



# Welcome to our November Newsletter

Hi, hope that the V&F-LP's newsletter finds you well, and  
November to go.... Because on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November,  
that's right

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November**  
**10:00 am – 2:00 pm**

V&F-LP will be opening their doors. We'll be open from  
10:00 am until 2:00 pm, and for the first hour 10:00 am  
while 11:00 am complimentary bacon or sausage baps will  
be available\*. Our Well-Being group with Ali is on too at  
12:00 pm, how fantastic is that - to actually meet in  
person... chair-to-chair...

Armed Forces Covenant Silver Award 2021 Employer Recognition Scheme

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Please note that you'll NEED to email us:

**veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com**

And book a place, as well

as \*pre-order your complimentary bap.

It would be really good to see you, so to avoid any disappointment please **email** us at the above address to book your place.



We proudly present this month's guest speaker -  
Resilience Garden Project Co-ordinator from

THE  
Aldershot Military Museum...

Helen Ellis

**The Resilience Garden: Aldershot Military Museum**

The Resilience Garden is an exciting new project  
launching in Autumn 2021 at Aldershot Military Museum.

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With support from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund and your help, we will transform an unused space into a garden through guided workshop at the Museum.



The project is particularly aimed at those that have previously been struggling with their mental health and are looking for a positive and engaging activity, where they can learn new skills, get active and reduce stress. We are very keen to involve veterans in the project to reflect the town's military heritage in the design of the garden and mosaic.

If you would like to know more or to sign-up, you can contact

Helen

[garden4resileince@gmail.com](mailto:garden4resileince@gmail.com)

07904 808 113

[www.hampshireculture.org.uk/health-wellbeing/resilience-garden](http://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/health-wellbeing/resilience-garden)

[www.hampshireculture.org.uk/health-wellbeing/resilience-garden](http://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/health-wellbeing/resilience-garden)





## The Wellbeing Project

*With Ali at 12:00 pm*

Hello Everyone!

I am really looking forward to catching up with you all again for our Wellbeing Group for March.

We are growing fast as a fantastic group who advise and support each other, sharing wisdom and also having a fair few laughs along the way.

We would really love to have some others of you to join us- so please do pop along!

This month, in addition to catching up with each other, we will continue to explore and share some solutions about managing and conquering some of our stresses, including thinking about the importance of our breathing and how our thinking can catch us out sometimes!!

So grab yourselves a brew and come and join us at 12:00pm...

*Ali*

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# Veterans' Vibes



We send our deepest sympathies and most heartfelt condolences at this most challenging time to Mr Hutchings' family and friends and acknowledge their painful loss.

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The Northern Ireland Crown Forces Veterans for Justice (NICFVFJ) have also revealed that they will be erecting a memorial in Northern Ireland to the Cornwall-based former member of the Life Guards Regiment that died in Belfast.

**Sunday Life** By Ivan Little. Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021



Dennis Hutchings' funeral will be on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November - Armistice Day, at St. Andrews' Church, Plymouth. His family have asked politics to be kept out of his service as a motorbike cortege will lead his coffin to St. Andrews' Church in Plymouth.

**Thank you Dennis Hutchings**

**...IT'S TIME FOR...  
HOT TOPICS.**  
So, grab a snack & come-on BACK

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The following four articles were brought to you from Adult Social Care Information & Engagement Team, Surrey County Council 22.10.21

#### **Veterans' friendship activity group**

Adult Social Care is developing a pilot project for veterans and ex-service personnel which gives them the support and recognition they deserve and encourages them to take part in group activities with other veterans with shared experiences. The pilot is being developed in Epsom & Ewell, Surrey Heath and Guildford.

Currently, sessions are well attended by older veterans, however, Adult Social Care would like to encourage more intergenerational friendships and will devise suitable activities to support this. Professionals are encouraged to publicise the project via their networks.

For more information please contact:

[Tracey.morris@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:Tracey.morris@surreycc.gov.uk) (Epsom and Ewell)  
[Mike.rowlands@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:Mike.rowlands@surreycc.gov.uk) (Surrey Heath)  
[Marne.stiles@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:Marne.stiles@surreycc.gov.uk) (Guildford).

#### **Death Café encourages conversations about death and dying**

The Brigitte Trust is encouraging honest and thoughtful conversations about death and dying over coffee and cake. Death is an inevitable part of life yet most of us find it a very difficult topic to talk about. The Brigitte Trust wants to normalise the conversation and help lead the discussion by providing a safe and informal space to talk about thoughts and feelings around death and dying.

