



**Veterans & Families – Listening Project**

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



# **Welcome to our**

# **April 2022**

# **Newsletter**

You know how it is with an April day, the sun is warm, but the wind is still a chill. At V&F-LP we say YAY, and look forward to seeing on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April, that's right...

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

**10:00 am – 2:00 pm**

Our doors will be open from 10:00 am until 1:30 pm, and for the first hour 10:00 am while 11:00 am complimentary bacon or sausage baps will be available\*. Even more great news our Well-Being group with Ali will be on too at 12:00

pm, how fantastic is that - to actually meet each other in person... No appointment necessary, just drop-by.

\*email us:

**veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com**

to \*pre-order your complimentary bap.

It would be really good to see you, so to avoid any disappointment please **email** us.

We are really looking forward to seeing you Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at the High Cross Church, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3SY. Open from 10:00 am – 1:30 pm.



Exciting news... Starting at 10:30 am with our guest speaker this month is the

Health & Wellbeing  
Services  
Surrey Heath Community  
Providers

Just as a sports coach can help an athlete develop and excel at a sport, a Health and Wellness coach can help most of us excel at living our lives, even —or especially— if we have chronic medical conditions. The coaching process is similar to talk therapy in that it involves two people discussing ideas and issues, but it is different in that the person who is being coached is in the driver's seat, creating their goals as well as the strategies on how to arrive at these goals.



We tend to hire health coaches to help us with a broad variety of health issues, such as weight loss, stress reduction, the management of chronic conditions, improving diet and exercise, tobacco cessation, addiction, and adjusting to a life-altering health event, like a heart attack.

Even though you have to be registered with a Surrey Heath & Ash Vale GP Practice for the above. Check this out with your own GP, and see what Health and Wellbeing services they provide... If you don't ask, you won't know.

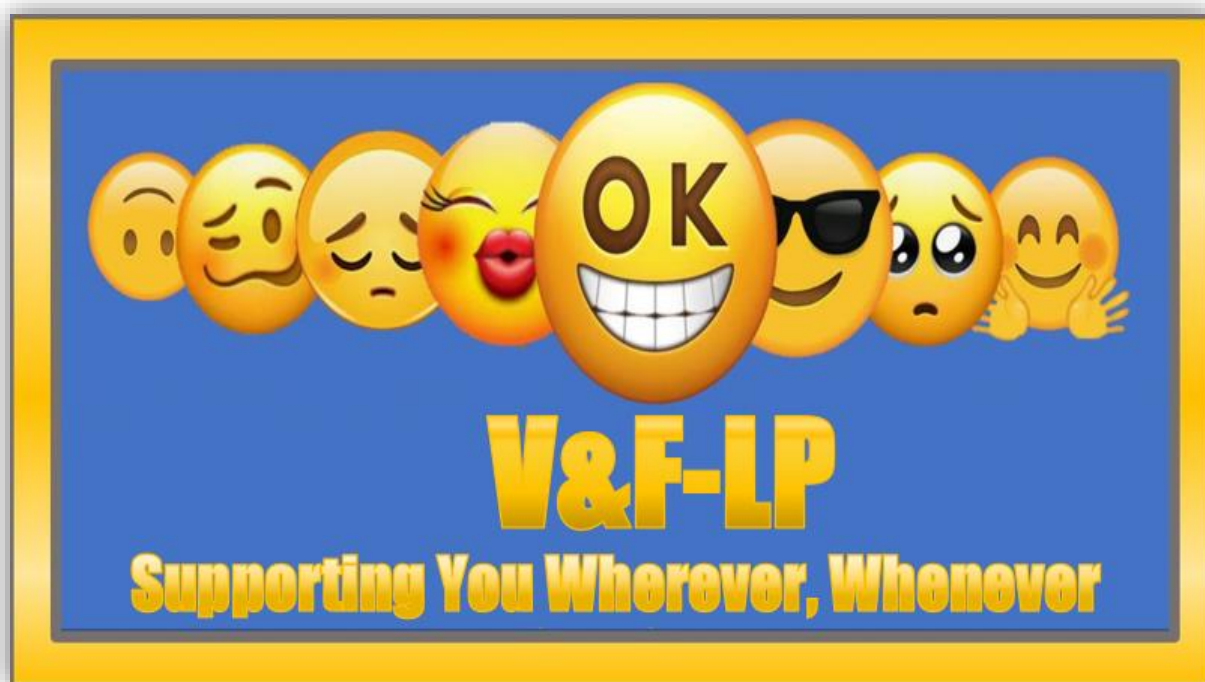


If you want to find out more about the Health and Wellbeing services at Surrey Heath & Ash Vale GP Practice, please ask your GP or email: [Shcp.healthandwellbeingservices@nhs.net](mailto:Shcp.healthandwellbeingservices@nhs.net)



