



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Issue 24 June 2012

# Veterans **WORLD**<sup>®</sup>

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



**Are you ready to celebrate  
Armed Forces Day 2012?**



Service Personnel  
& Veterans Agency  
*Supporting Services Through Life*

# HELP AND SUPPORT FROM SERVICE PERSONNEL AND VETERANS AGENCY



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# Veterans **WORLD**<sup>®</sup>

## Contents

June 2012

Issue 24

### IN THIS ISSUE

- 7 The Beacon**  
Officially approved for 'business'
- 14-15 Thirty years on**  
Support for Falklands veterans
- 16 Partnership Working**  
Helping injured personnel on the road to recovery
- 24 Healthy eating to haircuts**  
New initiatives supporting seafaring veterans
- Regulars**  
4-5 News in Brief  
25 SPVA News

Front cover: Armed Forces Day, see page 10.

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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Veterans WORLD is distributed to those who work in an advisory role.

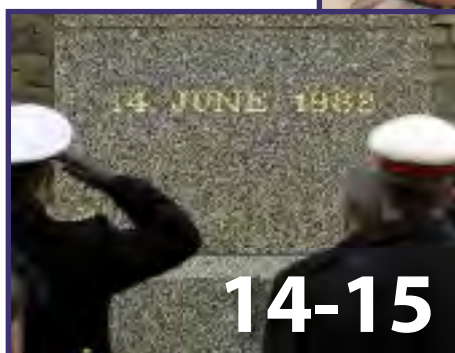
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Want to make an editorial contribution?  
Contributions are most welcome.  
To raise awareness of an initiative, scheme or organisation that offers help, advice or support to veterans, contact the Editorial Team:

by Email: [SPVA-VeteransWorld@mod.uk](mailto:SPVA-VeteransWorld@mod.uk) or by calling: 01253 338816

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14-15



16



24

## Olympic Torch Relay to visit the National Memorial Arboretum

The Olympic Torch Relay, which will take place over a period of 70 days and via more than 1,000 local communities across the British Isles, is scheduled to reach the National Memorial Arboretum on Armed Forces Day – Saturday, June 30.

The arrival of the Olympic Torch at 8.30am will start the Armed Forces Day commemorations at the Arboretum, for which a full programme of events and activities is planned, including a moving Service of Tribute, musical entertainment, a variety of interesting exhibitions and special displays.

After departing the Arboretum, the Olympic Torch Relay will continue to 16 other locations, including Streethay, Lichfield, Tamworth and Walsall, en route to Birmingham. The Arboretum will open early to the public on 30 June to admit visitors for what is expected to be a very memorable event for the Arboretum

The Olympic Torch Relay will take place from 18 May to 27 July, via 1,018 local communities across the British Isles. The route has been planned to enable 95 per cent of the population to be within ten miles reach of the Olympic



The Olympic Torch Relay is taking place during 70 days from May to July

Torch. Large numbers of people are expected to line the streets to celebrate the countdown to the Olympic Games and watch the Olympic Torch as it passes through the West Midlands, carried by a number of the inspirational individuals.

[www.london2012.com/torch-relay](http://www.london2012.com/torch-relay)

## Veterans still eligible for ELC support

### How veterans can apply for enhanced learning credits

Ex-Service personnel who previously registered on the Enhanced Learning Credit (ELC) scheme while they were still in-Service are eligible to claim ELC support up to ten years from their exit date.

Eligibility to claim support is subject to the proposed further education course resulting in the achievement of a nationally recognised qualification at the following levels:

- In England and Wales, a qualification at Level 3 (A level and equivalent) and above as defined by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF);
- In Scotland, a Level 6 or above on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF); and
- If studying overseas, an approved international equivalent higher level qualification.

The Course Provider must also appear on the Approved Provider List, held by the Enhanced Learning Credit Administration Service (ELCAS), which is available to view on the ELCAS website

[www.enhancedlearningcredits.com](http://www.enhancedlearningcredits.com).

Anyone wanting to submit a claim for a proposed course of study should download a claim form from the ELCAS website and submit it to the appropriate single-Service authority (see text box for details).

### Single-Service Authorities

Royal Navy (ELC Manager NTE) – call 02392 625954 or email: [FLEET-FOST-TAEL3RRESETS03C@mod.uk](mailto:FLEET-FOST-TAEL3RRESETS03C@mod.uk)

Army (ELC Manager) – call 01264 381565 or 01264 381580 or email: [elc@detsa.co.uk](mailto:elc@detsa.co.uk)

Royal Air Force (S03 Accreditation) – call 01400 268182 or email: [22TrgGp-TP-ACCRED-S03@mod.uk](mailto:22TrgGp-TP-ACCRED-S03@mod.uk)

All of the documents listed below must be submitted when making a claim, including proof of identity and proof of Service:

- Claim Form;
- Information about the course;
- A plan of your personal development;
- Copy of passport or driving licence (with photograph);
- Copy of Service discharge document;
- Copy of utility bill (for address); and
- Proof of ELC Scheme Membership.

## Military medals review



Campaign medals under review

The Prime Minister has announced an independent review of the rules and principles governing the awarding of military campaign medals.

David Cameron announced that Sir John Holmes will carry out a fresh, independent review taking account of the longstanding principles that have determined past decisions.

The existing guiding rules and principles for the awarding of military campaign medals are that:

- awards are based upon the principle of there being equal measure of significant 'risk and rigour' for the individual concerned;

- awards will not be considered after a period of five years has elapsed after a particular military action;
- individuals will not be rewarded twice for the same military campaign, i.e. no 'double medalling'; and
- the review will ensure that interested parties, including the veterans' organisations, are consulted, and aims to deliver a report with recommendations where appropriate for any change by early summer to the Government.

Sir John hopes to speak to as many people as possible and the review team can be contacted at [MedalsReview@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:MedalsReview@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk)

## From Troops to Teachers update

The MOD is working in partnership with the Department for Education (DfE) to implement and deliver a successful Troops to Teachers programme.

The programme is multifaceted and its main parts are currently in development. As part of the programme, DfE announced the awarding of a contract to SkillForce to recruit 100 ex-Service Military to Mentors (which began in September 2011). More recently in March this year, DfE announced the provision of 50 Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) places for graduate Service leavers to commence teacher training in September 2012.

The Troops to Teachers programme will secure excellent and rewarding second careers for Service leavers and provide DfE with a high quality group of teachers who can progress rapidly into school leadership roles.

For more information, visit the Teaching Agency website <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/troops-to-teachers.aspx>.

Personnel interested in the programme (both serving and retired) are advised to register their interest using the 'Sign Up with The Teaching Agency' link shown on the website.

*Editor's Note: The Troops to Teachers programme was originally announced in the Education White Paper in November 2010.*

## New campaign launches to get people saving for retirement

A multi-million pound Government campaign aimed at getting millions of people saving more for their retirement launched earlier this year.

The campaign comes ahead of the start of automatic enrolment into workplace pensions, beginning in October for the largest employers. It will explain the fundamentals of the reforms and signpost people to the Directgov website where they can find out more.

The campaign will include radio, print, online and outdoor advertising and will run in waves to build towards the launch in October.

Launching the press advertisements, the Minister for Pensions said:

"As we head into the final stretch before millions of people begin to be enrolled into a workplace pension, it is vital that we make sure that individuals and employers know what to expect.

"Automatic enrolment will transform this country, putting an end to the decline in pension saving, and setting millions on course for a more prosperous retirement."

[www.direct.gov.uk/workplacepension](http://www.direct.gov.uk/workplacepension)

## From veterans to volunteers



Toni Jackson enjoying the Red devils event at Whitby

A Charity which supports bereaved Military Families is looking for veterans to volunteer on their Activity Breaks

Families' Activity Breaks (FAB) is a non-public funded initiative which supports bereaved military families with children, by providing them with one week activity holidays in Coverack and Whitby. The aim? To give these families the opportunity to spend quality time with each other, and mix with others who really understand what they are going through.

A tri-Service initiative, FAB camps offer daily supervised activities which can range from horse riding and climbing, to kayaking and abseiling. It provides an

adventurous yet safe environment, which encourages the children to interact and develop self-confidence and resilience, all while having fun.

And FAB volunteers are at the heart of this - getting involved, giving encouragement to the kids (and the adults!), or simply sitting and talking, if that's of help. From a volunteer's perspective, FAB breaks can be emotionally and physically demanding, but they are always rewarding.

