# Www.vflp.org.uk Welcome to our October 2022 Newsletter

/eterans & Families – Listening Project email: veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com

Remember the splendour of September, as we look at the poster for October...

## Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Our doors will be open from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm, and we are really looking forward to seeing you Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at the High Cross Church, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3SY.

With even more great news our Well-Being group with Ali will be on at 12:00 pm, how fantastic is that - to actually meet each other in person... No appointment necessary, just drop-by our Drop-in. Exciting news, starting with our guest speaker this month at 10:30am...

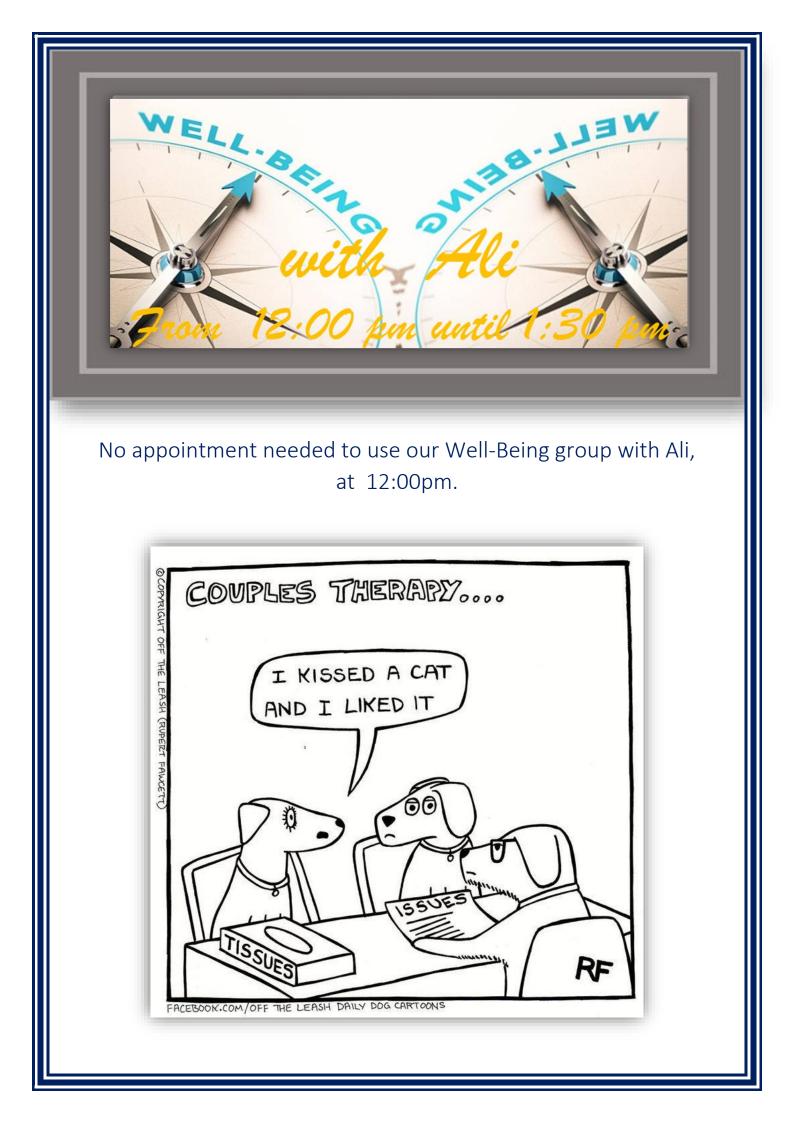
# DWP Department for Work and Pensions

Roxanne Brind, Armed Forces Champion, Surrey, provides a link between the Armed Forces community and the benefit system. Roxanne specialises in all things Military related, supporting current, and ex armed forces personnel as well as their families.

This ranges from help with understanding your universal credit claim, employment links with ex-forces friendly employers, Mental Health Support and referrals, and signposting / connecting you to additional support outside the DWP both locally and nationally. Also support discussions with regards to Childcare, PIP, Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and Pensions.

Roxanne is a veteran too and understands the transition, on how difficult it can be and enable those she works with to navigate the civilian world of employment a little easier and be the extra element of assistance when needed.

