



Veterans & Families – Listening Project

email: veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com

www.vflp.org.uk



Welcome to our September newsletter

Hope that you are all keeping well, it has been a busy few weeks at V&F-LP. Talking to Veterans & Families on the phone as well as providing information and support. Lots going on. It's good to see that we are venturing out further than our front-doors these days...



On Tuesday 8th

September we will be holding an evening drop-in at 7:00 pm.

We would like to give a warm welcome to our guest speaker - Andy Stubbs (Major), a

Clinical Nurse Specialist, South East NHS Veterans TILS And Complex Treatment Service, Clinical Psychology Dept, Princess Royal Hospital.

Veterans Mental Health Transition Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS)&Complex Treatment Service (CTS)

Who are – TILS?

The Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison (TIL) Service (formerly known as London Veterans' Service (LVS)) is a free NHS mental health service for all ex-serving members of the UK Armed Forces and service personnel who are making the transition to civilian life including reservists. We work with any veterans' and those transitioning from military to civilian life who live in London, Greater London, East / West Sussex, Surrey, Kent, and Medway or are registered with a GP in these areas. Our core opening hours are Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm.



We work with veterans' with any mental health difficulties.

For more information please visit their website:

www.veteransservice.nhs.uk/



We know that participating in our ZOOM Veterans Well-Being group (VWG) with Ali, could contribute to positive mental health well-being by creating positive emotions, helping to make connections, providing continuous understandings, opportunities as well as developing a sense of awareness. Our ZOOM VWG project with Ali, supports Veterans & Families of our Armed Forces.

Tuesday 8th September



As many traditionally 'offline' groups and organisations, like V&F-LP are quickly learning how to operate as well as thrive online. This is a really important time to stay connected with continuous support. Veterans & Families can take part in our VWB, whether or not they're isolating, distancing, or working from home. VWG are really supportive of each other as well as generous in sharing their own personal experiences.

VWG could also help make you feel calmer and more collected, in turn helping you to manage any feeling of anxiety, that you may have. "It felt like a luxury to be able to chat, catch-up, laugh, talk about real issues. Feeling comfortable and connected in such a disconnected and chaotic time," one of our Veterans said. "The ZOOM VWG has been essential for me for maintaining my sanity."



Hot Topics

Congratulations



Congratulations to the former Ulster Unionist MP Danny Kinahan has been appointed as Northern Ireland's first Veterans Commissioner.

His appointment was announced by the North's Secretary of State, Brandon Lewis, on Thursday.

Mr Kinahan, a former British army officer, said he was "honoured and proud" to take up the role.

The UK government had committed to creating the post as part of the New Decade, New Approach agreement which restored the Stormont

Assembly in January. REF: www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/former-uup-mp-named-northern-ireland-s-first-veterans-commissioner-1.4340238



Meanwhile in capsizing his canoe... Johnny Mercer, Conservative MP for Plymouth Moor View & Veterans Minister, capsized in the River Tamar on Friday 21st August and hit his head.

On Sunday the swelling had got so bad that he went to the city's Derriford Hospital where he was told he had an infection and needed minor surgery.

The Veterans Minister thanked the hospital's "amazing" staff.

REF:
www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-53921050



Johnny Mercer 
@JohnnyMercerUK



I think it's important in life to work out what you're not good at, as well as what you are. Canoeing would seem to joint that rather long and illustrious list for me. Loved it though. Still gonna finish the Tamar top to bottom.. there's a pint on the Barbican with my name on it



5:25 PM · Aug 21, 2020



1.1K



112 people are Tweeting about this

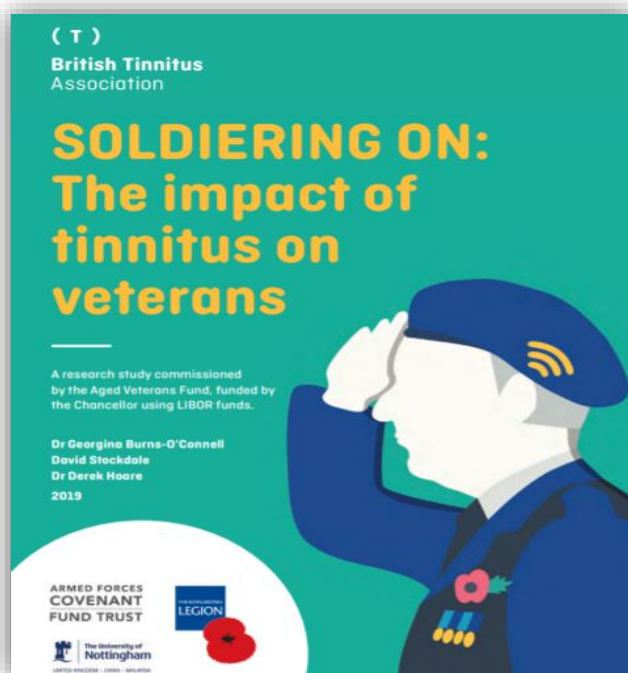
Recently, one of our guest - speakers Colette Bunker the Acting Head from The British Tinnitus Association said that they carried out a research project concerning Veterans and their hearing, below you will find the full report.

Aged Veterans Project - Final Report

Little is known about the impact of tinnitus on UK veterans. Service in the military can involve exposure to high levels of noise, resulting in many military veterans experiencing hearing loss and tinnitus, which can continue beyond their service. Tinnitus is the number one Service-related disability in the US.



A questionnaire, focus group, and interviews were conducted to explore older UK veterans' experiences of living with tinnitus. To take part, the participants had to have served at least 1 day in the British Armed Forces and be born before 1950.



Over half of older veterans had lived with tinnitus for over

20 years, with many experiencing symptoms more severe than other research populations. There was a lack of knowledge about tinnitus, how it can be experienced, and the available management options. Veterans spoke about the lack of health and safety when they were in the British Armed Forces. During their time in the Services, veterans were exposed to high levels of noise and had no access to (adequate) hearing protection.