Volunteers are carefully selected from across the Military and MOD, past and present. Although these breaks are not intended to be bereavement holidays, each volunteer is interviewed, CRB checked and, if they are suitable, will then attend a two day training seminar which covers basic bereavement techniques and other necessary skills.



Mother and daughter walking back after completing the zip wire at Coverack

This year's FAB camps will take place over July and August. If you'd like to volunteer for one of the camps, you can find out more or download a Volunteer Application Form at [www.fabcamps.org.uk](http://www.fabcamps.org.uk) or email W02 Lou O'Connell at [FABVolunteerCoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:FABVolunteerCoordinator@gmail.com)

## New online maritime charities welfare guide

A new online guide to the UK's maritime welfare charity sector has been launched by Maritime Charities Funding Group (MCFG). The Maritime Charities Welfare Guide is an interactive tool, available to anyone searching for assistance from a maritime charity. It replaces the Nautical Welfare Guide previously compiled and printed by Seafarers UK.

In the UK, there are nearly 150 charities providing a wide range of important support services to seafarers from the Merchant Navy, Royal Navy, Royal Marines, fishing fleets, and their dependants. In 2009, Seafarer Support was created to act as a referral service for the entire maritime charity sector. The service was set up in response to research that found that seafarers are more likely to face poverty, homelessness, bereavement, loneliness, debt and marriage breakdown than other occupational groups; but are often unaware that there are charities dedicated to helping them.



The web-based guide offers three ways of finding help: 'Quick Search', 'Key Words Search' and 'Advanced Search'. Using a weighting system, the guide differentiates between charities and directs users to those best suited to help. Seafarers without Internet access can use a Helpline telephone service operated by the Merchant

Navy Welfare Board - 0800 121 4765 - which is available between 0930 and 1630, Monday to Friday. Messages can be left for out-of-hours calls.

Seafarer Support is funded by the MCFG, a partnership of seven maritime charities: ITF Seafarers Trust,

Merchant Navy Welfare Board, NUMAST Welfare Funds, Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity, Seafarers UK, Seaman's Hospital Society and Trinity House. The group is working to deliver a range of efficient welfare projects across the UK maritime sector.

[www.seafarerssupport.org/self-help/](http://www.seafarerssupport.org/self-help/)

# Compensation Scheme review completed

## Millions in additional compensation awards paid



Changes to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme have been made

**Around 11,500 awards have been reviewed and nearly £53 million in additional compensation awards have been paid as a result of recommendations from the Boyce review of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.**

JUST a year ago, **Veterans WORLD** reported on significant changes to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme following the Boyce review. Now, we can report on the completion of all recommendations from the review.

Admiral the Lord Boyce independently chaired the review of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS). The government implemented in full all the recommendations from his Review, published in February 2010, from increased awards to improved communications.

The changes applied to all those who had previously received compensation under this scheme, going back to 2005.

The Service Personnel and Veterans Agency initiated The Boyce Review exercise to deliver uplift payments associated with the recommendations. The review exercise started in May, 2011 and was completed at the end of March, 2012. It was a significant exercise involving changes to legislation, processes and computer systems as

Sharon Tabear, Assistant Head of AFCS and the War Pension Scheme, explained:

"Looking back, its hard to believe how much we achieved to meet the recommendations. Our priority was to ensure all awards were re-visited and that the additional monies could be paid to those who needed it. From changing our processes, ensuring our IT was updated to training staff on the new legislation . . . all this had to be done within a year.

**" . . . we re-visited and increased every previously paid award and 500 Survivor's Guaranteed Income Payments/Child Payments, which was no mean feat."**

"In total, we re-visited and increased every previously paid award and 500 Survivor's Guaranteed Income Payments/Child Payments, which was no mean feat. This resulted in the region of an additional £53 million compensation paid. My staff and I take great pride in what we accomplished."

The Independent Medical Expert Group are still continuing work to ensure that

### The main changes implemented:

1. Increased Guaranteed Income Payment to reflect the lasting effect of more serious injuries on likely promotions and on the ability to work up to the age 65. This increase also applied to those who as a result of bereavement due to service, are in receipt of Survivor's Guaranteed Income Payment or Child's Payment under the scheme.
2. The top tariff level, which had already been doubled in 2008, remained at £570,000.00, with all other tariff levels increased.
3. The maximum award for mental illness increased.
4. The burden of proof remained largely the same but improvements made in cases of illness and where records have not been properly maintained.
5. Increased time periods for making a claim or appeal.
6. Introduction of 'fast payment' so those injured can receive some compensation before entire claims process is complete.
7. Improved way in which the scheme is communicated to Service personnel and their families. The main focus being how the scheme works, what payments they might be entitled to and the calculations behind them.

specific illnesses or injuries receive due consideration in complexity terms and that they are correctly described and placed on the tariff.

Recommendations were also made to improve communications, to support this a 'toolkit' was produced which included leaflets, posters online information and podcasts to help keep the Armed Forces Community informed.

## Contacts

Information on the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme can be found at [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info) in the pensions and compensation section.

# Beacon shines the light on new opportunities

## New centre signals next stage in battle to end veterans' homelessness



Riverside veteran Mr Ray Lawton outside The Beacon

**When Veteran Mike lost his friend and fellow soldier alongside him while on active service, it signalled the start of a dramatic decline for the Coldstream Guardsman after twenty-three years in the Armed Forces.**

"After the incident my life started to change dramatically. I became like Jekyll and Hyde and ended up being discharged from the Armed Forces, having a nervous breakdown and being diagnosed with post traumatic stress. That's how I came to The Beacon."

RUN by Riverside ECHG (English Churches Housing Group), The Beacon was officially opened by the Foreign Secretary William Hague during the country's mini heatwave in March. Over one hundred guests had tours of the scheme's facilities. These include thirty-one flats providing high-quality temporary accommodation for eighteen months, a health resource centre, training and employment centre, training bakery, multi-media training suite, IT suite, multi-gym and allotment.

Most discerning of all were a very special group of veterans from the Second World War who came along to see if the scheme passed muster. Veteran Ray Lawton gave his wholehearted approval for what he saw:

"It's about time the Government and social landlords did something like this. Riverside

have said this is a shining beacon and a flagship. Well let's not just have a flagship, let's have a fleet of them!"

Residents at The Beacon have already notched up an impressive list of training and employment. Five have gained their Level II Gym Instructors accreditation; five are training up as bakers in the bakery; a budding music producer has secured his own slot on local radio; and

The Beacon even boasts its first *Ice Road Trucker* who got his HGV licence and is now working in Canada!

*"... those who've served their country deserve to have the most up to date support possible if they find themselves homeless or dealing with health or mental health issues."*

Referrals to The Beacon and its sister project near Aldershot, Mike Jackson House, are made via Riverside's housing advice line, SPACES. Riverside ECHG's MOD Area Manager, Trevor Morris, said:



William Hague being shown the Beacon's bakery by Riverside Manager Trevor Morris

"We believe that those who've served their country deserve to have the most up to date support possible if they find themselves homeless or dealing with health or mental health issues. Along with our partners we have pushed long and hard for this and must thank the Ministry of Defence, the Homes and Communities Agency, the Department for Communities and Local Government, Richmondshire District Council; North Yorkshire County Council; The Royal British Legion; ABF The Soldiers Charity; Church Housing Trust; Groundwork and the Clervaux Trust."

## Contacts

For further information on SPACES at Riverside ECHG, call 01748 833797 / 872940 / 830191 or Catterick Military 94731 2940, email [spaces@riverside.org.uk](mailto:spaces@riverside.org.uk), visit [www.spaces.org.uk](http://www.spaces.org.uk) or [www.riverside.org.uk/careandsupport](http://www.riverside.org.uk/careandsupport)



Riverside Beacon resident Mike showing William Hague his DJing work in the multimedia suite

# Progress, progress, progress

## Community covenant gains momentum

**With the 100 mark in sight, the Community Covenant Scheme is gathering pace across the country. The Covenant Team give us an update on its commitments at a local level . . .**

LAST time the Covenant Team wrote a piece for *Veterans WORLD* magazine, 30 Community Covenants had been signed. We're pleased to say that the scheme is growing. 50 partnerships have been set up with another 50 on the way.

