice@rafbf.org.uk, or telephone: 0800 169 2942.

POP-IN FOR FREE ADVICE



The Royal British Legion (RBL) charity has opened the doors of a new Pop In Centre located at 19 -21 High Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

The centre offers a welcoming space for Service personnel, veterans and their families to get practical help and advice. Members of the public are also welcome to find out more about the wide range of services and community activities provided by the Legion. The centre is manned by a dedicated team of experienced staff and trained volunteers.

Visitors receive practical advice on accessing services provided by the Legion, statutory bodies, Military charities and other support organisations. All enquiries are treated in confidence and the centre can offer advice and support about a wide range of topics, including:

- War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS)
- Benevolent/Welfare assistance
- Benefits and Money advice
- Poppy Breaks/Respite Breaks
- Housing Problems
- Health/Mental Health issues and Advocacy
- Employment and training opportunities

The staff on hand in the Pop-In Centre can help visitors access the RBL's knowledge website for general enquiries.

Additionally, the Centre also acts as a useful hub to springboard a variety of other ventures. A recent success was a partnering arrangement with a local theatre to stage a successful and thought provoking theatrical



production using injured Service personnel and veterans to 'tell their story'. Plans are progressing to draw in new partnerships with local agencies to use the Pop-In Centre.

The RBL South East Midlands area office can be found on the first floor above the Centre and covers six counties; they are Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire.

For those who are having difficulty getting to the Centre there are a number of outreach offices located throughout the area providing advice and assistance to those in need. Needless to say, the new Pop-In and outreach offices do not detract from the Legion using experienced caseworkers to visit people in their own homes where needed.

You can find out more information by visiting their website www.britishlegion.org.uk, by telephoning 0808 802 8080 or by calling into the Pop-In Centre which is open: Monday to Friday, 10.00am - 4.00pm.

WELFARE STAFF OUT AND ABOUT ON ARMED FORCES DAY 2015

The 7th annual Armed Forces Day took place on 27 June 2015. More than 150 events were held to mark the occasion across the country, celebrating and honouring the many men and women of the Armed Forces, both past and present.

The *Veterans UK* Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) sent staff representatives to attend 10 of these events across the Country; one of which was the main event in Guildford that was attended by His Royal Highness The Duke of York and the Prime Minister David Cameron.

Celebrations began with a service at Guildford Cathedral attended by Rob Rowntree, Head of VWS, at which the Defence Secretary, Michael Fallon, gave a reading. A parade led by more than 900 Service personnel, veterans and cadets then marched through the historic heart of Guildford, from the High Street to the outdoor events arena at Stoke Park, and into the Veterans Village Arena.

Representing VWS within the Veterans Village Arena were Jim Burns, Sandy Andrews, Cheryl Blanchard, Sarah Thompson and Andrew Hiscutt who all provide welfare support to veterans across the South of England. The staff were on hand providing veterans with advice and guidance on a range of

topics from War Pension and Armed Forces Pensions schemes, Entitlements, Armed Forces Compensations Scheme and where required provided sign-posting to all other areas of welfare that a veteran or the veterans community may require.

Jim Burns and Sarah Thompson who together co-ordinated the VWS presence at the Guildford event said, "It was great to see lots of people attended the event to show their support to our Armed Forces and veterans and, of course, the beautiful weather on the day helped. It was interesting to see all the other charities and organisations that have been set up to help support our Armed Forces past and present and to also be able to see the different roles that our Armed Forces undertake."

Andrew Hiscutt, a Regional Welfare Manager and a Veteran himself said, "VWS set-up a *Veterans UK* branded gazebo in an action-packed event and met with many veterans who were so pleased to meet with us. Some old and bold who just wanted to thank us for our assistance in the past and some who were not aware of our existence."

To contact VWS, telephone **0808 1914 2 18** and ask for the number of your local Veterans Welfare Centre.





Ministry
of Defence

 **Veterans
UK**



VETERANS WELFARE SERVICE

The Veterans Welfare Service can help anyone who has served in the UK's Armed Forces. Support is provided on issues from benefits to housing, by either telephone contact or a home visit by one of our Welfare Managers.

Contact the Veterans Welfare Service on the Veterans UK Helpline:

0808 1914 2 18

email: veterans-uk@mod.uk

or visit: www.gov.uk/veterans-uk



***"Everything is completely
different when you are at
sea to when you're on land."***

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