*At 12:00 pm with Ali*

You can also drop-in our Well-Being group with Ali. It would be good to meet and catch-up with you, and find out what how you are doing – we look forward to seeing you at 12:00 pm





# IT'S TIME FOR... **HOT TOPICS.**

So, grab a snack & come on **BACK**

## SUPERMARKET SWEEP



STAFF at a major defence contractor have helped raise a huge cash sum, which will be put towards assisting serving soldiers and veterans in need. Bosses at food services provider Aramark recently handed over the fruits of last year's fundraising efforts to the Armed Forces charity SSAFA. Employee events, donations from the sale of carrier bags at convenience stores and Christmas card sales all helped to bring in the impressive sum.



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## ASSOCIATION LAUNCH

WHEN The Rifles sound the retreat on Horse Guards Parade in June, it will be an especially important occasion for the regiment's veterans.

The event is being used to launch The Rifleman's Association, bringing together former Servicemen and women from the regiment and its antecedent units. It will also shine a light on the Always A Rifleman programme, launched last year to provide crisis support for ex-soldiers.

Author and broadcaster James Holland will be on hand to narrate the story of the regiment's origins with the help of Napoleonic re-enactors, while the sunset parades in St James's Park will culminate with large fireworks displays.

Visit [tickets.theriflesnetwork.co.uk/rifles-sounding-retreat](http://tickets.theriflesnetwork.co.uk/rifles-sounding-retreat)





# Veteran's efforts recognised

**A** FORMER military physiotherapist and serial ultra-marathon competitor has been saluted for her efforts to inspire others with a prestigious award.

Maj Sally Orange (ex-RAMC, above right) – who is now an Army Cadet Ambassador – was crowned Inspirational Woman of the Year for defence community work.

The Afghanistan veteran was recognised for her tireless charity efforts in which she has championed the importance of mental well-being.

Having served more than two decades with the Royal Army Medical Corps, the 47-year-old has also raised half-a-million pounds for good causes,

clocking up successes in dozens of marathons and other extreme events.

Maj Orange said she was honoured to have been recognised with the award and would continue to work to promote a personal cause.

She told reporters: "Having fought with my own mental illness in silence for so many years, I hate to think of others having to do the same."

Nominations for the next Inspirational Woman of the Year award are being sought. Run by the Defence Discount Service, it is open to Regular and Reserve personnel, UK-based Nato colleagues, cadets and civil servants.

For further information visit [defencediscountservice.co.uk](http://defencediscountservice.co.uk)



# Among friends



Infantry soldier to care home worker – is it such a bizarre career move?

► THE Royal British Legion is on the hunt for care home staff – and it's got outgoing soldiers in its sights as potential candidates.

The sector might not offer mega-bucks, but according to former infantryman Matthew Mitchell (ex-PWRR) it is actually brilliantly suited to those hanging up their uniforms.

Most troops miss the buzz when they come out of the Army," the former private tells *Soldier*. "So they either join the police or get a job in security. They need to think on their feet."

But having been in various civvy street roles for more than 20 years, Mitchell now works as the facilities and hospitality manager at RBL's Mais House in Bexhill-on-Sea.

And although he admits it is a far slower pace of life than many Service-leavers would be comfortable with, the comradeship he has discovered among elderly veterans has made it his most rewarding job yet.

"Until you spend some time in these homes it is hard to convey," he continues. "But you can pick that camaraderie back up again."

"At first it was kind of intimidating because some of these residents had seen and done stuff I hadn't."

"But many don't share their military experience with their families. However, with other veterans they do."

"To share those stories – you couldn't ask for anything better."

With six sites across the UK, RBL roles up for grabs at the time this magazine went to press included chef, kitchen assistant, housekeeping assistant, care assistant and nurse.