### Background

The Armed Forces Covenant underlines the principle that veterans, Service people

and their families should not have to face any disadvantage because of their military experience. In some case such as the sick, injured or bereaved, it means giving special treatment that civilians wouldn't receive. While the ideas have been around since Queen Elizabeth I, publishing them in one document and committing to a series of initiatives to support the Armed Forces was a first when the Government published the Covenant just over a year ago in May 2011.

Two months later the Community Covenant was launched in Oxfordshire, with the aim of bringing together local Armed Forces and civilian communities.

Now more than 50 statements of mutual support between two communities exist and those partnerships allow local service providers to go even further than the national commitments made under the Armed Forces Covenant.

Since that first signing we've had even more good news – the Treasury has allocated £30 million over four financial years to support the Community Covenant in the form of a grant scheme.

### Community Covenant Grant Scheme

The Scheme considers applications from local groups for projects that deliver



The Armed Forces Covenant underlines the principle that veterans, Service people and their families should not have to face any disadvantage because of their military experience





Gloucestershire County and City Councils signed their military covenant in February. Fifty of these partnerships have been set up, with fifty more on the way

tangible results and meet the overall aims of the Community Covenant Scheme. A bid for funding can be raised by anyone within a Community Covenant area across the UK, for example charities, the single Services or individual members of the public.

Bids can only come from areas that have Community Covenant Partnerships in place, because all applications must first be endorsed by those local partnerships. Endorsed bids then come to the MOD to be assessed by our panel that includes Treasury, Local Authority and Families Federation representatives.

### Money that counts

From creches and art projects to outreach programmes and celebratory events, the Community Covenant Grant Scheme has allocated more than £2.8 million and counting.

We've been in touch with one of the first successful applicants – the SWAN Forces Project in Wiltshire – who won a £7,000 grant to develop services to prevent social exclusion among veterans and their

families. Joanne Burrows told us how they're getting on:

“Swan’s Armed Forces Advocacy Project was set up to develop a project that delivers independent advocacy to meet the needs of vulnerable serving personnel, ex-Servicemen and military families in Wiltshire. It was the marked increase in referrals to Swan from this group that prompted us to establish the project. We are currently working with four individuals that have been referred to us since the project began.

“An advocate will listen and provide support and information and endeavor to ensure clients’ voices are heard, empowering them to maintain choice and control.

“We will use the monies given to us from the Community Covenant Grant Scheme to promote the project, build links with Service charities to facilitate a cross referral process and signposting opportunities. We are also going to recruit, train and provide support to volunteers and project workers, monitor, evaluate and develop the project.”

### Applications welcome

News of deserving schemes like the SWAN Forces Project getting hold of much-needed funds is terrific. But for us to make sure all the money is spent we need to make sure we're receiving as many applications as possible. If you know of a worthy scheme or if you have an idea that could bring together the Armed Forces and the civilian communities in your area, please take a look at our website, [www.mod.uk/covenant](http://www.mod.uk/covenant), where you'll find the criteria for applications and the forms you need to fill in to apply.

We look forward to hearing from you.

**Editor's Note: For a full list of the Community Covenants visit [www.mod.uk/covenant](http://www.mod.uk/covenant)**

## Contacts

For more information on the Swan's Forces Project call 01722 341851 or visit [www.swanadvocacy.org.uk](http://www.swanadvocacy.org.uk)

# Get ready to celebrate

## Prepare for Armed Forces Day 2012



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The Red Arrows will perform a display at the national event at Plymouth

### With just weeks to go until Armed Forces Day 2012, what are you planning to do for the Day to show your support?

WHETHER it's attending an event, planning an event or purchasing a flag to fly, Armed Forces Day gives people in the UK the opportunity to get involved and celebrate the contribution our Armed Forces make - past, present and future. Based on previous years' successes,

thousands of people get involved across the UK, from the main national event to regional events. This year, more than 100 events have been planned from dinner dances to parades, reunions to family fun days. To find out what's happening in your local area visit

[www.armedforcesday.org.uk](http://www.armedforcesday.org.uk)

***"The warmth and hospitality Plymouth has shown the Armed Forces, veterans, cadets and families over the years has been outstanding"***

#### The main event

The city of Plymouth officially accepted the honour of hosting the Armed Forces Day national celebrations for 2012 as the official flag was delivered to the city in April.

The Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Councillor Peter Brookshaw, accepted the flag on behalf of the city and promised a first class programme of events to honour the Armed Forces Community.

Plymouth will host the national celebrations on Saturday June 30, 2012 in a spectacular event on Plymouth Hoe which will provide a unique opportunity to see the Armed Forces up-close and will feature displays on land and sea and in the air from current personnel, veterans, cadet forces, the Merchant Navy, support agencies and charities.

The event programme, revealed by organisers Plymouth City Council, will include the opportunity to visit HMS Argyll at anchor in the Sound, a moving Drumhead Service on the Hoe, a parade of Armed Forces past and present, an air show including a Typhoon and historical flights, and an impressive steam past of British naval vessels in Plymouth Sound, and will culminate in a display by the spectacular Red Arrows.

There will also be a packed programme of music and entertainment, including performances from the Military Wives Choir, a cadet band competition, and highlights from the ever-popular 'Music of the Night' event.

Councillor Brookshaw said:

"Plymouth is incredibly honoured to have been chosen to host the 2012 national celebrations. The city has an incredibly proud naval heritage and, as home to the Army and Royal Marines as well, the Armed Forces really are at the heart of the city.

"The event schedule is shaping up to be something really special and will be a tribute to all of those who serve, as well as all the people, agencies and charities who support them."

Speaking on behalf of the Armed Forces, Commodore Jamie Miller of the Royal Navy added:

"The warmth and hospitality Plymouth has shown the Armed Forces, veterans, cadets and families over the years has been outstanding, so it is most fitting that Plymouth takes a lead role in the Armed Forces Day national celebrations for 2012."

**Editors Note: Take a listen to SPVA's latest podcast where SPVA presenter Joanne Lowe interviews Air-Vice Marshal David Murray about plans for Armed Forces Day.**



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CPP Diana Cope, Sgt Dan Parker, Master Air Crew Batchelour, Commodore Miller and the Lord Mayor of Plymouth Peter Brookshaw and his wife

### Contacts

To find out the latest news and plans for Armed Forces Day, visit [www.armedforcesday.org.uk](http://www.armedforcesday.org.uk)

Get involved in the:

Scan here to reach the hub



Are you an organisation or charity, supporting the veteran's community? If so, SPVA would like to help you, help them, by sharing your details on the Veterans-UK Charity hub, by dropping an expression of interest to: [www.veterans-uk.info/charity\\_hub/index.html](http://www.veterans-uk.info/charity_hub/index.html)

# Additional funding for mental health helpline

## Services for personnel and veterans with mental health problems



The Combat Stress Support Helpline - a free 24-hour service - has taken over 5,000 calls

### Further funding for the Combat Stress helpline and changes to the Ministry of Defence Medical Assessment Programme have been announced.

THESE measures, announced in March, are part of the concerted effort to de-stigmatise issues around mental health and promote awareness of the professional medical care and support available for Service personnel and veterans.

The vast majority of Service personnel make the transition to civilian life successfully, but a small number suffer problems as a result of their service.

The National Health Service (NHS) is responsible for delivering veterans' healthcare needs, and services are available which cater specifically to veterans' mental health needs.

#### 24-hour Combat Stress helpline

The MOD is working with Service charities, including Combat Stress, to promote awareness of veterans' issues and, last year, the Department of Health, in partnership with Combat Stress, launched a free 24-hour helpline - 0800 138 1619 - , run by the charity Rethink, to offer support for veterans and their families.

*“... this fantastic service has now taken over 5,000 calls ...”*

Health Minister Simon Burns said:

"Last year we launched a free 24-hour helpline which offers vital support for our veterans and their families.

"Through working closely with Combat Stress and Rethink, this fantastic service has now taken over 5,000 calls, and I am pleased to announce that we are providing funding for a further year to continue to provide ex-Service personnel and their families with help and support whenever and wherever they need it."

The helpline is based on the principle of lifelong care and offers support to veterans of any age and at any stage in their lives. Families may also contact the helpline, both for themselves and to talk about a loved one.

It allows both groups to receive targeted support from people trained and experienced in dealing with often complex mental health needs.

#### Big White Wall

In addition to the Combat Stress helpline, The Department of Health and the MOD are funding a one-year wellbeing network pilot.