A number of beliefs prevented veterans from seeking help for their tinnitus. Veterans believed there were no effective treatments because tinnitus cannot be 'cured', and that tinnitus was not a priority health care demand compared to other conditions.

Participants had complex and diverse relationships with their identity as a veteran, and this influenced views about whether a veteran-specific tinnitus service would be beneficial. The 'military mind' was viewed as an integral part of being a veteran, which meant that veterans were viewed as different to civilians.

A difference which was highlighted was veterans' increased acceptance of difficult situations; many had accepted their tinnitus and come to endure it instead of seeking help. This research indicates that older UK veterans with tinnitus experience more severe symptoms than was reported for a general research population or US veteran population.

REF: www.tinnitus.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=06ece659-c39e-4057-950f-c7668e693662

Follow us today on:

www.linkedin.com/in/veterans-families-listening-project-aa9a74b0/

www.facebook.com/VeteransnFamiliesListeningProject

[@VnF_LP](https://twitter.com/VnF_LP)



Veterans & Families – Listening Project
email: veteransfamilies@yahoo.com
www.vflp.org.uk

V&F-LP is an independent member of ASDIC.
The association of Ex-Service Drop-in Centres,
Linking Veterans' Drop-ins together across the
United Kingdom.





Veterans UK looking for new ways to help ease the pressure on the National Health Service and continue processing claims safely

Pilot Scheme launched to change the way Veterans UK gather medical evidence for War Pensions Scheme claims and reviews.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, has brought about many changes to how we work, particularly to how we gather evidence from organisations who have also had to adapt to new ways of working. We have had to think about how best we can still obtain all the relevant medical information with the least added pressure for the NHS, and how to overcome the suspension of face to face compensation scheme medical board examinations.

REF: www.gov.uk/government/news/veterans-uk-looking-for-new-ways-to-help-ease-the-pressure-on-the-national-health-service-and-continue-processing-claims-safely



Please note that Movement therapy for KFiM Service @ Sheffield Mind is still accepting referrals from #Veterans and #ArmedForcesFamilies living in #SouthYorkshire area.

Movement Therapy for KFiM service @ Sheffield Mind

What is it?

Movement Therapy is a form of therapy founded on the body-mind connection. Body movement is understood as central to our communication and expression as human beings.

It is a creative process that aids self-awareness and healing. There is a focus on paying attention to and experiencing the present moment.



How does it work?

- Initial referral and assessment
- One-to-one sessions via zoom
- Mixture of talking and working with the body in movement, breathing and stillness.
- Safe, confidential process between you and the therapist
- Sessions are guided by your needs and areas of focus outlined in assessment

Who's it for?

- Veterans and any family members seeking therapeutic support
- Anyone who can breathe and blink! Movement therapy can be adapted to meet disability needs and physical limitations
- No experience in movement required

How can it help?

- Find ways to release physical, mental and emotional tension
- Increase body-mind awareness
- Explore ways of relating to yourself and others
- Learn about trauma responses in the body and how to spot them
- Discover ways to regulate the nervous system

For further details or to register your interest please contact us:

0114 258 4489 / therapy@sheffieldmind.co.uk



Providing residential nursing care, rehabilitation, respite and end of life care to physically disabled veterans and their families

Care for Veterans
Gifford House, Boundary Road,
Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 4LJ
T: 01903 213458
Registered Charity No. 1072334



What Veterans UK does

We provide free support for Veterans and their Families, Including a helpline, Veterans' Welfare Service and injury / Bereavement compensation scheme payments.

Veterans UK is part of the Ministry of Defence

Email: veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk

Freephone (UK only): 0808 1914 2 18

Telephone (overseas): +44 1253 866 043

Normal Service 10.00 am to 3.00 pm Monday to Friday

For more information visit their website:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk



Defence Chiefs 'Consider Plans To Scrap Tanks'

The Times reports the Challenger 2 tank and the Warrior armoured fighting vehicle could be scrapped as part of cost-cutting measures.

Military chiefs are reportedly looking at scrapping the UK's fleet of tanks and instead focus on other capabilities such as cyber warfare. A report by The Times suggests the plans have been drawn up as part of proposals to radically modernise the Armed Forces and cut costs.

It claims the Government will examine the idea, as the cost of upgrading Britain's 227 Challenger 2 tanks, and the supporting 388 Warrior armoured fighting vehicles, has soared. Last year, then-Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt said both vehicles were "obsolete".

Lucy Fisher, Defence Editor for The Times, and the journalist behind the report, told Forces News the place of the tank in the UK Armed Forces is now "incredibly vulnerable".

"UK military liaison officers have been dispatched to start floating this proposal with senior NATO members, the US Army in Europe and also in NATO land command in Izmir in Turkey," she said. "Obviously, if we did pull back from heavy armour, that would have huge impact on our military contribution to NATO."



The report comes months before November's expected conclusion of the Integrated Review - described by Downing Street as the biggest review of British defence, security, and foreign policy "since the end of the Cold War". New defence landscapes such as cyber and space were detailed by the newspaper as a priority for the military.

A Government source was quoted in the report saying "a number of bold decisions" must be taken to "rebalance" Britain's defence interests.

REF: www.forces.net/news/defence-chiefs-consider-plans-scrap-tanks

The good news is...



APACHES ARE STAYING PUT

■ THE Army executive committee has confirmed there will be no change to the current basing of Apache attack helicopters, ending years of uncertainty for personnel and their families.

As a result, 7 Regiment, Army Air Corps will stay at Middle Wallop while 3 and 4 Regiments, Army Air Corps and 7 (Aviation Support) Battalion, REME will remain at Wattisham Flying Station.