The best way to contact Roxanne or the Team is to email: segroup.armedforceschampions@dwp.gov.uk



# **...TSTIMEFOR... HOTTOPICS.** So, grab a snack & come-on BACK



We would like to take this opportunity to send our sincere condolences to his Majesty, King Charles III & family members of Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen served us very well and will be greatly missed by all. She gave us hope, hope for a better future, hope for a better world. We are blessed for her unconditional service as well as her great example towards humanity. Thank you Ma'am.

## THE ROLE OF A RAF HIVE INFORMATION OFFICER

The RAF HIVE Service supports the Chain of Command and Armed Service community through the provision of information and welfare referral service.

We welcome all enquiries from Serving Personnel, spouses, partners, extended families, and the wider military community including veterans, reservists, and MOD civilians.

RAF HIVE Information Officers (HIO) are trained to give them the ability to offer initial support to our people and

> 1. What is the main enquiry you receive? Accommodation - what does the Service Families Accommodation (SFA) look like, do they have new kitchens, bathrooms and carpets, how big are they? Is there a garage and parking? Can I live on the unit and how loud is the A1?

With being a front-line flying Station, we have many people deployed, receiving enquiries regarding deployment briefs, support, resources available along with events we are running.

One of the main enquiries is on occommodation, varying from entitlement to SFA, complaints regarding maintenance, utility bills and information on the local area. Being the largest air base in the UK, with over 8,000 personnel, I can receive a high level just on this topic.

With the recent change in housing contracts, there have been many enquiries surrounding the topic and angoing works to properties.

2. What unusual enquiry have you received? Can I put in a new kitchen and carpets in my SFA, as I don't like what is provided and will I be able to get the cost back from the RAF if I do it myself?

A customer enquired, 'if the RAF can fund accommodation services for their pet, whilst they were on detachment'. They wished for their pet to be supported, as would a family member.

Who do I need to speak to about stopping the pet weeing against the back door?! know how to make referrals to appropriate professional services and agencies, although they are not formally trained in welfare counselling

All HIVE staff are bound to a Code of Confidentiality.

No day is a typical day for an HIO, and they never quite know what question they will be asked next, so we asked some of the team about the enquires being received...

A customer soon to deploy enquired "if they could record a story with Storybook Wings for their pet to listen to whilst they were away". Though the recording is aimed for a child, we were able to support and put a smile on the customer and hopefully the pet too!

#### 3. What does a typical day look like?

There is no typical day, every day is different, and you have to learn to adapt quickly to all enquires and station requests for support. I go into the affice every day with a plan of what I want to achieve. Hawever, customers take priority and are supported in whichever enquiry – anything fram; deployment information, local attractions (due to family visiting aver weekend) through to signposting to welfare agencies. In between enquiries, I attend meetings and research information for digital and station publications.

The work is extremely reactive depending on the type of enquiry being received. The work is very varied, fast paced and requires a HIO to be adaptive to deal with anything at any time. However, being a HIO isn't just about enquiries, as a signposting and information service. I need to know

what is going on at station level and local area. Therefore, I spend some of my day building my network of contacts within the local community and the military community as well as other sections on station, who I may require assistance from.

Responding to many emails, dealing with customers, face to face, telephone, or IM enquiries and recording customers' enquiries.

On our digital platforms, view messages, scheduling posts. Advertising internally and externally requests from Station and HIVE Management.

ENVOY AUTUMN 2022

Working closely with the Community Support team and administering monthly deployment events.

The good thing about this role is every day is different! I ensure all enquires received are responded to, I can be providing a presentation on the Station Arrivals Brief, updating noticeboards, reviewing deployment resources, and researching information for unit publications.

A typical day includes monitoring our social media pages for enquiries, especially due to when we had no access to our unit, our main communication channels have been through Focebook and Twitter.

I ensure we have up-to-date information being pushed out to our followers that include local events and news surrounding our unit. I create information packs for Service personnel and their families going out of area. I deal with daily enquiries coming into the office, and for new arrivals conduct a 1:1 arrival's brief. We are your go-to for any information and support.

4. What do you enjoy about your role?

I have always enjoyed meeting the Service community. I am a veteran's spouse so have empathy with many of the challenges they face from a new posting to deployment.

Being a 'people person', I enjoy working in a customer facing role where the enquires vary from customer to customer. I also enjoy the networking side of the role because information and people both on station and within the local area are always changing and, as a HIO, I am always further developing myself personally and professionally.

I like the fact each day is different. You never know who will walk through the door or what enquires come through. I like the challenge, knowing that I have supported someone, and I also enjoy meeting people.