The 'Big White Wall', is an online social network for serving personnel, their families, veterans and the general public that allows people with mental health

problems from every walk of life to engage with others who have similar problems.

The anonymity of the network allows for a free and frank exchange of experiences, with a view to generating a wider sense of support, and it is staffed by professional counsellors. Mr Burns said:

"I am pleased to say that it has had excellent take-up. Up to March 1, 2,019 places of the original 2,400 provided in the pilot have been filled. Of those, veterans represent 40 per cent, with 38 per cent being Serving personnel and 22 per cent family members."

#### The Ministry of Defence Medical Assessment Programme

From 1 April, 2012, the Ministry of Defence Medical Assessment Programme (MAP) came under the control of APHCS (Army Primary Healthcare Service).

Currently located at St Thomas' Hospital, London, the MAP will, prior to October 2012, collocate with other Mental Health programmes based at the Reinforcements Training and Mobilisation Centre (RTMC) at Chetwynd Barracks in Chilwell, and offer a comprehensive service to reservists and veterans.

The MAP currently offers mental health assessments to ex-Service personnel who have deployed on operations since 1982 and have mental health problems related to their military service.

## Contacts

For further information on MAP visit <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/HealthandSafety/GulfVeteransIllnesses/TheMedicalAssessmentProgramme.htm>

Visit the Big White Wall - [www.bigwhitewall.com](http://www.bigwhitewall.com)

The Combat Stress 24-hour helpline number is 0800 138 1619 and more information can be found at [http://www.combatstress.org.uk/pages/24-hour\\_helpline.html](http://www.combatstress.org.uk/pages/24-hour_helpline.html)

# All the world's a stage . . .

And all the men and women are merely veterans



The Combat Veterans Players in a dress rehearsal

**In March at the Old Vic Tunnels, nine veterans performed Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to a specially invited audience of friends, families and colleagues. Several things made this performance extraordinary: none of the actors had performed previously; most had never read Shakespeare; all have overcome or experienced mental trauma.**

THE COMBAT VETERAN PLAYERS (CVP) is a drama group of veterans supported by Stoll (formerly Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation) in London. Led by applied theatre practitioner, Jaclyn McLoughlin, the group has been learning the craft of acting for a year.

Jaclyn explained:

"The CVP initially began out of a desire to engage vulnerable veterans in a therapeutic art form. We chose Shakespeare which needed a lot of demystifying to those who had never acted before; Shakespeare can be very intimidating to anyone who may not have a background in the field. I knew once his work and the delivery of his lines had been mastered, it would unearth rehabilitative benefits, such as an enhanced self-confidence, a rediscovered

sense of achievement and esteem, and a newly invigorated energy. These were some of the benefits that I was looking for when I begin working with the veterans, and I have indeed witnessed each of them and more. Every day with the CVP is a humbling and inspiring experience."

For this production, all the actors played multiple roles; some acted women's roles; costumes and props were minimal. Partly from necessity, this gave the audience an opportunity to focus on the words and drama without distraction, with forests and palaces being in their own minds, just as for Shakespeare's first audiences.

Since March, the actors have extended their plans for the Combat Veteran Players. Already the group is in rehearsals of *Henry V* and they will be reprising *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to paying audiences, raising funds for veterans' charities.

Ed Tytherleigh, Chief Executive of Stoll, commented:

"We're very proud of the Combat Veterans Players and what they have achieved. Stoll puts a lot of resources into not just supporting vulnerable veterans but also enabling them to live rewarding and

fulfilling lives. This is a really good example of this approach working."

*"Stoll puts a lot of resources into not just supporting vulnerable veterans but also enabling them to live rewarding and fulfilling lives."*

## Contacts

Combat Veteran Players can be contacted via their website [www.combatveteranplayers.co.uk](http://www.combatveteranplayers.co.uk). For more information about Stoll visit [www.stoll.org.uk](http://www.stoll.org.uk)

## 30 years on 2012 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Falklands War.

A total of 255 British and about 650 Argentine troops died after the UK sent a task force to the islands to combat the Argentine invasion on 2 April 1982.

During this anniversary year, **Veterans WORLD** highlights the two charities dedicated to supporting Falkland's veterans and the families of those that were lost in the Conflict.

A memorial to the 255 UK servicemen who were killed during the conflict was unveiled at the National Arboretum in May, in front of more than 600 veterans.

## Past, present and future

### Falklands Association in its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary year



SAMA Wales Chairman, Rob Nichols and some members in front of their Falklands Memorial in Cardiff

**The South Atlantic Medal Association 1982 (SAMA 82) was formed in 1997 on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conflict in the Falklands. In 2012 it celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary as well as commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the events of 1982.**

OVER the years, the Association and its members have made a number of pilgrimages to the Falklands. Mike Bowles MBE MNI, Chairman of SAMA 82 explained their importance:

"The pilgrimages enable people to go back to the scene of the action, and its value, especially for those suffering from PTSD, cannot be surpassed. Many ghosts are laid to rest and I will always remember the words of one ex-Paratrooper, a veteran of 3 Para and the battle for Mount Longdon, who said to me during the pilgrimage that he had, for the previous 25 years, only remembered the Falklands as a place of misery, suffering, cold, mud, blood and death.

Having returned to see the Islands 25 years on, in all their beauty, with time to look around and meet the wonderfully friendly and still grateful local people, he was able to say to himself that it had all been worth it after all. He also told me that he got the first decent night's sleep for 25 years!

"That to me confirms the value of returning to the place of the action and trauma."

Over the past few years, the Association's focus has been on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Its major project for the year was to build and dedicate a memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to commemorate the Task Force and the 255 Service personnel and three Falkland Island civilians who were killed. The dedication service took place on Sunday 20 May, 2012.



Computer generated images of the memorial

### What's the future for SAMA 82?

Mike said:

"We have a strong and gradually increasing membership, which currently stands at well over 3,000 people with branches across the UK.

One of the founder members of SAMA was Surgeon Cdr Rick Jolly RN, who set up the Ajax Bay hospital and there saved countless lives of both British and Argentine servicemen. He was subsequently recognised by the Argentine Government and awarded a decoration for his work with their POWs.

### *"Many ghosts are laid to rest..."*

"We are, of course, an ageing population and this will increase the need for assistance with welfare in the future. We already have an outreach centre in Portsmouth run by SAMA Trustees, this centre started as a Falklands Vets walk-in facility but now see many others as well.

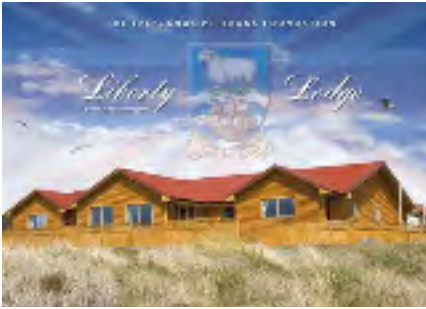
"We will also continue to run a programme of assistance to veterans to return to the Islands and this has been considerably helped in 2012 by an allowance by the MOD of 20 seats on each of their twice-weekly trooping flights to the Islands. These seats are available for Veterans of 1982 plus one or two family members, as well as Next of Kin of those who died in the conflict. This is greatly appreciated and will help in getting more people back to the Islands, than has been possible in the past. Details of these flights and how to apply can be found on our website."

## Contacts

For further information: call 01495 741592 or visit [www.sama82.org.uk/](http://www.sama82.org.uk/)

# Liberty Lodge

## Returning to the Falklands Islands



**Opened in February 2009, the Liberty Lodge is now a well established venue for veterans and families of those who make pilgrimages to the Falkland Islands.**

THE Lodge was created, built and is managed and owned by the Falkland's Veterans Foundation (FVF) who raised the money. The Foundation 'borrowed' the land, thanks to the generosity of the Falkland Islands Government, ordered the house and had it shipped and then built in Port Stanley.

Situated at the top of Rowlands Rise, overlooking the main entrance to Port Stanley harbour, the Lodge enjoys one of the best plots of land on the Falkland Islands.

To date, around 650 persons have stayed at the lodge for varying periods of time. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Conflict has once again seen particular interest shown in the Islands. In November, 50 veterans and some relatives of those killed and injured during the conflict will make a first time pilgrimage to the Islands. The majority of these 'Pilgrims' will be housed within the community by Islanders.