REF: <https://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=1fe0b7a6-b41d-4c08-89a8-2f6cf0fd2868>

PENSION REVIEW CALL

■ THE public service pensions consultation has been launched and will be open until October 11, 2020.

It provides Service personnel and veterans with the opportunity to comment on how to remove the discrimination caused by the transitional rules that meant older Service Personnel remained in their legacy schemes when other, younger troops were transferred to the new scheme in 2015.

The consultation is seeking the views of those who are in scope for the remedy proposals.

They are those who were in service on or before March 31, 2012 and on or after April 1, 2015. This includes any pre-March 31, 2012 rejoiners with a qualifying break in service of less than five years, those currently serving and qualifying personnel who have left the Army since April 1, 2015.

Personnel who were originally covered by the transitional protection are also in scope.

Service personnel, veterans and their families are urged to read government communications on the subject on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

CASH BOOST FOR SSAFA

■ SERVICE charity SSAFA has received more than £120,000 from two grants to help fund its work.

The City Bridge Trust awarded £71,600 to the organisation's stepping-stone home, Gildea House – a facility that supports women whose relationship with a partner in the military has broken down due to domestic abuse and violence.

And the Army Central Fund donated £50,000 to SSAFA's emergency response fund, which offered help to the vulnerable during the Covid-19 crisis.

BRAVERY IN BURMA

National hero recalls fierce fighting in the Far East

Interview: Georgina Coyne Pictures: Cpl Robert Weidman, RLC, Soldierarchive

RATHER than being captured, the Japanese soldiers would prefer to kill themselves – they had no value of their own lives let alone ours, which made them a very difficult enemy,” explains Capt Sir Tom Moore.

“They were fearsome opponents with no thought for others.”

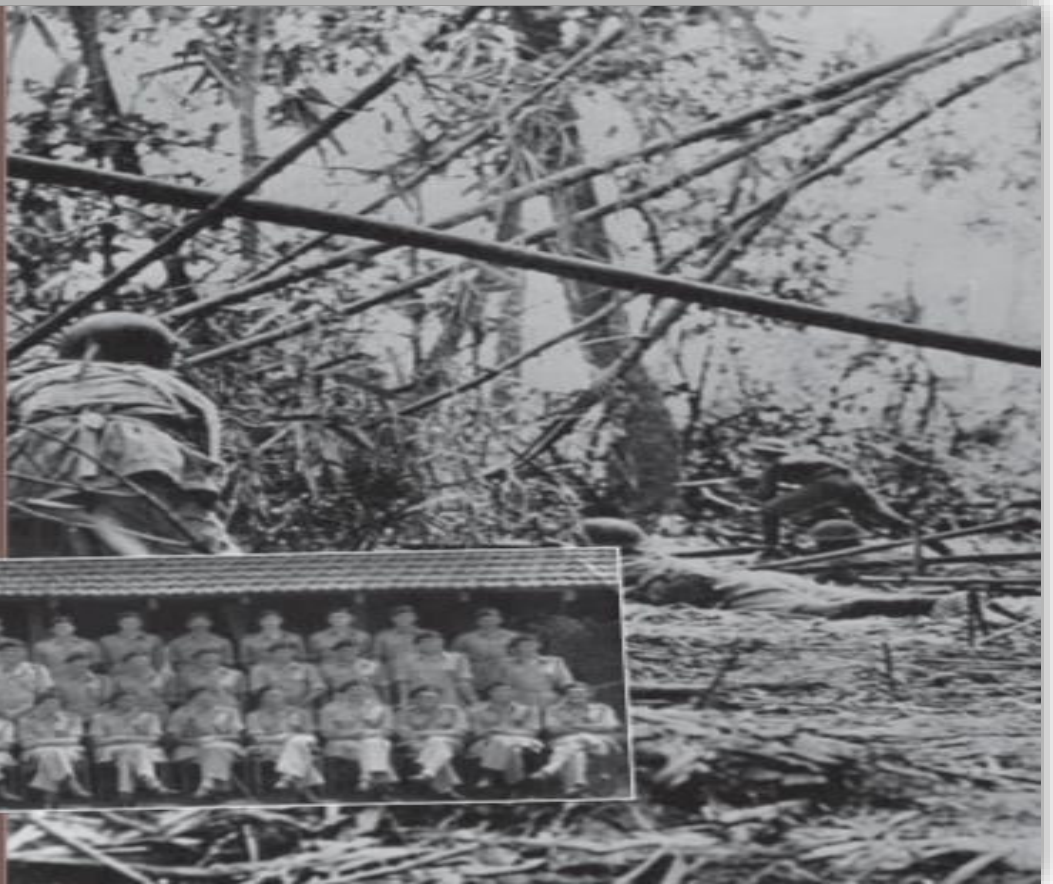
As we commemorate the 75th anniversary of VJ Day on August 15, marking both the surrender of Japan and the end of the Second World War, the inspirational veteran, whose incredible £40 million fundraising efforts have earned him a knighthood and appointment as an honorary colonel of the Army Foundation College, shares his wartime experiences of the brutal Burma campaign with *Soldier*.

British Commonwealth troops and their allies fought a bitter four-year war against Japan in the Far East that started in 1941, when the Imperial Army swept across Asia at a ferocious rate. It attacked territories including Hong Kong and Malaya and forced the British to capitulate its major military base in Singapore.

“To begin with they really caught us on the hop. I don't think we were really expecting the ”



“
We were the
British Army
and we were
doing a very
good job
”



“You’ve been out partying all
night, again, haven’t you?”



Japanese to be the force they were," the Yorkshire-born centenarian explains.

Entering Burma from Thailand, they captured the capital city of Rangoon by March 1942 and the incumbent British, Chinese and Commonwealth troops were driven back into India, over a distance of 1,000 miles during the largest fighting retreat in British military history.