The [death cafes](#) are free and open to anyone, to speak freely and without judgement. There is no set agenda for a death café meeting just facilitated discussion following the interests of those attending.

Places can be booked online at the [death cafes](#) or alternatively, please contact The Brigitte Trust:

**Telephone:** 01306 881816  
**Email:** [mandy.east@brigitte-trust.com](mailto:mandy.east@brigitte-trust.com)

Please note that the Death Café is not a grief support session and is, therefore, not suitable for newly bereaved people. For anyone who is recently bereaved and in need of support, there is [Bereavement Support information](#) on the Brigitte Trust website.







### Surrey Fire and Rescue's Safe and Well Visits offer valuable support

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service offers free visits to help residents stay safe and well in their home. The friendly and informal visit will happen at a time that suits them, and all the advice is tailored to the individual. The service will even fit and supply fire detection equipment free of charge if needed.

You can also refer someone for a visit. The service is committed to making sure everyone in our community has the right protection and prevention advice to help them maintain their safety, independence and quality of life. Visits can be booked by:

- Calling free on 0800 085 0767 or,
- Texting on 07971 691898 or,
- Visiting: [www.surreycc.gov.uk/safeandwell](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/safeandwell)





# Follow us today on:



[www.linkedin.com/in/veterans-families-listening-project-aa9a74b0/](http://www.linkedin.com/in/veterans-families-listening-project-aa9a74b0/)



[www.facebook.com/VeteransnFamiliesListeningProject](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransnFamiliesListeningProject)



@VnF\_LP



Veterans & Families – Listening Project  
email: [veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com](mailto:veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com)  
[www.vflp.org.uk](http://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.



## Remembrance Day Tour at Brookwood Military Cemetery

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1100-1300hrs**

Join Action for Carers on a tour of Brookwood Military Cemetery, Brookwood, Woking GU24 0JD.

The Cemetery is steeped in military history and a source of countless interesting facts. It is a very peaceful and tranquil place to remember those that have fallen.

Don't forget to wear your Poppy.

To book ☎ call 0303 040 1234, press option 1  
✉ or email [CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk)

**[www.actionforcarers.org.uk](http://www.actionforcarers.org.uk)**

**Action for Carers  
Surrey**

Charity Registration No 1116714

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## Epsom and Ewell Veterans Community Hub

Please join us at our friendly, monthly veterans' hub for a cuppa, natter, and a biscuit or two!

**Where:** The Army Reserve Centre, Welbeck Close, Ewell, KT17 2BG

**When:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month

**Time:** 10.30am-12.30pm.

Any questions please contact Zoe Kirby – [zkirby@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:zkirby@britishlegion.org.uk) or Tracey Morris [tracey.morris@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.morris@surreycc.gov.uk)

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## STRENGTH THROUGH SUPPORT.

### Support and Outreach Meetings.

From 09.00 - 16.00 Veterans and families drop in with several service charities in attendance offering advice and support all day.

The following activities are available to try including indoor Archery, Kurling, Bocchia, Bowls. Table Tennis. for all abilities able bodied and disabled.

If you require a lift from Hampton Court station please call 07902 125508 as we may be able to help.

Next Meeting every Monday of every Month.

Venue:-

3 rd Molesey Scout hut.

St Peters road. West Molesey.

Surrey. KT8 2QE.

erans and families welcome.

Veterans  
Support  
Association

### LOOSE PARTS



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## BRAVERY MEMORIALISED

■ A STRIKING statue of a heroic Sikh soldier was unveiled in Wolverhampton to mark Saragarhi Day – the annual commemoration of one of the bravest last stands in military history.

Funded by £100,000 in donations from local Sikhs, the figure depicts Havildar Ishar Singh, who in 1897 led 21 comrades from the Army of British India as they defended a strategically important hilltop post against 10,000 Afghan troops.

Serving Sikhs and personnel from 4th Battalion, The Mercian Regiment were on parade at the ceremony, while members of 210 Battery, 103 Regiment, Royal Artillery gave a field gun salute.



Ref: [www.soldiermagazine.co.uk](http://www.soldiermagazine.co.uk) OCTOBER 2021 Page 13

## OVERLOOKED SOLDIERS

■ A BOOK celebrating the service of African troops has been published.

*The King's African Rifles and East African Forces in Both World Wars* was commissioned by the formations' regimental association to commemorate the honours earned by personnel in conflict.