All Falklands veterans (holders of the South Atlantic Medal) can apply for an Indulgence Passage to and from the Islands. In this anniversary year, the MOD has provided a special concession to assist in getting veterans and families to and from the Islands. All flight applications and applications for accommodation within the Lodge are serviced by The South Atlantic Medal Association 1982.

Many Falklands veterans have now made return trips to the Islands for many reasons. In the mid to late 1990s, it was soon realised the therapeutic value to

those who did return, in 'laying their ghost to rest'. Coming to terms with the realisation of what and why it had happened, has helped many veterans and relatives.

The Islanders themselves have been extremely active and generous in assisting in every way possible since these return visits began.

Having made the 8,000 mile journey south, there are many things to do depending on the reason for the visit. Many veterans wish to visit the sites, where they fought their war, places where their comrades were lost. Many will visit the now historic landmarks of 1982 and pay their respects at the numerous monuments placed throughout the Islands. A long time is spent among the Islanders themselves, and one soon realises the genuine appreciation that they not only feel, but express at every given opportunity, including the sharing of the sadness of the losses that they also suffered.

Depending on the time of the year the wildlife in the region is a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to see in the rawness of the South Atlantic. With the weather alone one can experience all four seasons within an hour.

### Looking to the future

FVF's aim for the immediate future is to continue to provide the much needed facilities at the 'sharp-end' for those that make the journey South. As they become aware of the Lodge, the haven that is offered and the travel facilities available, more and more veterans and family members of those who were not able to return are using them. It is only with the generous financial support from those who are able and wish to contribute that FVF are able to continue this work on their behalf.

When not filled with veterans or families, personnel serving in the South Atlantic are allowed use of the lodge for R & R, leave or visits of families to the Islands, at the discretion of the Lodge manager.



*Veterans making a return visit*



*The lodge has also been visited by MPs*



*'Pilgrims' making the visit to the Islands*

## Contacts

For further information or to find out how to support FVF and the Liberty Lodge call 02392 511582,  
Email: [info@falklandsveterans.org.uk](mailto:info@falklandsveterans.org.uk)  
visit [www.falklandsveterans.org.uk](http://www.falklandsveterans.org.uk)

# Supporting recovery

How partnership working is helping injured personnel and veterans on the road to recovery



Chris Hannen (centre) SPVA Veterans' Welfare Manager based at Tedworth House

**Help for Heroes' current focus is the creation of Personnel Recovery Centres, which provide the facilities to support the two key parts of the recovery process: holistic life skills courses and activities to get the wounded, injured and sick back out doing what they enjoy the most.**

FROM learning new skills, to access to psychological, financial, employment, prosthetic and social support, the Recovery Centres are a 'one stop welfare shop' for our wounded and their families.

This forms part of the wider Defence Recovery Capability, an MOD initiative, in partnership with Help for Heroes (H4H) and The Royal British Legion alongside other Service charities and agencies.

In Tidworth, Tedworth House is a key step along the road to recovery for our wounded, injured and sick Servicemen and women. After Headley Court, Tedworth House provides rounded support in the form of education, training, welfare, sport and adventure to residents and day visitors alike.

In a relaxed, understanding and caring environment, residents are encouraged to make the most of the opportunities and

facilities available to aid their recovery process.

The Support Hub at Tedworth House brings together a range of Service charities and organisations that collectively offer advice and guidance on a multitude of issues, such as: money, health, housing and respite. The Support Hub is available to residents and day visitors of Tedworth House, but also to serving and veteran wounded, injured and sick and their families and carers. It assists all three Services plus the Territorial Army.

*“... taking the stress away from our wounded, injured and sick clients leaving them to concentrate on their recovery.”*

SPVA has a permanent representative in the Tedworth House Support Hub. Veterans' Welfare Manager, Chris Hannen offers the support, expertise and consistency needed to aid the smooth

transition between the Armed Forces and civilian life.

Chris explained:

“My role in The Support Hub is a pivotal one by taking the lead and completing a holistic interview with the wounded, injured or sick client. I complete Armed Forces Compensation, War Pensions and Service Pension claim forms with the client and advise on Job Seekers Allowance, Department of Works and Pensions Benefits, also PAX insurance and letter writing etc.

“I also discuss any other issues and requirements that the client may have including financial problems, housing and employment. Thereafter referring and discussing these issues with the individual relevant Charities, Agencies and Partnerships, arranging any further interviews that may be required between the client and other parties. Thus hopefully taking the stress away from our wounded, injured and sick clients leaving them to concentrate on their recovery.”

**Editor's note: You can get the latest news from Tedworth House by following them on Twitter - @TedworthHouse**



# New recovery centre opens in Colchester

## New addition to the nationwide Defence Recovery Capability



Crown Copyright/MOD

Chavasse VC House, the latest Personnel Recovery Centre, is officially opened in Colchester. From left: John Crisford, Royal British Legion; Major General Gerry Berragan; Bryn Parry, Help for Heroes; Colonel Mike Newman, Commander of Colchester Garrison; Private Alex Stringer, 23 Pioneer Regiment; Gunner Maxine Ball, 3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery; and Emma Parry, Help for Heroes

### A new purpose-built Personnel Recovery Centre (PRC) designed to provide first class facilities for wounded, injured and sick members of the Armed Forces has opened in Colchester.

As part of the MOD-led Defence Recovery Capability, Chavasse VC House offers accommodation, social areas, family rooms and a fitness centre, as well as comprehensive and co-ordinated ongoing support.

The centre can accommodate up to 27 personnel, including two families, and a further 30 day-residents. It also offers training facilities, classrooms, and gymnasiums with state-of-the-art sports equipment.

Residents will be able to learn new skills and gain qualifications in order for them to make a smooth transition into civilian life or return to duty.

As well as being there for current serving personnel, Chavasse VC House facilities and

services are open to wounded, injured and sick veterans on a needs basis.

A Support Hub, offering a 'one stop shop' of advice and support for residents, veterans and their families, will provide access to the expertise of many welfare agencies, Service charities and organisations. This includes advice and guidance on a number of issues such as money, health, housing, social security and much more.

Help for Heroes, working closely with the MOD, has created Chavasse VC House with contributions from other Service charities, most notably The Royal British Legion, who have agreed to cover a very significant part of the operating costs.

Speaking on behalf of the MOD, Major General Gerry Berragan said:

"We in the Armed Forces are extremely grateful for all the hard work involved, not only in successfully delivering this project, but also to the continued commitment shown by our partners and all the Service

charities who are working to make the Defence Recovery Capability such a success. As part of that capability, centres such as Chavasse VC House will make a tremendous difference to our wounded, injured and sick personnel and their families."



Chavasse VC House exterior

Help for Heroes is leading on the delivery, running, management and staffing of the centre, working in partnership with the Army, who have provided staff to command, care for and deliver key recovery activities to serving soldiers.

Bryn Parry, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Help for Heroes, said:

"The opening of the Colchester Personnel Recovery Centre is an important milestone in the wider Defence Recovery Capability. These men and women are young now but they will grow old and need the support now and for the rest of their lives, and Chavasse VC House will provide that support to those who need it in the local area."

John Crisford, National Vice Chairman of the Royal British Legion, said:

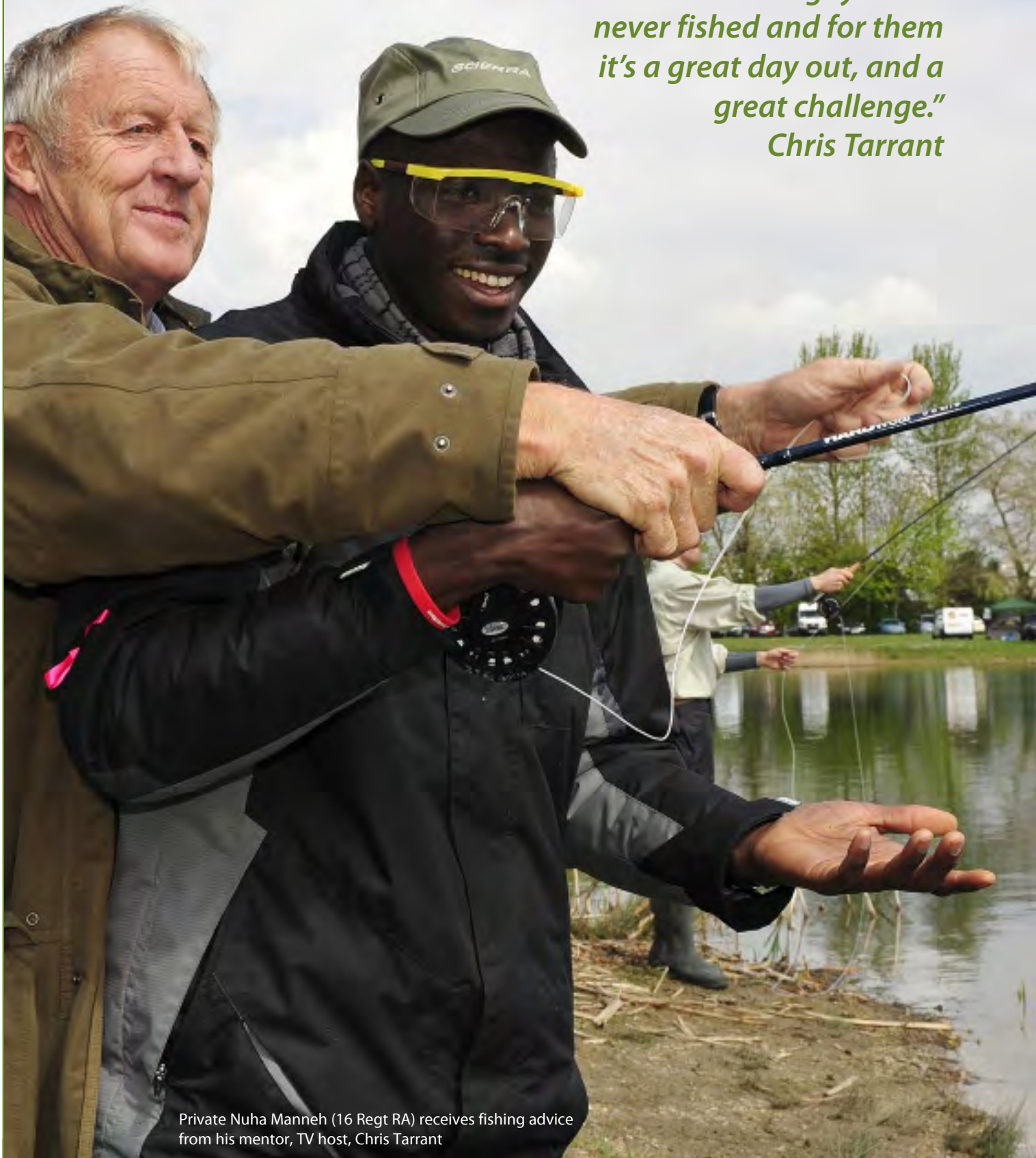
"The range of support, both practical and emotional, that the Colchester PRC will provide to the wounded, injured and sick Service personnel who come here will make a vital contribution to their recovery, whether they return to duty or move into civilian life."

**Editor's Note - Keep up to date with news from Chavasse VC House by following them on Twitter - @chavasseVCHouse**

# Who Wants to be an Angler?

*Chris Tarrant joins Troops for day of fishing.*

*“Some of these guys have never fished and for them it’s a great day out, and a great challenge.”*  
*Chris Tarrant*



Private Nuha Manneh (16 Regt RA) receives fishing advice from his mentor, TV host, Chris Tarrant

**A group of 45 Service personnel and veterans were amongst the latest members of the military community to spend a day learning to fish courtesy of Fishing for Forces.**

SINCE 2010, the charity has offered the chance to experience the peace and quiet of a day's angling to those who may have been affected by conflict. The most recent event was held at Sportfish Hayward's Lake, Reading in April and involved troops from all three Services, along with veterans from the charity Combat Stress.

The group spent the day being mentored by 30 experienced anglers, all of whom had volunteered to share their knowledge and enthusiasm about the sport. Among them was TV presenter Chris Tarrant, himself a keen angler and patron of Fishing for Forces.

"I've got a big soft spot for the Forces, because my father was an infantry major in the War. I think we should support these guys in any way we can. I've been fishing since I was four, through good times, bad times, busy times etc. Some of these guys have never fished and for them it's a great day out, and a great challenge.

Some of them have caught their first ever fish."

Private Nuha Manneh of the Royal Logistic Corps was one of the soldiers who took part.

"I think this is quite relaxing" he explained.

"I would have been disappointed to go home without anything but having caught a fish it is fun. I am a chef by trade so I am going to go home and bake it and invite a few friends over. The environment is refreshing and if there's anyone in the Army who's interested in fishing I would definitely encourage them to take it up."

"Fishing is the best stress buster going" explained Major Derek Saunders, who works with Fishing for Forces to allocate slots to individuals and regiments.

"You may have had a bad day at work, or you may have just come back from operations or be about to go on operations and life gets intense. You're on the water and you have to focus on catching that fish. Eight times out of ten the fish might get away but in the excitement all the stress goes away."



LCpl Dom Able (8 Fd Coy REME) under instruction with his mentor Dan Gazzard



Serving and ex-Service personnel take part in the latest Fishing For Forces organised event held at Sportfish Hayward's Lake, Theale, Reading, Cpl Aaron Ross (13 Air Assault) under instruction from his mentor Dr Philip Vickers

Fishing for Forces is open to all serving and ex-Service personnel and offers fishing free of charge to groups or individuals around the country. Since 2010, the organisation has introduced about 250 members of the Service community to angling.

The main sponsors of the day were Reading-based Red Lion Foods, which was set up with the sole purpose of donating 100 per cent of its post tax profits to military charities.

## Contacts

For further information visit:  
[www.fishingforforces.org/](http://www.fishingforforces.org/)

# A Haven for heroes

## Charity project provides accessible holiday opportunities in Dorset

**An email about the plight of a young soldier injured in Afghanistan, and not being able to holiday in one of his favourite places – Swanage - prompted the two-year development of a holiday lodge for disabled Service personnel and veterans.**

NOW, the bespoke log cabin project 'Heroes Haven Swanage' is ready for occupancy after its official opening in April this year.

The cabin has been specially designed and built to accommodate severely disabled Service personnel, veterans and their immediate family for respite, relaxation and that all important family holiday.

Situated at Herston Leisure Park on the Jurassic Coast in Swanage, Dorset, and set in its own landscaped grounds, the cabin can sleep up to six people.

The cabin has many features to accommodate disabled guests from fully equipped wet rooms and emergency exits to a kitchen with a hob-oven, fridge, freezer and dishwasher and a low-level worktop for wheelchair users

Fronted by a south facing veranda, it overlooks a garden, specially designed by Combat Stress which is planted with shrubs and flowers chosen for their colour and therapeutic scent.



The cabin has been specially designed to accommodate severely disabled Service personnel and veterans

**“... the cabin is ready for families from the Armed Forces Community to enjoy ...”**

Insulated to domestic standard, the cabin will be available for 50 weeks a year. The area of Purbeck has plenty of places of interest in all seasons and the climate here is milder than in most parts of the country to be able to enjoy a winter holiday.

The project has been fully supported by the community as Linda Welsh, a trustee Heroes Haven Swanage, said:

“That first email in 2010 from an injured Serviceman gave us the incentive to start the charity and begin our project. We have been humbled by the support we have received from the local community, groups, organisations and individuals. At the start of this project we never thought that it would have touched so many people in so many ways and how successful it could be.” She added:

“It has been a busy process organising fundraising events, conducting presentations, helping design the unit, looking at plans etc, but it has been



The grand opening

worth it. The project has provided both a nice and accessible place to stay and a lovely landscaped area where the sunshine can be enjoyed.

“Now the cabin is ready for families from the Armed Forces Community to enjoy and we've already taken our first bookings for 2012!”

## Contacts

For further information visit  
[www.heroes-haven.org.uk/](http://www.heroes-haven.org.uk/)



*The project has been supported by all the community*

# Education opportunity for Service families

## New schools bursary scheme launched



Crown Copyright/MOD

Lieutenant Colonel Thorneloe

**In keeping with Radley's long tradition of supporting Service families, the Radley Foundation, in partnership with Downe House and St. Mary's Calne, has recently created a new bursary scheme called 'The Radley Armed Forces Fund'.**

THE FUND will help finance the education of sons and daughters of Service personnel killed or wounded while serving their country. Its creation was inspired by the loss in Afghanistan of two Old Radleians, Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Thorneloe MBE and Lieutenant Dougie Dalzell MC, and by the injuries to others – notably to Captain Harry Parker who was seriously wounded by an IED while serving in Helmand Province. Fifty-eight Old Radleians are currently serving in the Armed Forces.