Around one million men made up the multinational force of the 14th Army, whose efforts, despite enduring some of the most vicious battles of the war, remained largely unrecognised back on the home front, some 5,000 miles away.

"We knew we were the Forgotten Army but that didn't bother us," Moore continues, providing a glimpse of the stoicism and steely determination that encapsulates this generation of wartime heroes.

"You could never look back and think we were badly done to because we weren't. Our morale was always high – the highest you could expect given the circumstances – because we were the British Army and we were doing a very good job."

However, it was not just capture by the Japanese – who subjected prisoners to vicious beatings, torture and starvation – that the Allies feared, but the treacherous jungle terrain that saw more troops evacuated off the battlefield from sickness than fighting.

Moore, who suffered from a bout of dengue fever during his time in this unforgiving environment, explains: "Soldiers got hurt not only by the enemy but by the natural surroundings – people got terrible diseases from the jungle, it was full of animals.

"Your boots were never dry so you could get foot rot. There was also malaria, dysentery and jaundice – lots of unfortunate things could happen."

Little progress was made in attempts to recapture the British colony over the next year, in part because the Burma Road – a vital supply route linking neighbouring China – had been cut off.

Numerous attempts to reassert military control were hindered by lengthy monsoon seasons and ultimately failed, as did efforts to advance back into the Arakan region of Burma.

It wasn't until 1943 and a restructuring of Allied military command, including a newly formed and better equipped 14th Army under the control of Gen William Slim, that successful attempts were made to repel Axis forces from the country.

Chindit operations behind enemy lines and a recently established air support and supply system proved that



Above and far left: Capt Tom Moore, and with members of The Duke of Wellington's Regiment in Burma

Left: Soldiers of the 22nd Division return fire in Burma, surrounded by broken bamboo trees – a result of Japanese shelling



the Japanese weren't infallible in the jungle and ensured personnel were now able to hold their ground when supplies dwindled, situations that would have previously seen them withdraw.

"To begin with we weren't in the position to force them back, we just had to hold them in the location they were in," Moore reflects.

"It was really just a holding operation and we weren't expecting them to go any further."

Initially conscripted into the Army in 1940, the 20-year-old joined 8th Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (DWR) before being selected for officer training later that year.

After receiving his commission, he joined 9th Battalion, DWR (later converted to 146th Royal Armoured Corps) and was posted to India in October 1941, arriving in Bombay before embarking on a treacherous three-week road move to Calcutta through the monsoon season.

His unit formed the 50th Indian Tank Brigade and Moore – who had been riding motorbikes from the age of 12 – was instructed to start a motorcycle driving course by the brigade commander.

Dispatch riders were often used to ensure secure delivery of communications to front-line commanders – information that could put lives in jeopardy if sent over the airwaves and intercepted by the enemy.

Moore passed messages between tank formations and front-line infantry troops, a perilous undertaking that required him to ride alone through the jungle and along several miles of track to reach his destination.

"I just used to think about getting to the other end," he replies with a wry smile when pressed about the fear he must have felt when setting out on such a journey.

"We all knew that the Japanese were infiltrating the areas where we were cycling through but, fortunately, they didn't come out much during the daytime, so you felt a bit safer then and you wouldn't cycle at night."

Moore remained overseas for nearly four years, during which time he and his unit took part in numerous offensives, including the Battle of Ramree Island. He later moved to Sumatra, following the surrender of Japanese forces there.

He believes a key turning point in the campaign was

Right: Soldiers from the Indian Tank Brigade inspect a Japanese Type 97 tank, which they have knocked out

Below: Capt Tom Moore

Bottom right: Soldiers from Sierra Leone display a Japanese rifle and helmets after a raiding sortie along the waterways of Burma



due, in part, to the Allies' response when a savage attack was launched on British bases behind the Indian border, in Imphal and Kohima, in the spring of 1944.

A lengthy battle ensued resulting in the largest Japanese defeat of the campaign, and that enabled the Allies to push back across the Arakan and River Chindwin.

"The Japanese never anticipated they were going to get the resistance they did, and both the British and Indian armies had to fight hand to hand in some cases, but we did eventually manage to drive them back," he explains.

"It was a turning point because the Japanese were shown to be beatable and the

fact that we were driving them back came as a complete shock to them."

Promoted to captain, Moore was sent back to Britain in February 1945 as an instructor at the Armoured Fighting Vehicle School in Bovington, where he was stationed as a victory in Europe and over Japan were declared.

"It was my first time back in England in about four years, so it was very nice," he recalls.

"I've returned to India several times, and despite the war I thoroughly enjoyed my time there and it holds a very special place in my heart."

As the milestone of VJ Day approaches we ask about the importance of marking such anniversaries.



"At the time I don't think the British public was fully geared up for the war against Japan in the Far East, so VE day had much more of an impact for the people at home because it meant that the bombing in England had finally stopped and we could all settle down for peace," he reflects.

"And although it was a day full of celebrations, for me personally it wasn't the happiest time because all my friends were still away.

"When VJ Day came there was enjoyment, but it wasn't celebrated in the same way," he continues.

"But it's important to remember because we did such a good job and people must be proud of what we achieved in the East."

Moore initially set out to raise £1,000 for the NHS by walking 100 laps of his garden by his 100th birthday during lockdown.

But as images of the veteran, determined to complete the challenge with the aid of a walking frame and wearing a blazer displaying his military medals, circulated around the world millions of people donated, far surpassing his modest target.