But Mitchell says the rewards reach far beyond individual job descriptions.

"When I sit down and ask the residents how life is going, we start talking like we are best buddies because we are both from that world and have that common frame of reference," he says.

"The reason ex-soldiers go to reunions is because they interact with people who know what they had to put up with – and it's the same here. It's almost as if I'm one of their platoon."

Care homes hardly have the best reputation for rates of pay. However, Mitchell has an important message about this issue.



"People are always looking for better money, but that means most are in jobs they don't enjoy," he adds.

"Yes, my job could pay more. But my advice is to come in with an open mind."

"I was an infantry soldier for a long time and the buzz is not always the good thing. Quality of life is important."

"I think if vets saw this job for what it really is, they would definitely take a look – it's a privilege to do."



• For more information on roles at RBL care homes visit [rbl.org.uk/carejobs](http://rbl.org.uk/carejobs)

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FIZZIN' WITH FLAVOUR



# FALKLANDS WAR 40 YEARS ON SPIRIT — OF THE — SOUTH

A conflict over a tiny British territory continues to have a huge resonance – four decades on



**T**HE sudden appearance of the Falkland Islands – after a grinding 20-hour flight from RAF Brize Norton – is a surreal experience.

Droning over the infinite South Atlantic, the ear-popping descent and landfall is a welcome relief. The ocean gives way to a brown-grey landscape of rocks and occasional evidence of human settlers.

“You can picture the troops fighting down there during the war,” whispers one of the passengers as we collectively peer through the windows.

The sight is Mother Nature at her rawest – foreboding but majestically beautiful.

This stark landscape – the hallmark of a British overseas territory 8,000 miles from home – has long been familiar to soldiers. A venue for tours, exercises and adventurous training, it has become a home-from-home across the generations.

Turn the clock back 40 years, however, and the situation was very different. At the beginning of 1982, many troops had never heard of the Falklands – a vestige of the British Empire with around 2,000 settlers. And then, on April 2, they were invaded by neighbouring Argentina.

The aggression literally changed the status quo overnight – news that British territory had been seized and photos of the defending Royal Marines being taken prisoner after a

## Gen Leopoldo Galtieri

IMPLICATED in human rights abuses and presiding over a crumbling economy from the outset of his tenure as Argentina's president, Gen Galtieri's uncompromising military government had become unpopular with the people as the 1980s began.

But his occupation of the Malvinas marked a brief turnaround in his political fortunes as he was greeted by cheering crowds in the capital Buenos Aires.

Having taken the lead of a three-man junta in 1981, his decision to invade was heavily influenced by hardline naval colleague Adm Jorge Anaya.

But the dictatorship did not envisage a robust response from the UK and public support soon gave way to anger as the tide of the conflict turned.

Defeat – and the return of democracy in Argentina – saw Galtieri imprisoned, although he was released after serving part of a 12-year sentence.

He lived in near-obscurity in the country's capital until his death aged 76 in 2003.



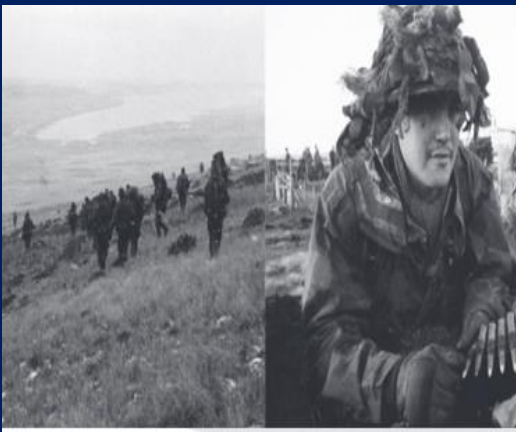
Report: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Paul Haley



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fierce battle were met with public outrage.

While Argentina – which had long claimed the islands it calls the Malvinas as its own – had been negotiating with the UK over the territory, a military junta led by Gen Leopoldo Galtieri had ordered the attack to bolster flagging domestic popularity. His gamble would have disastrous results.

The leader had underestimated the resolve of then British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, whose government swiftly ordered the assembly of a Royal Navy-led task force to recover the southern outpost.

It was an audacious undertaking. Troops had to be moved from one end of the world to the other, using the midpoint of Ascension Island as a staging post. The well-documented battle that followed under the banner of Op Corporate was brutal – a conventional land, air and sea campaign that claimed the lives of 255 British personnel, 649 Argentines and three islanders.