The Radley Armed Forces Fund was launched in November 2010. Its initial aim was to raise £1 million during 2011 and then £5 million by 2015, so bursaries can be made available to the children of all ranks in all parts of the Armed Forces, whether they have connections with the three schools or not. The Bursary Awards are based on sensitive means-testing up to 100 per cent of school fees; the boys will go to Radley College and the girls to either Downe House or St Mary's Calne. Funds will also be available for some years at Prep School.

The Fund has got off to a flying start with over £1.2 million donated during the first year and raising awareness is now a priority as Anthony Robinson, Director of The Radley Foundation, explains:

"Our focus has now moved to the families of those killed and wounded and the task of briefing them carefully about the opportunities and benefits of the Fund. The MOD has been helping us over the last three years, and we estimate there are at least 2,500 families we need to reach. Two Bursary Awards have already been made and we are keen to make further Awards during 2012.

"When the Fund reaches £5 million, we will be able to educate between six and fifteen children at any one time, depending on the size of their means-tested awards, for the foreseeable future. In the meantime, while the capital fund is building up, various trusts, organisations and individuals have most generously given us lump sums that will enable us to fund immediately 'whole educations' for a number of Armed Forces children."

*"... we estimate there are at least 2,500 families we need to reach."*

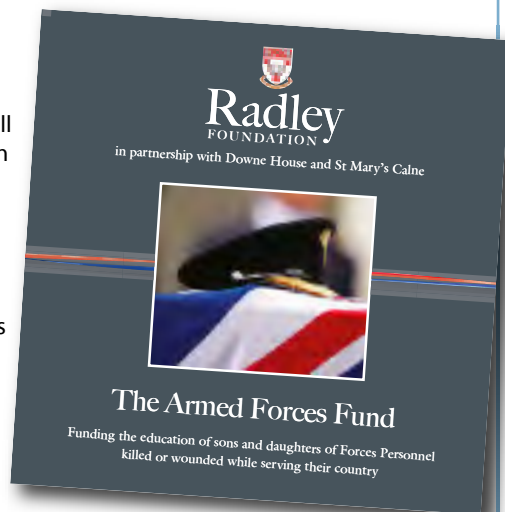
If you have lost a loved one or been wounded in any campaign while serving in the HM Armed Forces and have a child who qualifies for a Radley Armed Forces Fund Bursary Award, then get in touch to find out more about the Fund and the three schools involved.



Crown Copyright/MOD

Lieutenant Dalzell

If you know of a family who would benefit from the Fund, then spread the word and encourage them to contact Radley. The Fund is particularly keen to hear from families who may never before have considered independent education for their children.



**Editor's Note: The Bursary Awards will be named after Lieutenant Colonel Thorneloe and Lieutenant Dalzell.**

Lieutenant Colonel Thorneloe was killed near Lashkar Gah on July 1, 2009. He was the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards and the most senior Army officer to be killed in action since Lieutenant Colonel 'H' Jones VC in the Falklands in May 1982. Lieutenant Dalzell of the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards lost his life in the Babaji area of central Helmand on his 27<sup>th</sup> birthday, February 18, 2010, and was awarded a posthumous Military Cross. Both were greatly respected and much loved.

The tragic loss of two such fine men was keenly felt throughout the Radley community and many former pupils contacted the school to encourage it to create a lasting tribute in their honour.

## Contacts

For more details, email [anthony.robinson@radley.org.uk](mailto:anthony.robinson@radley.org.uk), call 01235 543151 or visit [www.radley.org.uk](http://www.radley.org.uk).



*“... the freedom of movement attained in mid air levels the playing field for the disabled in a way that other sports can't compete with.”*



# Veterans take to the skies

The UK's First Amputee Skydive Team – BLESMA Trans4mers



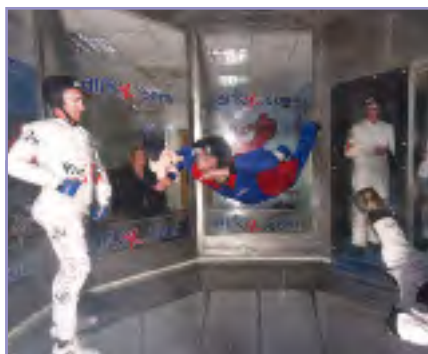
The BLESMA Trans4mers, David Scott is third from the right

David Scott of Aldershot is one of eight wounded veterans who will shortly be taking to the skies to become a part of the UK's first disabled skydive formation team. The project, funded by Armed Forces charity BLESMA (British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association), will see David, who lost his right leg above the knee in 2009, go from novice skydiver to national competition standard, competing against some of the UK's top able-bodied skydivers in a little under eight months.

DAVID was required to take part in a number of tandem skydives as well as indoor skydive training at Airkix, Milton Keynes before he was selected to fly to California in March 2012 to complete his solo skydive course. Upon returning from



Taking a rest from training



Indoor skydive training in progress

America, David and his teammates began an intensive training programme at the Army Parachute Association in Netheravon, Wiltshire to prepare for the 2012 competition season.

David said:

"It's great to see the doors to a sport like this finally being opened to the disabled community. I'm very excited to be a part of this ground breaking project and can't wait to make my first solo skydive or win that Gold medal at the competitions!"

Team Coach Sgt Dave Pacey added:

"Skydiving challenges you in every way imaginable: physically, mentally and even spiritually. However the freedom of

movement attained in mid air levels the playing field for the disabled in a way that other sports can't compete with."

Jerome Church, General Secretary, BLESMA added,

"Events of this nature are of great importance to the rehabilitation of our members as they place both physical and mental demands on the participants. We strive to prove that no challenge is beyond their capabilities following their horrific injuries."

It is hoped that more disabled people will consider becoming involved in skydiving as a sport when they see what BLESMA Trans4mers can achieve. Netheravon Parachute Centre is currently planning to provide a UK based syllabus aimed specifically at those with physical disabilities who wish to become involved with the sport. Please go to [www.netheravon.com](http://www.netheravon.com) for more information.

BLESMA has been helping serving and retired Servicemen and women and their families for more than 75 years, with the aim of proving there really is life after amputation.

*We strive to prove that no challenge is beyond their capabilities . . ."*

## Important Dates:

**4-13 July 2012**

Armed Forces Parachute Championships, Netheravon, Wiltshire, [www.netheravon.com](http://www.netheravon.com)

**4-6 Aug 2012**

UK National Championships Target Skysports, Brigg, [www.skydiving.co.uk](http://www.skydiving.co.uk)

## Contacts

For more information on BLESMA: call 0208 590 1124, email [headquarters@blesma.org](mailto:headquarters@blesma.org) or visit: [www.blesma.org](http://www.blesma.org)

# Maritime charity provides 'safe haven' for veterans

*From healthy eating recipes to a hairdressing salon, a charity is providing that little bit extra for the seafarer's community*



The charity's 'safe haven' near Surrey

**With a specialist dementia care unit, a full range of nursing care, residential and sheltered housing and an extensive calendar of activities which incorporate all the latest innovative therapies, The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society offers veterans much more than the average care home.**

SINCE 1865, the maritime charity has provided a 'safe haven' for elderly, sick or disabled seafarers from all backgrounds including the Royal and Merchant Navies, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Royal Marines, WRENS, fishing fleets and port workers, and has recently opened its doors to non-seafarers too when there is spare capacity. Situated on the Society's Weston Acres



Healthy Eating is on the charity's 'menu'

*"... nice to have a salon to go to instead of having a hairdresser visit my room as it's a bit more social."*

Estate near Banstead, Surrey, the home gives residents peace, tranquillity and like-minded companionship. Residents have access to a full range of nursing and respite care, residential care, specialised dementia care, and sheltered flats for those with a degree of independence, all on one site. The home also offers social events, day trips, landscaped gardens, communal areas and (unusually) an on-site bar...and much more.

The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society's 90 staff are constantly on the look-out for innovative new treatments and initiatives which can be introduced to ensure residents enjoy a high quality of life at the home.

Most recently, the Society has become one of the first care homes of its size to open its own hairdressing salon following research documenting the positive health and well-being benefits to elderly residents.