However, despite an incredible array of accolades that include two Guinness World Records (for raising the most money in an individual charity walk, and as the oldest person to have a number-one single in the UK charts), book deals and personal messages of thanks from royalty and celebrities, it is clear that his service for King and country during the longest British campaign of the Second World War remains his proudest achievement of all. ■



● Capt Sir Tom Moore's memoir *Tomorrow Will Be A Good Day: My Autobiography* will be published by Penguin Books on September 17

IN NUMBERS

The Battles of Imphal and Kohima



53,000

Troops lost by the Japanese 15th Army



12,500

British and Allied casualties at Imphal, with a further 4,000 at Kohima



19,000

Tonnes of resupply equipment delivered by air



12,000

Reinforcements flown in by the Royal Air Force



EMPIRE OF THE SUN

Thousands of troops were taken prisoner by the Japanese – for the survivors, the war lived on forever

KEITH Merritt (pictured far right) can only recall a handful of occasions when his father, Frank (below), spoke out about his time serving in the Far East during the Second World War.

Having been taken prisoner in Singapore and put to work on the infamous Burma-Thailand Railway, the former soldier rarely discussed his three years in captivity.

Remembered as a fun-loving man, he had returned to civvy street, become a nurseryman, married and started raising his three boys.

But when demonstrations erupted during a UK state visit by Emperor Hirohito – who had been Japan's spiritual leader during the conflict and had remained in place afterwards – he broke his silence with a surprising comment.

"Back then, in 1971, dad noticed the protestors seemed to be young people who couldn't have remembered the war at all," Merritt told *Soldier*.

"He felt that if anybody had a right to be angry it was those who had been there.

"But our father didn't say much else over the years," he continued. "I remember him having a strange bump on his head, which he told me was from a spanner dropped on him by a Japanese soldier – he said their troops were brutal.

"He remembered how he'd seen the bamboo growing everywhere and the deluge of the monsoon rains – and how the American soldiers cried openly when they liberated the camps."

Although Frank Merritt, a private who served in the Bedfordshire



11 and Hertfordshire Regiment, kept quiet during his lifetime, a box of memorabilia he left to his family after his death two decades ago speaks volumes.

Now, 75 years after the end of the conflict, the document inside are as much a tribute to those who endured captivity in one of the conflict's most brutal episodes as they are to one quiet man's personal courage and resilience.

Falling into Japanese captivity in February 1942 – two years to the day after he enlisted – telegrams show how Pte Merritt was initially recorded as a missing soldier.

The 21-year-old is later confirmed as a prisoner on a card approved by the Imperial Japanese Army. Using pre-written statements, he declares that his "health is good" and "I am working", before signing off with his best regards.

Delving deeper uncovers a handwritten poetry volume giving a glimpse of camp life, while a battered pay book provides a formal record of service. There is correspondence with the government in Australia where he was sent to recover – and finally a letter from King George VI welcoming him home.

Keith Merritt recalls a few telltale signs of his father's experiences as he grew up.

"He never touched rice because it was given to the prisoners riddled with maggots," he said. "And he let slip that some PoWs had diseases such as elephantiasis, typhoid and beriberi; I saw him suffer from malaria myself."

Frank was one of 132,000 Allied personnel taken captive by the Japanese forces – a figure confirmed during the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal at the end of the conflict.

Some 50,000 of his British and Australian contemporaries were captured in Singapore alone, while others were incarcerated in places such as Hong Kong, Java and the Philippines.

Some were transported on so-called "hell ships" around Japan's new territories – along with its home islands – providing slave labour so that men could be freed up for military service. In all, more than a quarter would die in captivity before the war ended.

As well as the dire conditions of their imprisonment, the PoWs endured beatings, torture and other inhuman treatment.

With Japan having never ratified the Geneva Convention and its soldiers taught to consider surrender a disgrace, prisoners were often seen as the lowest of the low.

Hong Kong-based military historian Tony Banham – who has interviewed a number of troops who were captured when the then British colony fell in December 1941 – said many survivors were, unsurprisingly, left with serious mental scars.

"I never found a PoW who hadn't suffered some form of PTSD," he pointed out. "But when you look 11



VJ75

IN NUMBERS

132,142

Allied prisoners
taken by Japan

27

Per cent who died in
captivity

“There was no
anger in him,
and I shall
always admire
the way he
lived his life”



Above: Lt Gen Arthur Percival, led by a
Japanese officer, walks under a flag of truce
to negotiate the capitulation of Allied forces
in Singapore, on February 15, 1942.

are welcome here.
I sufferings which
the Japanese, you
ally in our thoughts.
already received too.
We know also that
it's the highest courage.
the of so many of your

I hope that your return from
your families a full measure
long enjoy together.

George R.I.

CABLE AND WIRELESS
Via Imperial
CONSTITUTION
WOMEN FOR THE SCOTTS
IN THE HIGHEST COURT LOOSE CORNERS
CHERRYBLOSSOM AND CHALDERON CORNET
BATS AUSTRALIAN BARDS HOPE TO BE
DOWN DRIVING * ADDRESS LETTERS AND
AND TO LIBERATED MEN CARE AUSTRALIAN
P O WELLSBORO *
* FROM *

Form 20-404
Board Office
2 January 1945
was notified I have to
has been received from the
1 Jan 1945/4
has

IN MEMORY OF OUR COMRADES
These soldiers I may have lived their life
you for them with struggle and sleep,
but has called them under his wing.
But he knows what it might bring.
They and yours are taking their toll
along fresh wounds for him learned well
though they suffered in silence and smiled
though in pain
We know now their courage was all in vain.
These soldiers of ours we shall never forget
to the world the true part in full their battle
for them all together now in our peace
for they put their lives in their hands & souls

The VJ-Day 75th anniversary articles above can be found in the Soldier Magazine| August Edition 2020:

www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/soldier-magazine

Jacqui Ritchie, general manager at St John's Wood Care Centre, 48 Boundary Road, London

is trying to find more information about the building's former life as an Army barracks. The centre celebrates its 20th anniversary in October and is keen to invite veterans to the celebration. Anyone with memories to share should email stjohnswoodmanager@bondcare.co.uk

The Air Training Corps, now part of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets, will celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2021. To help mark the occasion, they would like to identify those who were cadets when the formation launched in 1941 and interview them to capture memories of those early days. Email al.munns@btinternet.com

The Women's Royal Army Corps Association has launched a campaign to find the oldest British female Second World War veteran. To nominate someone you think may meet the criteria visit www.wracassociation.org or use #FindOurOATS on social media.