It would also forever change the near-forgotten Falklands as they were rapidly transformed into a fortress.

Soldiers still patrol around the settlements of the territory today. The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment are the most recent of the Army arrivals, providing personnel and firepower for the islands' Roulement Infantry Company.

Colleagues from 16 Regiment, Royal Artillery are also on permanent rotation. Responsible for air defence, the gunners have recently taken delivery of the

formidable Sky Sabre missile system. And all the while, the deployment is bolstered by Royal Air Force Typhoon fast jets and a host of naval assets.

But Stephen Badsey, professor of conflict studies at Wolverhampton University, stressed the legacy of Op Corporate extends beyond the ongoing defence of the islands and continues to inform military thinking.

"In hindsight you can see the Falklands campaign as an early example of modern power projection," he told *Soldier*. "Back 40 years ago defence thinking was focused on Europe and the threat from the Soviet Union."

"But when the Argentine forces invaded, personnel and equipment had to be moved over large distances – suggesting that in the future forces might be called to do anything, anywhere in the world."

Badsey highlighted that the recent creation of the 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team, with its helicopter support and ability to move swiftly, could be traced back to the defence reorganisations stemming from the Falklands conflict.

"The concept of more agile forces, which can be rapidly deployed, was developed further in the defence reviews of last year," the academic added.

The fighting of 1982 also marked a new era in the public's relationship with the military, Badsey argued.

"Although many people would at first have been unable to point to the Falklands on a map, they were interested in all that was happening," he continued. "There was a 'rallying around the flag' effect."

"The way the public saw the war was also

different, with journalists reporting from ships at sea – although you could also argue that this was the last great conflict where the newspaper correspondent had primacy."

Elsewhere, the academic suggested the conflict may have influenced the wider Cold War picture. With Soviet forces embroiled in their decade-long occupation of Afghanistan, he believes the Kremlin watched the UK's response to the Argentine invasion carefully.

Some commentators even took the view that Russian leaders saw British resolve and reassessed their outlook of Nato.

With liberation, the islanders developed a vibrant economy, based on fishing, oil and tourism. But the outpost has also provided an unmatched opportunity for troops to carry out training with tri-Service colleagues as they prepare for the campaigns of tomorrow. ■

## Margaret Thatcher

BRITAIN'S first female prime minister had already faced a tough three years in office by the time Argentine forces landed and seized the Falklands.

Rising unemployment, strikes and riots across UK cities had dominated the headlines at home while a belligerent Soviet Union – which had invaded Afghanistan early in her tenure – was at the centre of a concerning international picture.

But Thatcher had demonstrated an uncompromising attitude to those bent on using violence to achieve their ends. In 1980,

when terrorist gunmen

seized control of the

Iranian Embassy in

South Kensington,

she sanctioned Op

Nimrod and deployed

special forces to end

the siege.

In her autobiography

*The Downing Street Years*,

the former leader reflected on the Falklands: "We were fighting for our honour as a nation and principles of importance to the whole world, above all that aggressors should never succeed, and international law should prevail over the use of force."

Margaret Thatcher – who died aged 87 in 2013 – eventually served 11 years as PM before continuing her political life as a baroness in the House of Lords.





FALKLANDS WAR 40 YEARS ON

# THE GATHERING STORM

In 1982, as Argentina celebrated the capture of a territory it had long claimed, the UK was readying for battle...

**F**ORMER Argentine Navy medical officer Eduardo Gerding remembers the fervour at reports of the Falkland Islands being wrested from British control. Lying some 300 miles off his country's southern tip, the Latin American state had long laid claim to the windswept territory it knew as the Malvinas. Now – on April 2, 1982 – news of their capture was met with jubilation.

"There was enthusiasm and the media fuelled the hopes of the population," the retired lieutenant commander recalled of the crowds that gathered following the rapid seizure of the territory by the country's then ruling military government.