President David Williams said the contribution of the Askari – as the soldiers were also known – was significant, but is often overlooked.

For more information visit [kingsafricanriflesassociation.co.uk](http://kingsafricanriflesassociation.co.uk)

## LONG WALK HOME

■ A CENTENARIAN former prisoner-of-war who escaped German captivity has launched a charity appeal to mark his 102nd birthday.

Ex-Royal Engineer Norman Lewis is aiming to raise £10,000 – one pound for every mile he covered on his epic journey home in 1945.

The cash will go towards two charities that have assisted him in recent years – SSAFA and the Tri-Service and Veterans Support Centre in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Lewis (pictured below) endured five years of forced labour in Poland during the Second World War, before the Russian advance enabled him to get away and return to Britain via the Black Sea and Mediterranean.

To find out more about his campaign visit [virginmoneygiving.com/fund/SapperNorman102](http://virginmoneygiving.com/fund/SapperNorman102)

Read more about Norman Lewis's story in November's magazine.



[www.soldiermagazine.co.uk](http://www.soldiermagazine.co.uk) OCTOBER 2021 17



# October WAS National Cyber Security Awareness Month! Anyway...



## Follow us today on:



[www.linkedin.com/in/veterans-families-listening-project-aa9a74b0/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/veterans-families-listening-project-aa9a74b0/)



[www.facebook.com/VeteransnFamiliesListeningProject](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransnFamiliesListeningProject)



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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.



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twenty twenty one



# Are you Christmas jumper ready!!!

We know.... We know that it's still October-ish-November, and we're mentioning Christmas already!!! Anyway just giving you the heads-up that it will be a Festive Fusion of Delight, that Yule not want to miss... Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 10:00am – 2:00 pm.

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## 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](mailto: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](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk)

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The Veteran's Awards is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes the positives from our military veteran community. It's been put together by Veterans for Veterans, serving reservists and those companies that support us. We reward our community in the areas of fitness, business, health and well-being and the wider community.

# THE ENGLISH & WELSH VETERANS AWARDS TAKE PLACE IN SOLIHULL & CARDIFF

**T**he aim of the awards is to celebrate the success coming from within our community and inspire future service leavers that great things can happen when they do decide to leave the Armed Forces.

The English and Welsh Veterans Awards nights recently took place in Solihull and Cardiff respectively, both being held in September.

Pathfinder International is proud media partner for both events and we were on hand to support the events.

And so to the winners and runners up from both nights...

## THE WELSH VETERANS AWARDS 2020/21:



**From Team V&F-LP, congratulations & well done to everyone that was involved.**

- Welsh Veterans Awards Champion – Michael Allen – Endex
- Role Model of the Year – Sponsored by Royal Educare – Mike Smith
- Inspiration of the Year Award – Sponsored by Porters Estate Agents – Michael Allen
- The Community Award- Sponsored by RV1 Group – Cyril Turner
- Contribution to Welsh Fitness Industry- Sponsored by Print Inc – Neil Adams
- Entrepreneur of the Year- Sponsored by Pinnacle Office Solutions – Collin Singer
- Lifetime Achievement – Sponsored by Hugh James Solicitors – Steve Fisher
- Employer of the Year- Sponsored by AB Glass – MPCT
- Leavers to Leader Award – Sponsored by Leavers to Leaders – Paul Taylor MBE
- Volunteer of the Year – Sponsored by Pathfinder Magazine – Sue Butler
- Veterans Business of the Year Award – Sponsored by Educ8 Training – Ajuda Limited
- Health and Well-being Award – Sponsored by Bridgend AUDI – Sinclair Audi – The Bulldogs
- Reservist of the Year Award – Sponsored by Bridgend AUDI – Sinclair Audi – Kieron Long

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# THE ENGLISH VETERANS AWARDS 2020/21:

- Veterans Awards Champion: Bernard Stonestreet – sponsored by Hugh James

## **Role Model of the Year- Sponsored by Print Inc**

- Winner – Tim Evers – Sapper Support
- Silver – Ger Fowler – Veterans Crisis Sunderland
- Bronze – Scott Lawson – The Cornwall College Group

## **Inspiration of the Year Award – Sponsored by Ridgesteel**

- Winner – Stuart Bratt – Tough enough to Care
- Silver – David Curtis – Everton in the Community
- Bronze – AJ Roberts