Introducing HeadFIT for Life

HeadFIT is designed specifically for the Defence community, providing 24/7 access to online self-help tools that can enhance your mood, drive and confidence, and help manage the stresses of everyday life.

We all recognise that feeling when our head is in the right place – the moments when we're feeling positive and confident about what we're trying to achieve, when we're on top of our game.

Most of us go the other way too. Everyone has thoughts, feelings and behaviours that don't really work for us or the people around us. At home and at work.

The fact is, our heads are active all the time. In any day we can feel excited, stressed, irritable, elated, up and down... it's all completely normal and goes right back to our earliest instincts.

What's more, the science now shows us that these instinctive patterns don't need to hold us back. By understanding how our thoughts,

feelings, behaviours and bodily sensations all interact, we can actually help rewire our brains to work better for us.

There's a range of proven, everyday tools and habits to help us with that. But a great start is to STOP and become aware of how you are responding to things.

The tools and techniques include breathing exercises, body posture and relaxation techniques that have been designed for everyone across Defence. Whether you are a new recruit, long-serving personnel, a veteran, civilian staff, serving in uniform or part of the RAF Family. The techniques are designed so they can be easily integrated into everyday lives.

This is the moment you come off autopilot, CHALLENGE what's going on in your head and, if it's appropriate, CHANGE the way you're thinking.

HeadFIT has been developed in partnership with The Royal Foundation's Heads Together campaign, the Ministry of Defence, Kings College London, with clinical advice from Dr Vanessa Moulton, and has been spearheaded by The Duke of Sussex.

Learn to check in with yourself and get into the habit of using the tools that are right for you simply go online to:
www.headfit.org



HeadFIT
FOR LIFE

Research Evidence for Real Life

Some people think that academic research is not relevant to their lives, but it can be used in many ways to inform and support decisions on different issues faced by all of us. Far from being something done by academics with no practical utility, much research in the military social field has very real applications to everyday life for the Armed Forces family and for veterans. The FiMT Research Centre offers free access to relevant UK and international research and a wide variety of networking tools to support anyone making use of it.

The research on the Veterans and Families Research Hub is easily searched and covers all the main topics that affect our community, such as education, health, housing and many others. This research helps to underpin and guide, with robust and relevant data, the work done by many of the organisations you can go to directly for help or support. If, for instance, you are working with the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) and the RAF Families Federation to support you with a school appeal for your child, you may wish to access research on education and Service children to add to your evidence.

TO START WITH, WHY NOT TAKE A LOOK AT THE SNAPSHOTS?

These are simple, lay language summaries of key research areas that take away all the academic jargon and provide key facts and evidence. If you need more detail, the Snapshots contain links to all the longer reports. The team can also help with finding the right research if you have any trouble finding it on the Hub; just get in touch.

As a research centre, we produce research and monitor research activity in this area globally, but we also get out and about, talking to Serving personnel, local government staff, NHS workers, and the many organisations and charities who support the Forces community. We do this to keep up to date with key issues affecting you and also to find new ways of getting research to those who can use it for the benefit it offers.

FiMT
forces in mind trust
Research Centre



ENVOY SUMMER 2020
raf-ff.org.uk

The Forces in Mind Trust Research Centre (funded by the Forces in Mind Trust) is part of the Veterans and Families Institute for Military Social Research at Anglia Ruskin University.