"The issue of the Malvinas is very deep-rooted in Argentina and is taught in school – the public mood 40 years ago reminded me of the enthusiasm described after the outbreak



## FALKLANDS WAR APRIL 1982 TIMELINE

**April 2** Argentine forces land and capture the Falkland Islands

**April 6** Argentina's 9th Infantry Brigade arrives on the Falklands to reinforce the captured territory; 5th Marine Infantry Battalion arrives soon after

**April 9** The Liner SS Canberra departs Southampton with 40 and 42 Cdo Royal Marines and 3 Para on board

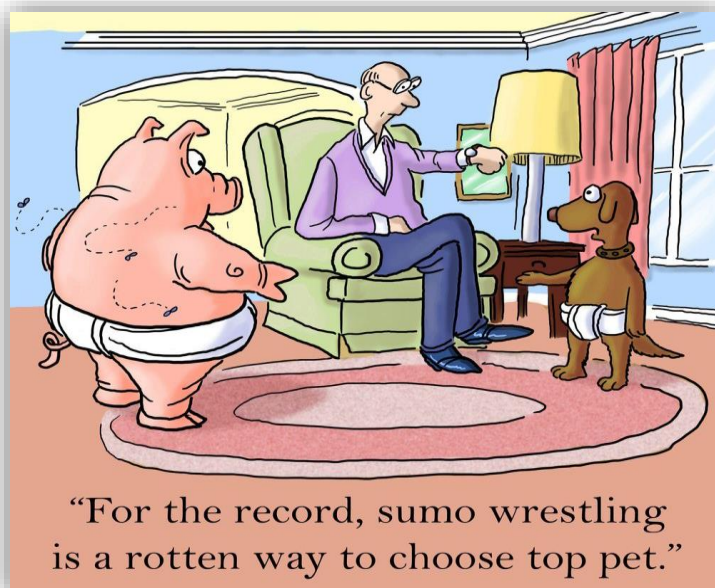
**April 12** A 200-mile maritime exclusion zone around the islands – earlier announced by the UK government – comes into effect

**April 3** The South American country's marines occupy South Georgia – a dependency to the east. British PM Margaret Thatcher announces the dispatch of the Royal Navy task force to the South Atlantic

**April 7** Fleet replenishment ship RFA Stromness leaves Portsmouth with most of 45 Cdo Royal Marines on board. Argentina's Brig Gen Mario Benjamin Menendez appointed the territory's military governor

**April 11** Argentine 10th Infantry Brigade begins deploying to the Falklands

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"For the record, sumo wrestling is a rotten way to choose top pet."





**April 30** A total exclusion zone around the Falklands, imposed by the UK government, comes into effect

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30



**April 25** Operation Paraquet sees Royal Marines recapture South Georgia; Argentina garrison surrenders; 2 Para head for Falklands aboard Ferry MV Norland



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of the First World War in Europe.”

Dubbed Operation Rosary, the occupation of the islands had followed a ferocious battle between a detachment of Royal Marines and South American troops. The following day, the Falklands dependency of South Georgia was taken.

While Lt Cdr Gerding did not take part in the action – watching from a distance – he had already served on the front line of a military escalation with neighbouring Chile some years previously. Now the threat of armed conflict seemed ever present again.

The euphoria erupting in Argentina was in direct contrast to the situation 8,000 miles north in the UK. There the public was largely in the dark about the location of the tiny island chain, or even that it existed at all.

But as images from the aftermath of the invasion – including British personnel captured by Argentine forces – appeared in the newspapers, there was outrage.

Gus Hales, an NCO serving with 9 Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers, was on Easter leave when the news broke. Along with colleagues he received a telegram telling him to return to barracks in Aldershot.

“My brother had served with the Royal Navy during the late 1970s and had been to the Falkland Islands while on HMS Endurance,” he recalled. “But while I knew of the place and where it was, I did not know there was an Argentinian threat – or British citizens were living there.

“At that time, I had done a couple of tours

of Northern Ireland as well as serving in Germany, which was then the routine in which the Army was involved.

“I felt that we were all as ready and prepared as possible for whatever unfolded.” ■



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Thank you  
**VETERANS**  
HONOURING ALL WHO SERVED



*...Waiting to serve you...*





Passport to Well-Being adult learning courses starting at the end of April are now available for new enrolments. These courses are free, subject to eligibility.

If you are looking for ideas to recommend to clients who experience low moods or anxiety, are feeling isolated, or perhaps have trouble with sleeping, our courses can help them take positive steps towards recovery.

The programme is open to adults aged 19 and over who are managing mental health conditions that have a mild to moderate impact on their day-to-day lives.