## **The Community Awards – Sponsored by Mortgage Squared**

- Winner – Neil Jurd OBE
- Silver – Stephen West – Forces Re-Engineered CIC
- Bronze – Nick Wilson – Talk Mental Health

## **Contribution to the English Fitness Industry and Society – Sponsored by The ABF The Soldiers' Charity**

- Winner – Steve Whitmore
- Silver – Graham O'Brien – BMF
- Bronze – Simon Baverstock – Plyofit Elite Fitness

## **Health & Well-being Award – Sponsored by Company X Consulting**

- Winner – Tough enough to Care
- Silver – BMF ( Be Military Fit)
- Bronze – Veterans Growth

## **Leavers to Leaders Award – Sponsored by Leavers to Leaders**

- Winner -Lynn Roddy
- Silver – Laurence Moore – Nomad CIC – Project RECCE
- Bronze – Timothy Duncombe – Unite Telecom

## **Entrepreneur of the Year- Sponsored by Hugh James**

- Winner – Matthew Burrows – Self Build Heroes

- Silver – Benjiman Sutton – Techulia
- Bronze – Dougie Brimson – Red Bus Movies

## **Employer of the Year- Sponsored by Hugh James**

- Winner – FM Conway
- Silver – FDM Group
- Bronze – CXC Ltd and Portsmouth NHS Trust

## **Veteran Owned Business of the Year- Sponsored by Veteran Trees**

- Winner – CXC Ltd
- Silver – Unite Telecoms
- Bronze – AJ Roberts Coaching & Sir Fix-a-lock Ltd

## **Volunteer of the Year – Sponsored by Pathfinder International Magazine**

- Winner – Bernard Stonestreet
- Silver – David Paul Swift
- Bronze – Kerryanne Wild

## **Lifetime Achievement – Sponsored by Vigilance**

- Winner – Richard Dorney MBE
- Silver – Bob Blanchard
- Bronze – Nicola Batty

## **Reservist of the Year Award – Sponsored by Mortgage Squared**

- Winner – Andrew Lawson ( FDM Group)
- Silver – Rochelle Gopee – NHS
- Bronze – Ryan Edwards

Founder of the awards, Sean Molino said: "These awards are extremely close to my heart. As a former serving soldier, I can understand how difficult transition is, and how we require help and guidance along the way, even at times if we don't ask for support."

I want our Veterans Awards and social media presence to become a place where serving military and veterans can discover some great advice and tips from veterans, who are doing truly inspirational things upon leaving the military. I hope we can inspire future service leavers that great things can be achieved with help and support."

See you all in Edinburgh for the Scottish Veterans Awards 2020/21 on October 6.

REF: |12| **PATHFINDER** | THE ORIGINAL RESETTLEMENT MAGAZINE |

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# HUMBLE BEGINNINGS FOR WOODY'S LODGE

REF | OCTOBER 2021 | **PATHFINDER** | 13 |

**July 2015, Woody's began its journey, from a donated room at a Penarth Pier Pavilion, views of the Bristol Channel, a table, 12 mugs and a kettle and a group of Veterans, with mixed service histories, all ages and the simple need to talk.**

Bringing together of likeminded persons and experience, with a focus of commemorating the life of Paul "Woody" Woodland RM, SBS. a wish to thank our Armed Forces and the rigour and determination to support the needs of a disparate and sometimes desperate, community of locally based Veterans.

Soon, 12 mugs and kettle were not enough, with Veterans asking for less public, safe and secure "green spaces", matching Paul's wishes, building his

own cabin, settling his family in peaceful woodlands. In 2016, an unusual set of coincidences, (a common occurrence at Woody's); we arrived at the gates of RN HMS Cambria, a long worked out strategy with RN/RM Command, RFCA Wales gave access to a former medical unit building, providing that much requested indoor and outdoor space.

Within 12 months, our Cambria operation, by word of mouth, welcomed over 1000 visits by local Veterans. Funded by local donations, long hours of voluntary work, with great humour, we built partnerships, public and political recognition, developing direct and simple ways of supporting our Veterans.

In 2017, Woody's partnered with Age Cymru in supporting Wales's senior veterans, receiving, substantial Armed Forces Covenant granting, enabled us to employ a team of 3, register as Charity and realize our plans to deliver Woody's Lodge to the wider Wales.

Today we operate out of three farm based hubs in South, West and North Wales and twelve (and increasing) Welsh town-based Drop-in Centres and employ 13 veteran staff. Further support from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust and RNRMC, plus countless acts of generosity we have hosted over 8500 veterans and directly supported over 2000, changing lives of individuals and families, within mental and physical health, financial, and welfare settings. We now extend our support to the emergency services.