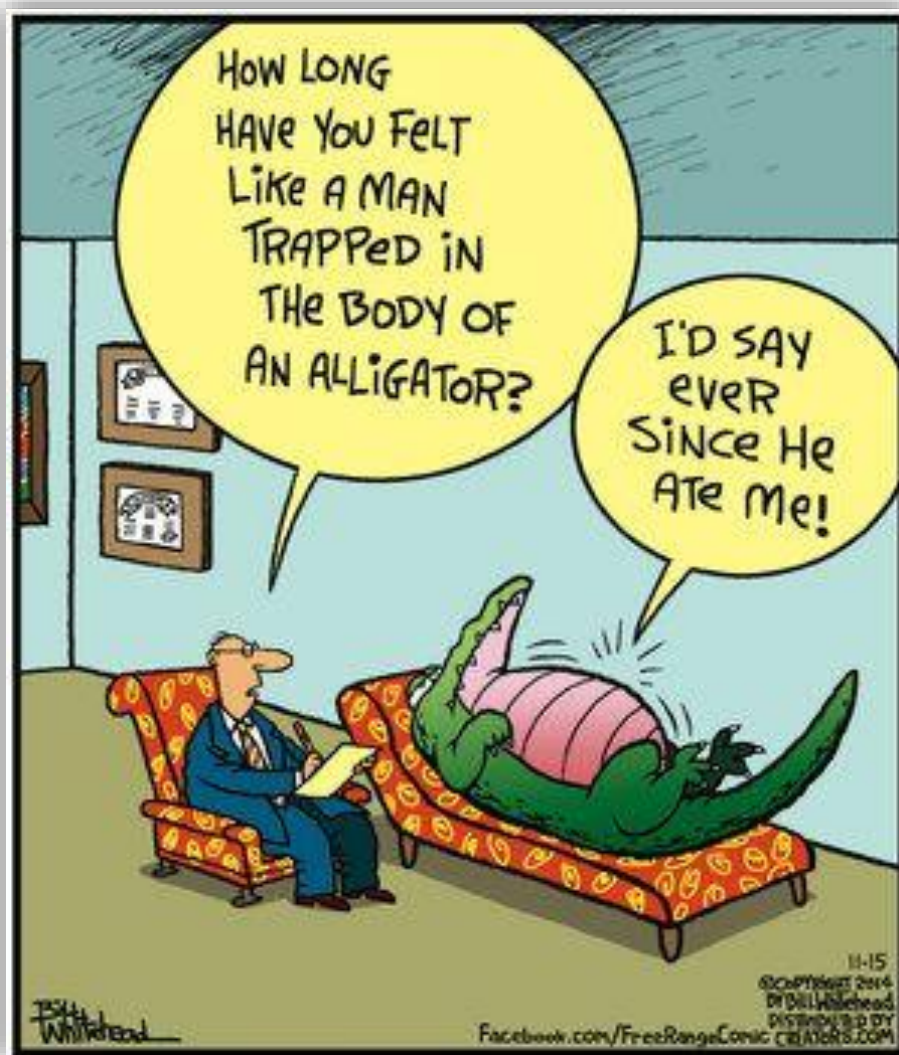
For information

- www.vfrhub.com
- www.facebook.com/Forces-in-Mind-Trust-Research-Centre-107973787399665
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Case study

Phil (not his real name), a serviceman is married to Tania (likewise), who was previously married to another serviceman. He has two children from his first marriage and Tania has one child from her first marriage. Phil is being posted overseas, and they are facing a custody battle as her ex-husband does not want him to take the children with them. Phil came to the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) Research Centre via its website, the Veterans & Families Research Hub (www.vfrhub.com) and the team signposted him to the latest research on Service children. Due to the evidence he provided to the family court, the decision made took into account the particular issues of service life and the impact on families.



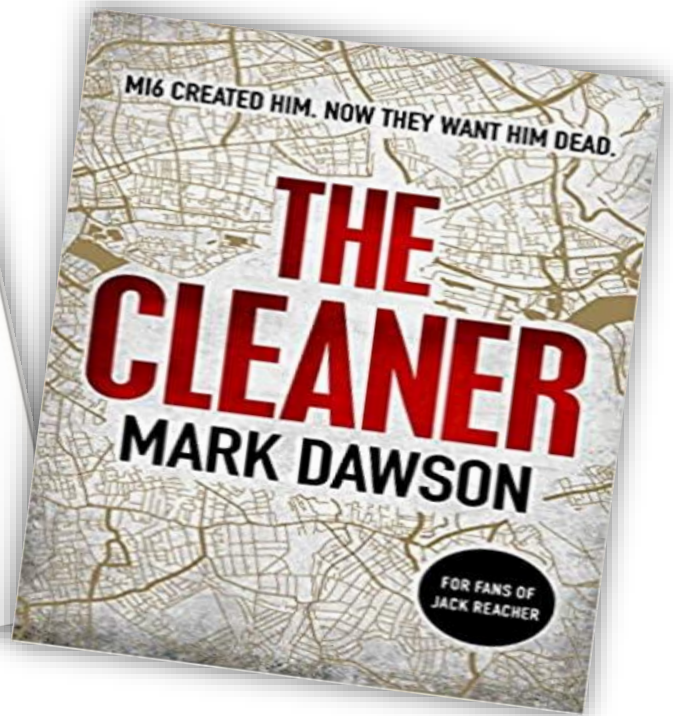
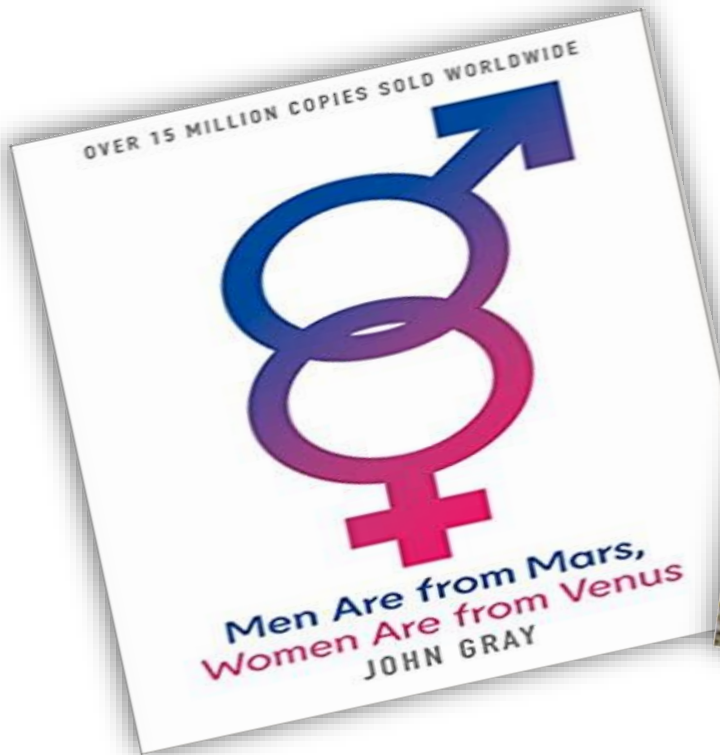
Book Chats

PHEW!!! Almost there!!!

This is what have you been reading in our #TLRC2020 Reading Challenge...

Awwwww! We're so excited!!! This month, we've read a fictional story and a self-help book LIKED THEM BOTH-ish!!! Both of them are part of our Lockdown Summer Reading Challenge **#TLSRC2020**, unknown & unsuspected authors; and we hope that everyone has had a great time reading so far... So just like last month, typically, we don't publish comments with spoilers. Also, we will not publish any comments that are hateful/ugly. There are other book clubs that might if you want to express your thoughts in that way, but V&F-LP's **#TLSRC2020** isn't one of them. Remember that in the **#TLSRC2020** you have the freedom of picking up and putting down any old book you like, totally up to you.

TA. DAH.... Introducing our two **#TLSRC2020** books are Men from Mars, Women Are from Venus by JOHN GRAY & THE CLEANER by MARK DAWSON.