The diversity within the role and dealing with the triservice community. Teamwork is a big part of the role and ensuring flexibility whilst being able to bring my own (as a dependent) view to assist and improve the services we provide.

5. What three words describe your role? Customers, Informative, Approachable

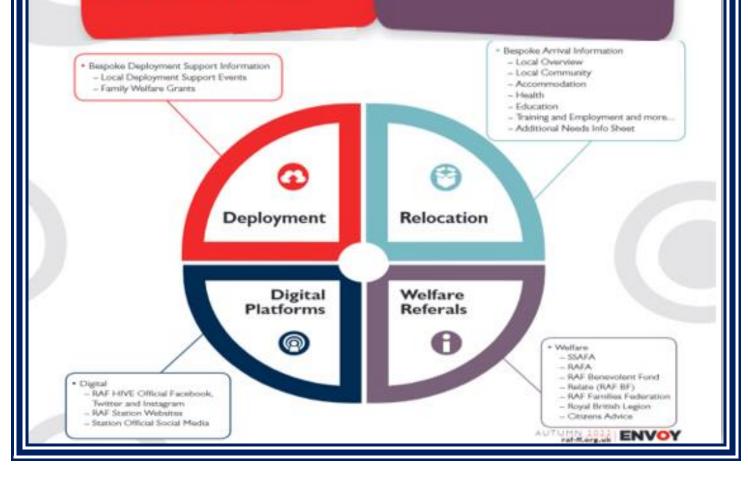
Bury, Challenging, Rewarding

Diverse, Patience, Enjoyable

Rewarding, Varied, Team-Orientated

Connect Online:

- 🔰 RAF HIVE
- RAF HIVE
- RAF HIVE





### Veterans UK

#### 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: <u>veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk</u>

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



In this month's column, Giles O' Halloran looks at relevant qualifications you may need on leaving the armed forces...

# PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU

very employer ideally wants someone who is both qualified and experienced – what the Royal Navy calls SQEP "Suitable Qualified Experience Personnel." However, whilst a lot of service leavers have a great deal of experience (and a wealth of operational exposure, often in very challenging environments), many lack some of the relevant qualifications or certifications needed in the civilian world. Unfortunately, although most is, not all service learning is or can always be accredited externally and so many of those going through resettlement seek comparable qualifications or accreditations where possible.

I do understand and respect this perspective, especially where a professional qualification or membership provides a recognised indication of a professional standard. As a result, and due to the work that I do. I recently went for my own professional upgrade, and although the experience was rightfully challenging, it was indeed rewarding being recognised against a global standard for my profession.

In this piece, I therefore want to share some thoughts to consider when you are yourself exploring professional qualifications and bodies, so that this might save you time, money and help you focus on what works for you.



You will need to translate what you do, your experience and capabilities, and may need to take time to transition your current capabilities into the civilian space by developing and utilising transferable skills."

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I have always been a great believer in experience and capability trumping qualifications, but I also know this is not what all employers or recruiters believe.

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as part of resettlement programmes. Before I share my personal thoughts, the first thing you need to ask yourself is whether you truly want to be a gas engineer? You might have to go into some very uncomfortable domestic or commercial environments. working with a very dangerous substance and surely you want a break from that after years in service? Joking aside, I would strongly

first ask why these are always offered? The Health & Safety qualifications might make sense if you want to go into construction, facility management, logistics or other industrial sectors, but it is not necessary for all sectors. I would also strongly advise you reconsider

### PRINCE 2, IOSH, NEBOSH or Gas Qualifications?

A lot of service leavers I have worked with always cite the qualifications above as being a standard offering

a PRINCE2 qualification. I have yet to hear of anyone using this or PRINCE2 in the commercial space consistently when other certifications and methodologies are more relevant and in demand. Please avoid being put through a sausage factory and remember to use your time and your funds investing in what you need to do for your next career. Everyone doing the same thing doesn't play to unique capabilities that can earn you a premium.

#### Play to your strengths:

You need to think about transition, more than simply in terms of moving from the military to the civilian space. You will need to translate what you do, your experience and capabilities, and may need to take time to transition your current capabilities into the civilian space by developing and utilising transferable skills.

This is why it is important to play to your strengths and focus on things you are capable, confident, and competent in, as that is more likely to drive your commitment to completing relevant qualifications or certifications. It is a pragmatic approach to your professional

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development which is more likely to help you succeed in achieving your aims in both the short and long term.