Today we have accessed over £700,000 in Welfare and Pensions Benefits for our Veterans and Families.

That first brew, a smile, a friendly voice and helping hand, in Paul's wished for setting, has saved lives and gives, once again, an often, lost wish...a way back to a positive life.

"Small enough to care, large enough to cope", someone said. That's what we do, so Proud.

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# NO-ONE LEFT BEHIND FROM LOCKDOWN

Covid-19 has created a new battleground in society, hitting the mental health of our Veterans and their families particularly hard. This Christmas help Walking With The Wounded ensure that no-one is left behind as we start to exit the worst of the pandemic – together.

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**The past 18 months have been some of the strangest and the toughest this country has gone through. We've been tested to our limits and forced to isolate from our colleagues, our friends and our loved ones.**

The pandemic has taken a huge toll on the mental health of the nation. Our challenge as a charity, as a society is to come together and walk into the future, making sure that no-one is left behind from lockdown, no-one left behind on the battlefield of Covid.

In 2020, our supporters came together and smashed records for Walking Home For Christmas, raising over £450,000 through 3,000 Walkers. Walking With The Wounded Santa hats were seen up and down the country, with our fundraisers smashing their targets with every small step making a big difference.

This year we want to go one better. The colleague you've only seen over Zoom for 2 years? Give them a call and organise a team walk. The relative you've been waiting to hug for so long? Get the family together and plan a weekend stroll. Renew those relationships, remake your connections. Reach out in the great outdoors and help us to make this the best Walking Home For Christmas yet.

It couldn't be easier to get involved. Sign up at [www.walkinghomeforchristmas.com](http://www.walkinghomeforchristmas.com) – you'll get an online fundraising page created for you and be sent a branded Santa hat and fundraising pack. Then plan your walk, home from work, school walk instead of drive, or somewhere important to you. Whatever the weather. Anytime between the 10th-20th December. We can't wait to see what you come up with, a memorable adventure this Christmas whilst supporting the cause.

Last year the Army Cadets were an inspiration to Walking Home For Christmas. Between them, the Cadets raised over £62,000 for Walking With



The Wounded, with success stories from all around the country. They were the single biggest contributor to our event and we're so pleased to welcome them back for 2021.

Jack Cavilla, Head of Media & Communications for the Army Cadets said: "The Army Cadets are delighted to once again be supporting Walking Home For Christmas. Over the festive period it gives our Cadets and Adult Volunteers something to focus on, participate in and ultimately give something back to support ex-military personnel. Anybody can sign up and take part and it was fantastic to see so many people associated with the Army Cadets taking part in 2020 and we hope that this year will be no different."

Carolyn Brown, Walking With The Wounded Clinical Lead said: "Exercise improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression and negative mood as well as improving self-esteem and we had some lovely comments from our participants last year about the positive mental impact of Walking Home For Christmas. Taking part in group activities and working to achieve a common goal can instill a sense of camaraderie which many ex-service men and women miss. They know that the associated banter can give a little respite from the day to day difficulties that can be experienced by many."

We all need ways to help us through stressful situations - having a laugh, socialising with others and taking part in some physical activity is a recipe for improving our wellbeing and rebalances the nervous system. After the past 18 months, this event has all the ingredients to be a really positive activity this Christmas!

Fergus Williams, CEO of Walking With The Wounded said: "Coronavirus has posed an

enormous challenge to Walking With The Wounded over the past 18 months. We've had to come up with creative solutions to ensure that we can continue to support ex-military and their families on a daily basis. We've adapted as the world has changed, for example moving our mental health services online during the worst of the pandemic. With your help through Walking Home For Christmas we can continue to be there when we're needed most, with client first at the heart of everything we do. Thank you to everyone who takes up the challenge this Christmas and helps us to ensure that no-one is left behind from lockdown."

Every £82 raised by our supporters could fund a private therapy session for an ex-serviceman or woman to begin the process of addressing their mental health needs – with a therapist allocated within an average of just 5 working days.