Other initiatives introduced include music and singing sessions which help residents living with dementia to unlock memories and connect with loved ones. Earlier this year the Society's head chef also devised a collection of recipes designed to boost cardiovascular health after new research has found having a healthy heart can help stave off dementia.

Resident and Royal Navy veteran Roy Ticehurst said:

"I've made lots of friends here and can access all the support I need. Having the salon on site is much more convenient in comparison to the high street and the prices are more favourable. It is nice to have a salon to go to instead of having a hairdresser visit my room as it's a bit more social."

The Society will soon be celebrating the first anniversary of its new specialist dementia care unit which caters for up to 36 residents living with dementia.



The on-site hair salon is one of the new initiatives the charity has launched

## Contacts

For more information about The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society contact the home on 01737 353763 or email [info@royalalfred.com](mailto:info@royalalfred.com). The Society can also be found online at [www.royalalfredseafarers.com](http://www.royalalfredseafarers.com) and on Facebook.





Air Commodore Chris Bray OBE RAF, Head of Military Operations at SPVA, that co-ordinates repatriations, presented the 14 personnel with the Operational Service Medal Afghanistan with Clasp Afghanistan for deployment to theatre between 2006 and the present day

## MOD honours civilian repatriation teams

At a ceremony in London, a little-known group of 14 civilians from across the South East has been honoured with campaign medals earned during multiple trips to Iraq and Afghanistan in support of the UK's Armed Forces.

The presentation, in March, recognised the work by staff from Albin International Repatriation, based in Bermondsey, South East London. Albin's personnel provide specialist repatriation services for the Ministry of Defence (MOD) when members of the Armed Forces die while serving overseas, including those who make the ultimate sacrifice for their country on military operations.

The teams always travel at short notice and personally take care of the dead Servicemen from theatre all the way through to moment when they are returned to their families.

## Veterans-UK 2012 'user' survey results are now in!

189 Veterans-UK users had their say . . . During April, SPVA ran the annual Veterans-UK 2012 user survey. The 18 question survey was designed to obtain feedback and provide ratings against a number of user specific questions.

Karen Awere, SPVA Communications lead on the survey explained:

"The Veterans-UK user survey and its evaluation is so important to us and is essential in understanding our website and its effectiveness as another means of communication. It provides us with valuable insight into what is considered to

work well and equally what doesn't, and assists in us identifying areas for improvement. We can't thank enough all those who very kindly took the time to complete the survey, and in addition to all those who provided individual comments."

*" . . . evaluation is so important to us and is essential in understanding our website and its effectiveness . . . "*

The survey result findings will now be analysed, in particular the free text comments, to see if there are ways in which SPVA can incorporate some of the suggestions for improvement.

### Survey Statistics

**85.1%** said they got some, if not, most of what they wanted from the site, with above a third saying they got everything they needed.

**80.4%** said they would recommend this website to a friend, colleague or family member.

**76.7%** said good or above to having found the information clear and easy to understand.

**74.6%** of users said overall they were very satisfied or satisfied with their visit to the website.

## SPVA announces new contract

Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) has been selected as preferred bidder for the

new seven-year SPVA contract for HR administration for HM Armed Forces. The result was extensively scrutinised from a commercial/legal, technical and financial perspective. It represents excellent value for the tax payer through a significant saving on current costs, as well as providing a very strong technical solution to the needs of the MOD. The contract will commence from November 2012 and there will now be a six-month transition period from the current provider HP Enterprise Services.

## Where will SPVA be on Armed Forces Day?

SPVA staff will be attending some of the Armed Forces events planned across the UK including the National event in Plymouth. To find out where you can find SPVA staff visit the events calendar on the SPVA website [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info) or follow our Twitter feed for updates.

## Podcast lifts the lid on the role of the Veterans Welfare Service

The Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) provides a welfare presence for every postcode in the UK. A podcast from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) asks why the Service is as relevant today as it was almost 100 years ago. Regular podcast presenter Clare Ellis speaks to Alison Davies, Manager of the Veterans Welfare Service for the UK and Ireland, about how today's VWS has adapted to a much wider role as part of the Government's commitments under the Armed Forces Covenant and finds itself helping people right at the start of their welfare journey, as well as veterans, their dependents and families.

## Learn a bit more about Armed Forces Day

SPVA's latest podcast release has been launched in support of Armed Forces Day. For the second year running, SPVA presenter Joanne Lowe interviews Air-Vice Marshal David Murray about the day and plans for the 2012 celebrations.

## Contacts

More information on SPVA's services and news can be found at [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info). If you use social media products as a way to find or share information then visit SPVA's social media hub on the website to links for their Twitter and Facebook pages as well as their latest podcasts and videos.

# Bravo 22 Company on tour

## Wounded Service Personnel Set for UK Tour Following West End Success



Photo credit: Helen Murray

*“The experiences and subsequent opportunities that wounded, injured and sick personnel have received in support of their individual recovery journey has been extraordinary.”*

**A group of wounded, injured and sick Service personnel who took the West End by storm in January with the hit play ‘The Two Worlds of Charlie F.’, created by The Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust in partnership with The Royal British Legion and Defence Recovery Capability, will now bring their real-life stories of conflict and recovery to tens of thousands of people throughout the UK.**

The Bravo 22 Company will tour the production to The New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, The Sherman Cymru Theatre, Cardiff in July, The Pleasance Grand as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August and finally return to London’s West End in early September.

UNDER the artistic auspices of patron Trevor Nunn, and with the support of project ambassador Ray Winstone, and patron General Sir David Richards, Chief of Defence Staff, the Bravo 22 Company crafted a production which received five star reviews and full house standing ovations from a star-studded audience when it debuted for two performances at The Theatre Royal Haymarket on January 22, 2012.

Following the first performances, Ray Winstone commented:

“I am so proud and overwhelmed. It is the most moving play I’ve seen for a long, long

time. The public should get behind this and be part of something unforgettable.”

The production, which was born out of a collaborative project between The Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust, The Royal British Legion and Defence Recovery Capability, has the aim of using a theatrical learning environment to aid recovery, build new skills and offer

opportunities to those members of the Armed Forces transitioning into civilian life.

Commenting on the origins of the project and the success of the production and forthcoming tour Masterclass Creative Producer Alice Driver said:

“This all started 15 months ago as an idea inspired by the bravery of a wounded soldier I met in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham. The Bravo 22 Company was born out of this meeting; at its heart was the recovery of wounded, injured and sick Service personnel by providing a unique work placement within a theatre company. By being part of this process they would not only immerse themselves into a new industry but benefit from the effects of this theatre model: increased confidence, self-awareness and ultimately allowing them to step away from their injury.”

The Legion’s Director of Health and Welfare, Sue Freeth, said of the charity’s involvement:

“The Legion is proud to be funding this very innovative and unique recovery project for members of the Armed Forces community. The project has demonstrated the huge impact a creative and collaborative process can have on building self-esteem and motivation, and has also offered an insight into a different industry, opening doors to new opportunities for those involved.”

An independent evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the project concluded that the original project aims and intentions have been surpassed. In interviews conducted during the process and post-performance the participants spoke of gains in confidence and motivation, feeling calmer and less angry, of building lasting friendships and gaining a valuable insight into an industry outside of the Armed Forces. Theatre and third sector based work placements have been secured for members of the Company following on from the success of this first phase.

Cast member Bombardier Gareth Crabbe (34), is a soldier in the Royal Artillery was injured in 2007 while on exercise commanding a 105mm light gun which left him needing spinal disc replacement. Speaking of his involvement he said:

“I really enjoyed working in the positive environment of the theatre, making new friends, learning new skills and being with others who understood what I was going through. The whole company is incredibly excited about reliving this amazing experience and taking the play on tour to share our experiences with as many people as possible.”

Colonel Charlie Knaggs OBE, on behalf of the Defence Recovery Capability, said:

“The Ministry of Defence was delighted with the inspiration and support that Bravo 22 has delivered. The experiences and subsequent opportunities that wounded, injured and sick personnel have received in support of their individual recovery journey has been extraordinary. I am sure that the next stages of this project will be equally exciting for all the Service personnel involved.”

## Contacts

For further information visit [www.bravo22company.com](http://www.bravo22company.com), The Royal British Legion at [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk), The Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust [www.masterclass.org.uk](http://www.masterclass.org.uk) or find out more about the The Defence Recovery Capability <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Personnel/Welfare/DefenceRecovery/>

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**Saturday 30 June 2012**