#### Research professional associations and bodies:

There are lots of professional bodies, institutions, and organisations out there. You need to take time to evaluate which are best for you and your future career. Some bodies maybe chartered, some may not hold a charter – does this matter and will this make a difference to your professional profile? How is certification or qualifications ranked and which are in more demand? If you wanted to become an accountant, is ACCA, ACA, or CIMA more relevant, which is more valued and which will help you drive your career forward? You need to take time to look into relevant bodies, check how respected they are in areas you wish to focus, so that then you invest your time, effort, and funds in what will truly help you take the next step as a professional.

### 3

It is well worth keeping your finger on the pulse of key qualifications or professional bodies that are out there. Which are more respected, growing in influence or sought after? Through doing so and watching for where certain professional qualifications or membership are more valued, you will be ensuring that you can secure a good next step in terms of your career."

#### Consider credit systems:

Always look into any potential learning credits or funding that you might have earned through your service, and check this against relevant professional bodies or associations. It makes sense to recognise your experience and a number of professional associations do so as part of the qualifying criteria.

For instance, the CMI (Chartered Management Institute) has a webpage that helps you map your service qualifications and courses against potential CMI qualifications with advisory criteria. Other professional bodies may grade your experience, rank, and capability against certain membership levels, and so using the credits you have earned, or recognition of your rank/ service could be a more preferable way to gain the qualifications or certification you need.

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#### Test for trends:

It is well worth keeping your finger on the pulse of key qualifications or professional bodies that are out there. Which are more respected, growing in influence or sought after? Through doing so and watching for where certain speaking to your network, looking at relevant sector news or monitoring job adverts to see what is respected, recognised, desired or in demand.

#### Enjoy the experience:

Finally, if you need to go through a professional evaluation and reflection of your capabilities to meet a professional standard, use the opportunity as a positive learning experience. I recently had to do this myself and whilst I did find the experience challenging, I also found it a positive one, getting me to think about my achievements, evidence my work, my development and also consider my professional aspirations. Often the more challenging the test, the more rewarding the outcome when completed, and at worst, it is still a learning experience we can return to when we might be better prepared. Thankfully, I was successful but the demands of the assessment and meeting the required professional standard can be a very rewarding experience in itself. So, I advise you try to enjoy the experience as a developmental opportunity, which whether successful or not, will still help your career development going forward.



## About The Author

Giles O'Halloran is an experienced Recruitment, Talent and HR consultant who works as a freelancer supporting professionals and organisations with career transition services and talent solutions. He has worked for a number of large and respected organisations, including blue chip and global recruitment companies. Giles has spent over 15 years providing CV writing, LinkedIn profile writing, interview preparation and professional networking support to clients in both the public and private sector. He also has over a decade of service in two branches of the Reserve Forces. Feel free to connect with Giles via LinkedIn, follow him on Twitter via @GilesOHalloran or @go2\_work or take a look at his website www.go2-work.co.uk



Pensions go some way to providing family financial security and it is a good idea to keep an eye on pension savings as they grow. One of the ways in which the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) helps you with this is by issuing you with a Benefit Information Statement (BIS). This short article explains how the BIS works.

## INTRODUCING THE REVISED BENEFIT INFORMATION STATEMENT



MARY PETLEY





All serving personnel should receive a fresh BIS annually, shortly after their birthday. Following feedback from members, the MOD introduced a revised version of the BIS in May 2022, so those of you with birthdays after the date of the change will receive a much clearer account of your benefits.

The new document provides clear separation of any Early Departure Payment (EDP) Scheme benefits and pension benefits, as well as wording it to remove the necessity for many foot notes that were so confusing on the old BIS.

The BIS provides a concise statement of pension earnings up to the date of issue, offering the opportunity to identify and correct any errors found in the underpinning data used to produce the BIS (so, dates, rank etc.). Non-receipt or data errors should be referred to Unit Admin staff.

The BIS is a snapshot of the pension/EDP as if the member were leaving service on their birthday that year and the spouse or civil partner benefits which would become payable if they were to die in service at that point. It separates the benefits so that it is clear which benefits result from which scheme, and when they are payable.

It does NOT show benefits transferred

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concise statement

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data used to

produce the BIS"

in from other schemes, the value of any Added Years or Added Pension purchased, or the impact of divorcerelated orders on the pension.

Further, it does not mention the benefits payable for dependent children or unmarried partners. These

are omitted to keep the BIS simple. To cover everything would make the document too complicated and discourage the owner from reading it!