To discuss the programme and how it can support your clients please contact 0300 200 1044 or email: [passport.wellbeing@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:passport.wellbeing@surreycc.gov.uk)

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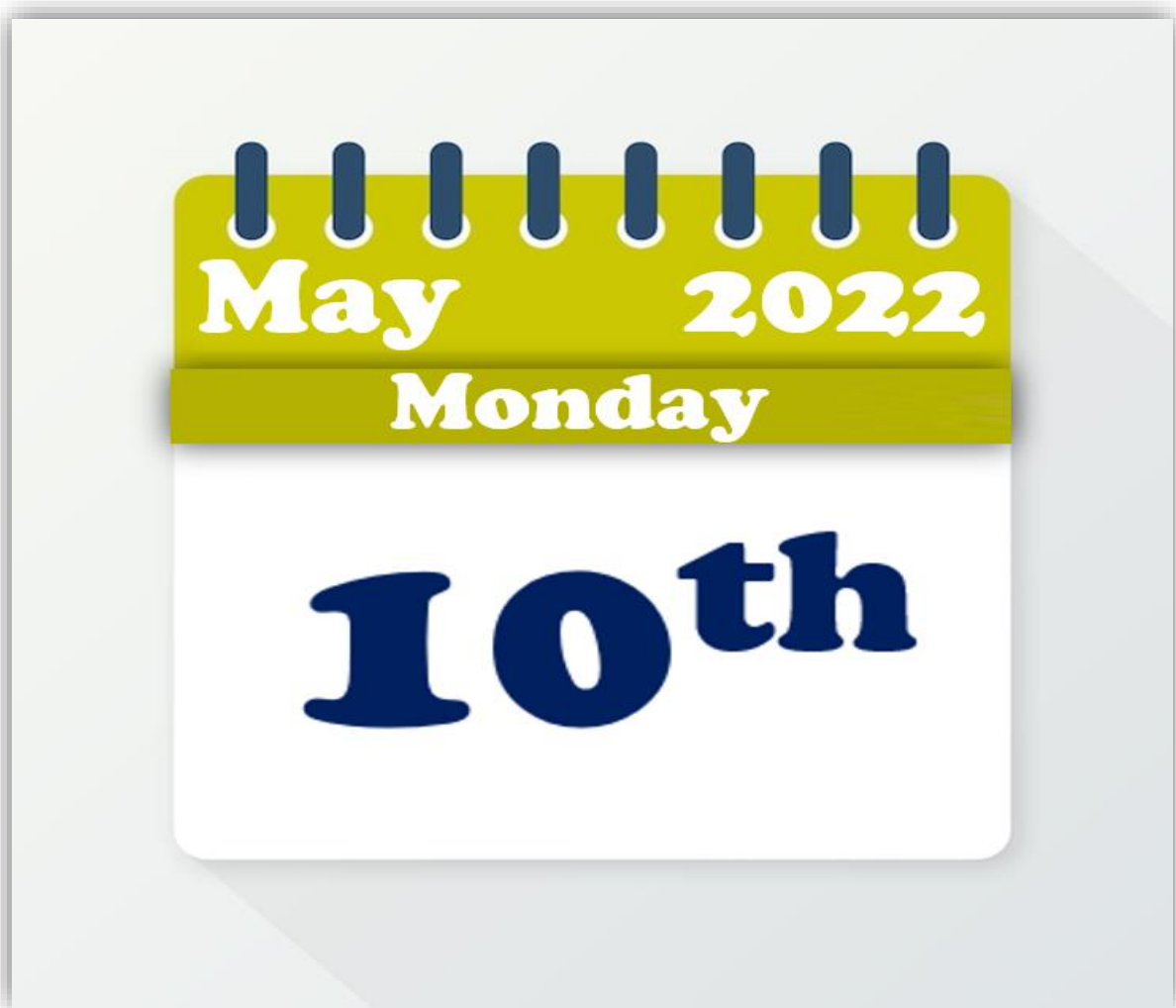


@VnF\_LP



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.





Save the date for next month's drop-in  
Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022 from 10:00 – 1:30 pm





Team V&F-LP are looking forward to  
seeing you  
Soon  
Have FUN, stay SAFE

All information correct at the time of going to press & PDF  
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