Men from Mars, Women Are from Venus by JOHN GRAY

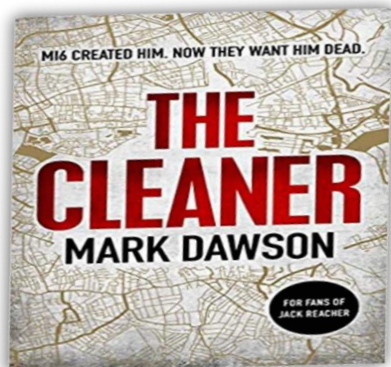
Ray: Being a bit sceptical, thought I'd give it try, not told my wife, but, reading it has helped and encouraged me to understand our behaviour, have actually started reading this again, just to make sure we're singing from the same song sheet, even though we might be singing wrong words etc . Everything is always work in progress, patience and understanding does work.

7 / 10

Yorkshire John: Yeah. Men should have stayed where they were on Mars & lived happily ever after. I'll give it a **7.5 - 8** & I would recommend anyone that is having relationship problems to read or listen to it. To be honest I think it should be spoken about in schools as a book to read.

Pat: I noticed how politically out of date this book is as it suggesting women do the cooking, cleaning, shopping, and child rearing than the man, and he can score points with her by taking her out to dinner. Really! In my house, he knows where the door is.... we don't score

points against each other. I felt the book was patronising. I won't be recommending this book, just a lot of condescending waffle and I'm being really generous with this mark. **1/10**



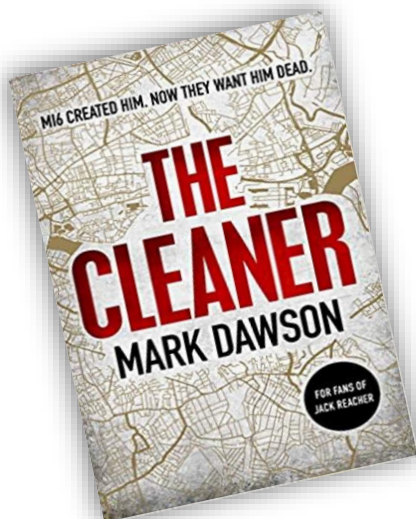
THE CLEANER by MARK DAWSON

Key: This is my first foray into Mark Dawson books, and certainly won't be my last. I was actually rather surprised by the story - I had expected a bit more of the typical jet-setting spy, but no. None. The Cleaner is a government assassin who grows tired of the things he has to do and allows his conscience

to grow. The Cleaner's mission seems to go to plan, but obviously it doesn't. The Cleaner wants to quit - something his government handler is far from happy about. Jack Reacher has nothing to fear from this Cleaner! I look forward to seeing his character develop in later novels. **7 / 10**

JFK: At first I thought this was going to give me some tips on cleaning...The beginning is enlightening, I can't say Cillit Bang and the crime as gone because it hasn't it's just getting started. Unlike my cleaning. Good starter book and once the cleaner character is developed more should imagine he'll give Jack Reacher some competition. Better than any cleaning book I have read – then again this was my first one. Easy read and easy to follow. **7 / 10**

Kathy: THE CLEANER centres on John Milton a high level British agent gone rogue. Well, maybe 'rogue' is not quite the right word in this instance. He's disregarded his training and his conditioning, dropping off the radar, he isn't taking on the whole establishment, not just yet anyway. Instead he is making it his business to help ordinary people. But trouble seeks him out and he's more than capable of dealing with it. I'd never read one of his thrillers. I raced through the pages and was really impressed. It's a gripping read. **9 / 10**



Thank you to our #TLSRC2020 team for your reviews on two completely different books. Adding the scores on the doors....

THE CLEANER by MARK DAWSON

In the meantime continue to email us your book reviews and we can share our reading material in #TLSRC2020

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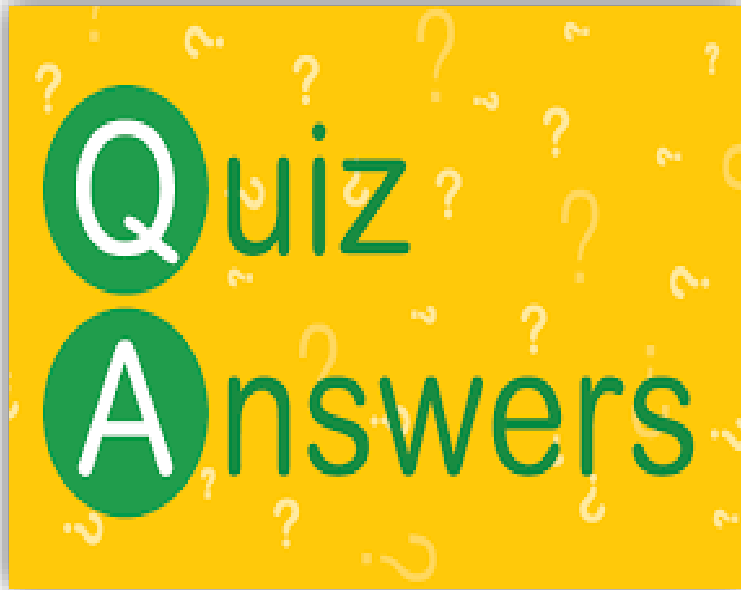
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email: veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com
www.vflp.org.uk

V&F-LP is an independent member of ASDIC.
The association of Ex-Service Drop-in Centres,
Linking Veterans' Drop-ins together across the
United Kingdom.





Congratulations if
you got them all right.

Lloyd George, James
Callaghan, M. Thatcher
T. May, Stanley Baldwin,
Neville Chamberlain,
Winston Churchill, Boris
Johnson, Clement Atlee.

Please do not hesitate in emailing us:

veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com

to drop-in to our ZOOM drop-in meetings.



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Thank you.