The revised BIS is a welcome improvement, but it is not the full picture and should not be used for financial planning. So, what else is available? Well, there is the MoD online pension calculator, but its accuracy depends entirely on the data that is input and it, too, has some limitations. For example, it will assume that the rank for pension is the rank that it has been told the member holds – which, of course, for AFPS 75 members may not be the same as 'rank

for pension'. Further, it cannot deal with split service, transfers in, Added Pension, Added Years or Pension Sharing Orders. Then there

is the formal pension forecast. This calculates benefits using the actual data as held by DBS and the actual rules of the

scheme(s) in which benefits have been accrued. Everybody is entitled to one free formal pension forecast a year and it is obtained by submitting an AFPS Form 12 (while still serving) or an AFPS Form 14 (once discharged) to Veterans UK in Glasgow. Again, when you receive your forecast, check it – errors can occur.



#### Further Information

If you are a member and have pensions questions, email us at pensionenquiries@ forpen.co.uk. If you are not a member but would like to know more about us, visit www. forcespensionsociety.org.

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### DINNER DANCE RAISES £3,750 FOR VETERAN'S LONDON MARATHON 2022 CAMPAIGN SUPPORTING TWO MILITARY CHARITIES

A fantastic £3,750 was raised by Army Veteran, serving Reservist and Marlow Bridge Master, Jason Perry's 2022 London Marathon fundraising campaign in aid of two military charities; SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity and Fighting with Pride.

The dinner dance was attended by members of the Marlow Bridge Lodge, family, friends, including serving Armed Forces personnel as well as representatives of Fighting with Pride and SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity.

An auction and raffle were compared on the night by lodge members Steve and Dave Pepper; included: a day out in a classic or vintage car donated by David Pepper and DK Classics Wedding cars; a day out for two on the Thames, a tour of Inner Temple and a day out courtesy of Westways Carriage Horses. Jason Perry said: "it was such lovely evening with family and friends celebrating these two fantastic charities. The money raised went far beyond my expectations and will ensure both charities can continue their vital work.

"I would like to thank everyone for all their support, particularly fellow members of the Marlow Bridge Lodge, my Parents Michael and Helen for donating such a generous auction lot! I would also like to thank Carolne Paige from Fighting With Pride and Alice Farrow from SSAFA who came to talk to us about the work of the charities."

Alice Farrow from SSAFA said: "I have known Jason for a very long time and know he put so much into this fantastic event. To raise nearly £4,000 is incredible and these vital funds will go towards supporting the Armed Forces community via SSAFA and the incredible work Fighting With Pride is doing."

To find out more about SSAFA, visit ssafa.org.uk.

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The Veterans' Strategy Action Plan was launched over six months ago. Here we receive an update on the plan from the Government...

## PROGRESS ON HEALTH, HOUSING AND EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

- Progress in healthcare, housing and employment outlined six months on from the government's Veterans' Strategy Action Plan
- More than 100 NHS England trusts are now 'Veteran Aware', with staff receiving specialist training on the needs of veterans
- New members of the refreshed Veterans' Advisory Board announced, providing insight and advice on veterans issues to government

Significant progress has been made in a range of veterans' support and services, including in healthcare, housing and employment, since the launch of the Veterans' Strategy Action Plan six months ago, new data shows.

Significant progress has been made on delivering the Veterans' Strategy Action Plan which was launched more than six months ago.

More than 100 NHS England Trusts have now gained 'Veteran Aware' status, providing the highest standard of care to veterans and their families.

As well as healthcare, progress has also been made in other areas, such as employment, wellbeing support, and digital verification. These include:



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- Opening bids for the Veterans' Health Innovation Fund, which will develop innovative projects to enhance bespoke treatment for injured veterans' healthcare.
- Rolling out the Great Place to Work for Veterans guaranteed progression scheme across all central government departments, making it easier than ever before for veterans to join the Civil Service
- Completing the first tranche of the Advance into Justice programme, which helps veterans become prison officers with job offers received in May
- Distributing £5 million of funding through the Afghanistan Veterans Fund to charities, so they can better support veterans of recent conflicts. This includes funding to upgrade the Veterans Gateway website and for Samaritans to develop a new veterans peer support hub

Investing £1m in new funding for a new digital service for veterans - this will enable them to quickly and easily verify their veteran status online.