**Sign up or find out more today:**

[www.walkinghomeforchristmas.com](http://www.walkinghomeforchristmas.com) or

email [hello@walkinghomeforchristmas.com](mailto:hello@walkinghomeforchristmas.com)

## IDEAS...

- Walk 12 miles of Christmas on 12th December.
- Be inspired by our Walk of Oman team and cover 400km.
- Do a good deed and hand-deliver presents.
- Walk from or to an NHS site, war memorial or barracks.
- Create a Strava Art message to map out your support.
- Visit the website to see what the Army Cadets did last year to top the leaderboard





# MORE SUPPORT TO HELP PEOPLE TO BECOME HGV DRIVERS AMONG PACKAGE OF GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO EASE RISK OF SHORTAGES



**P**athfinder continues the focus on the hot topic of driver shortages with news of support for those who would like to become HGV drivers

- Up to 4,000 people will be trained as new HGV drivers to help tackle skills shortages and support more people to launch careers within the logistics sector.
- Package of measures includes using MOD examiners to help increase immediate HGV testing capacity by thousands over the next 12 weeks.
- Nearly 1 million letters to be sent to all drivers who currently hold an HGV driving licence, encouraging them back into the industry.
- 5,000 HGV drivers and 5,500 poultry workers added to existing visa scheme until Christmas 2021 to ease supply chain pressures in food and haulage industries during exceptional circumstances this year.

Up to 4,000 people will soon be able to take advantage of training courses to become HGV drivers, as part of a package of measures announced on September 25 by the government to ease temporary supply chain pressures in food haulage industries, brought on by the pandemic and the global economy rebounding around the world.

The Department for Education is investing up to £10 million to create new skills bootcamps to train up to 3,000 more people to become HGV drivers. The free, short, intensive courses will train drivers to be road ready and gain a category

C or category C&E licence, helping to tackle the current HGV driver shortage. An additional 1,000 people are expected to be trained through courses accessed locally and funded by the government's adult education budget.

Fuel tanker drivers need additional safety qualifications, which the government will work with industry to ensure drivers can access as quickly as possible.

To help make sure new drivers can be road ready as quickly as possible, the Department for Transport (DfT) have also agreed to work with Driver and Vehicles Standards Agency (DVSA) to ensure that tests will be available for participants who have completed training courses as soon as possible.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is also announcing today the immediate deployment of their Defence Driving Examiners (DDEs) to increase the country's testing capacity. MOD examiners will work alongside DVSA examiners, providing thousands of extra tests over the next 12 weeks.

The package comes as the DfT, along with leading logistics organisations have worked with the DVLA to send nearly 1 million letters to thank HGV drivers for their vital role supporting our economy, and to encourage those who have left the industry to return. The letter, which will arrive on doormats over the coming days, sets out that the steps the road haulage sector is taking to improve the industry, including increased wages, flexible working and fixed hours.

Alongside this, 5,000 HGV drivers will be able

to come to the UK for 3 months in the run-up to Christmas, providing short-term relief for the haulage industry. A further 5,500 visas for poultry workers will also be made available for the same short period, to avoid any potential further pressures on the food industry during this exceptional period.

Recruitment for additional short-term HGV drivers and poultry workers will begin in October and these visas will be valid until 24 December 2021. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) are preparing to process the required visa applications, once made, in a timely manner.

However, we want to see employers make long term investments in the UK domestic workforce instead of relying on overseas labour to build a high-wage, high-skill economy.

Visas will not be the long term solution, and reform within the industry is vital. That's why the government continues to support the industry in solving this issue in the long term through improved testing and hiring, with better pay, working conditions and diversity.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

This package of measures builds on the important work we have already done to ease this global crisis in the UK, and this government continues to do everything we can to help the haulage and food industries contend with the HGV driver shortage.

We are acting now but the industries must also play their part with working conditions continuing to improve and the deserved salary increases continuing to be maintained in order for companies to retain new drivers.



# MORE SUPPORT TO HELP PEOPLE TO BECOME HGV DRIVERS AMONG PACKAGE OF GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO EASE RISK OF SHORTAGES

## Continued...

After a very difficult 18 months, I know how important this Christmas is for all of us and that's why we're taking these steps at the earliest opportunity to ensure preparations remain on track.

Separately, the government is also bringing in legislation to allow delegated driving examiners at the three emergency services and the MOD to be able to conduct driving tests for one another. This will give the emergency services greater flexibility and help increase the number of tests DVSA examiners can provide HGV examiners.

The government will also provide funding for both medical and HGV licences for any adult who completes an HGV driving qualification accessed through the Adult Education Budget in academic year 2021/22. Previously, adults who took these qualifications had to pay for their own licences. This change will be backdated and applied to anyone who started one of these qualifications on or after August 1st 2021.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

HGV drivers keep this country running. We are taking action to tackle the shortage of drivers by removing barriers to help more people to launch new well-paid careers in the industry, supporting thousands to get the

training they need to be road ready.

As we build back from the pandemic we're committed to supporting people, no matter their background, to get the skills and training they need to get good jobs at any stage of their lives, while creating the talent pipeline businesses need for the future.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

It is a top priority to ensure that there are enough workers across the country's supply chains to make sure they remain strong and resilient.

We have listened to concerns from the sector and we are acting to alleviate what is a very tight labour market.

The government has been able to bring forward these solutions in response to a global issue made worse by coronavirus thanks to our existing work in this area. We have already taken a range of steps to support the industry, including streamlining the process for new HGV drivers and increasing the number of

driving tests. Our measures provided a rapid increase in capacity and allow for an extra 50,000 tests to take place per year.

Progress has already been made in testing and hiring, with improving pay, working conditions and diversity. We continue to closely monitor

labour supply and work with sector leaders to understand how we can best ease particular pinch points. Through our Plan for Jobs we're helping people across the UK retrain, build new skills and get back into work.

The Food and Drink Federation's Chief Executive, Ian Wright CBE, said:

We welcome the government's pragmatic decision to temporarily add HGV drivers and poultry workers to the existing visa scheme.

This is something UK food and drink manufacturers have asked for over the last few months – including in industry's Grant Thornton report – to alleviate some of the pressure labour shortages have placed on the food supply chain.

This is a start but we need the government to continue to collaborate with industry and seek additional long term solutions.

Elizabeth de Jong, Logistics UK's Director of Policy, said:

"Logistics UK welcomes the government package of measures aimed at improving the ongoing driver crisis. The government's decision to grant 5,000 temporary visas for HGV drivers to help in the short term is a huge step forward; we are so pleased the government has listened to our calls and has made this bold decision to support the UK economy. We are also delighted that DfT have agreed to jointly send nearly 1 million letters to all drivers who currently hold an HGV driving licence. With fantastic HGV driving opportunities available in the logistics industry, now is the perfect time to consider returning to the occupation."



**It is a top priority to ensure that there are enough workers across the country's supply chains to make sure they remain strong and resilient."**





## How to get the most from your GP

 By ED HANNA

The NHS is encouraging all GPs to become Veteran friendly accredited.

Currently over 1000 GP surgeries in England have staff trained to be aware of health problems that veterans might face.

These are referred to as veteran friendly. They are designed to support you with your healthcare in many ways, including:

- having health staff with military healthcare backgrounds
- having staff trained to treat health problems that commonly affect veterans
- having knowledge of specialist NHS and DMS services designed specifically for members of the armed forces

You can contact a GP surgery to ask if they are veteran friendly.

### Top tips for veterans, to get the most from your GP

- 1 It is important to register with a GP, rather than wait until you need treatment.
- 2 If you've recently left the forces, it is important to give your GP the paperwork that your military medical centre gave you, including any medical records. This will help to make sure your military health record transfers to your NHS health record. This will also give your GP information on your health and ensure that any ongoing care and treatment is continued.
- 3 Regardless of when you left the military, tell your GP that you've served in the UK Armed Forces. This will help your GP to better understand any military related health conditions that you may have and ensure that you are referred, where appropriate, to dedicated services for veterans.

This includes the specialist mental and physical health services, Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service and the Veterans Trauma Network.

When using these services, you will be able to speak to people who:

- understand the Armed Forces and military life
- are either from the Armed Forces community or highly experienced in working with Serving personnel, reservists, veterans and their families
- will work with you to make sure you get the right type of specialist care, support, and treatment
- work closely with a range of organisations and charities, including military charities, to support your wider health and wellbeing needs.







4 With your agreement, it can sometimes be helpful for your doctor to refer you to Armed Forces charities, such as SSAFA, the Royal British Legion, Combat Stress or Help for Heroes. They can often offer significant help and support, even if they do not all deliver healthcare.

5 You may be worried about sharing information about your time in the Armed Forces. Please note that the NHS is bound by a confidentiality code of practice to ensure GPs, nurses and other people working within the NHS deliver a confidential service bound by law.

For more information, speak to your GP or visit the NHS website at [www.nhs.uk/armedforceshealth](http://www.nhs.uk/armedforceshealth)

#### Accessing healthcare for Armed Forces families

The NHS provides most health care services for Armed Forces families. Visit the new NHS Armed Forces families web pages at [www.nhs.uk/armedforcesfamilies](http://www.nhs.uk/armedforcesfamilies)

REF: **CIVVY STREET** visited 26.10.21

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## Poppy power



### **Poppyscotland Public Affairs and Campaigns Manager Ross Thomson explains the charity's campaign on improving the Armed Forces Bill currently before the UK Parliament.**

Poppyscotland is campaigning for the Bill to go further so that it will fully deliver on the promise of the Armed Forces Covenant to the Armed Forces community. The Bill largely applies only to local government, and some education and health bodies. We believe that national governments and the devolved administrations should be subject to the same legal standard on the Covenant that it is seeking to apply to councils. In our experience, many of the policy areas in which members of the Armed Forces community experience difficulty are the responsibility of UK or Scottish Governments.

The Bill is limited to housing, education and healthcare. We know from our own experience that there are other topics of high importance to the Armed Forces community that would benefit from the legal protection of a due regard duty. These include employment, pensions, compensation, social care, criminal justice, and immigration. Therefore, we are campaigning to widen the scope of the Bill.

As part of the campaign we are actively encouraging members of the public to support us by using **#HonourtheCovenant** on social media and emailing their local MP, which you can do very easily through the **Poppyscotland** website: [www.poppyscotland.org.uk/about-us/campaigns-advocacy-policy/campaigns-policy---what-we-do](http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk/about-us/campaigns-advocacy-policy/campaigns-policy---what-we-do).

REF: [www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/what-we-do/supporting-older-veterans/unforgotten-forces/unforgotten-forces-magazine/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/what-we-do/supporting-older-veterans/unforgotten-forces/unforgotten-forces-magazine/) visited 25.10.21

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# Virtual Field of Remembrance

Select the remembrance symbol of your choice and leave your tribute message. #LestWeForget

Enter the Field

After 35 years at Hollybush House, **Combat Stress** has decided to move out of the treatment centre in Ayr to new premises in both Edinburgh and Glasgow (details to be confirmed). Those veterans currently being supported by Combat Stress will not have their treatment impacted by the move of premises, and new referrals will continue to be welcomed into our services.

Jeff Harrison, Interim Chief Executive Officer at Combat Stress, said: "We will be very sad to leave Hollybush House after 35 years. It is Combat Stress' aim to help as many veterans as possible with military trauma and we can best achieve this by relocating to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Not only will it be easier for veterans to access our services because of the better transport links, but by modernising our services veterans will benefit from our specialist, cutting-edge support."

**Contact Combat Stress:** 0800 138 1619 (All and every day)

Text: 07537 404719 / Email: [helpline@combatstress.org.uk](mailto:helpline@combatstress.org.uk)





## Never too old to go online

If you would like to use new technology and the internet but don't know where to start, help is at hand. Volunteers at charity **AbilityNet** can provide free support to older and disabled veterans anywhere in the UK. They are all disclosure-checked and can help with all sorts of IT (information technology) challenges, from setting up new equipment and resolving technical issues to showing you how to stay connected to family, and use online services. Call the **AbilityNet helpline** on **0800 048 7642** (freephone and minicom) during office hours or email **enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk**.

If cost is a barrier to you using the internet, **Poppyscotland** includes digital access grants in the financial support it can offer to veterans. To find out more you can call their **Get Help line** on **0131 550 1557** or email **GetHelp@poppyscotland.org.uk**.

If you served in the Royal Navy or Royal Marines there's an exciting new initiative open to you. The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) is working in partnership with the Royal Naval Association (RNA) to bring online connectivity into the homes of older veterans. The **Sparko TV kit** is a small box which connects to a TV and comes with a webcam and simple remote control. This enables people to connect with family, friends and community using simple digital technology.

REF: **12 UNFORGOTTEN FORCES MAGAZINE AUTUMN 2021**

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The Sparko tool does not interrupt or interfere with TV programmes; the camera is only activated if a person is on a video call or a live/class activity and will show a small light when in operation. A privacy slider for the camera is included to cover it when it is not in use to ensure peace of mind. Essentially, Sparko is a simplified version of the internet which can be accessed from the comfort of your sofa/armchair, through your TV.

For an application form call Lynda Pearson, the **RNA Welfare Programme Manager**, on **07591 829416**, or email **lynda@royalnavalassoc.com**.

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## LOOSE PARTS

### SLACKER HALLOWEEN



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