As part of the employability support package for veterans, the Department for Education has launched an updated website for veterans interested in applying for the Troops to Teach scheme.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Johnny Mercer said:

"We want to make sure that regardless of location, our veterans can access incredible employment opportunities and the support they may need.

"Schemes such as Advance into Justice and Troops to Teach allow veterans to bring their fantastic transferable skills into other areas.

"Great progress has been made on our

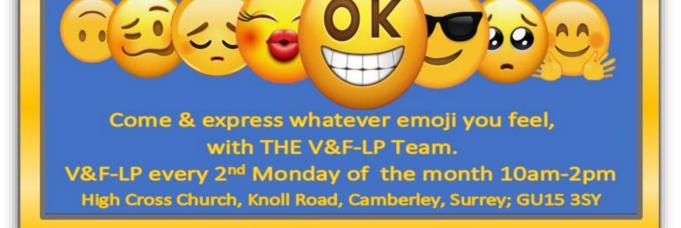
We want to make sure that regardless of location, our veterans can access incredible employment opportunities and the support they may need." provision for veterans but there is more to do to realise our mission to make the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran."

With more than 1500 'Veteran Friendly' GP practices across England, accessing bespoke mental health and support services is now easier to access than ever before.

The Cabinet Office has also announced the newest members of the Veterans' Advisory Board, which provides independent advice to ministers on current

and future support for veterans.

This refreshed board will provide views from academia, charities, employers and the veteran commissioners from across the UK to provide independent insight into the veteran community and potential opportunities to improve support.



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## Nuclear test veterans 'need Hillsborough-level apology'

#### By Tanya Gupta

BBC News: Visited BBC website 03.10.22



A series of nuclear weapons tests took place in the 50s - the first was Operation Hurricane on 3 October 1952

The daughter of a man who witnessed a British nuclear test in the 1950s has demanded a "Hillsborough-level" apology 70 years after the first detonation.

Elin Doyle said her father Mike Doyle and many others had not seen justice. Her father suffered ill-health, as did her sibling, which they blamed on the tests, she said. The government said the veterans helped keep Britain safe. The first test, Operation Hurricane, took place on 3 October 1952. Veterans will join a service in Kent on Tuesday. Mr Doyle, a technician and civil servant, was present at a later test - Operation Grapple in 1957 - for his national service. His daughter said he witnessed that explosion with his back to the blast, his hands over his eyes, and without protective clothing. She said he described an intense heat as his back grew hot, and how he believed the men who were present were "going to burn".

Ms Doyle said her father developed a rare condition, cardiac sarcoidosis, had a heart attack at the age of 48, and lived with heart disease until he died aged 67. Her sibling was born with a birth defect that her parents immediately attributed to the tests.

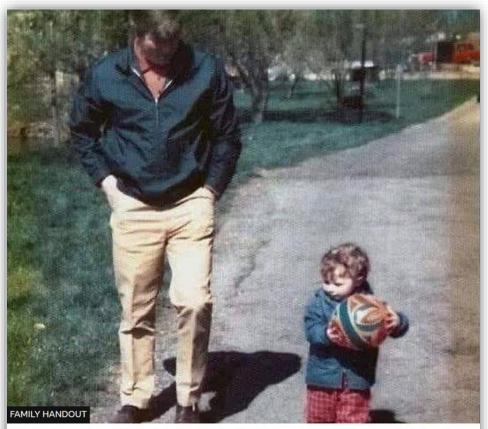


Ms Doyle said her father did not question the tests, and many people at the time saw taking part as being patriotic. But potential symptoms of a condition called moral injury appeared later. <u>Combat Stress</u> defines moral injury as the psychological distress resulting from a person having to follow orders and take actions that clash with their own moral or ethical code.

"He'd go out of the house and be able to start a row over some perceived lack of service - he'd go on the warpath," Ms Doyle said.

"He definitely felt by the time he died that he had been badly served, let down in general.

"I think he had decided there was enough suspicion and enough evidence for him to believe that actually the people who were sent to the tests had been put there as guinea pigs."



Elin Doyle, seen here with her father, said he had fought for compensation and would still want an apology

London actor Ms Doyle, whose play <u>Guinea Pigs</u>: www.guineapigstheplay.com, based on her father's experience, is being performed this week, said for many years no government on either side would address the problem.

"After dad died, he didn't get justice," she said. "Thousands and thousands never saw justice and then they died.

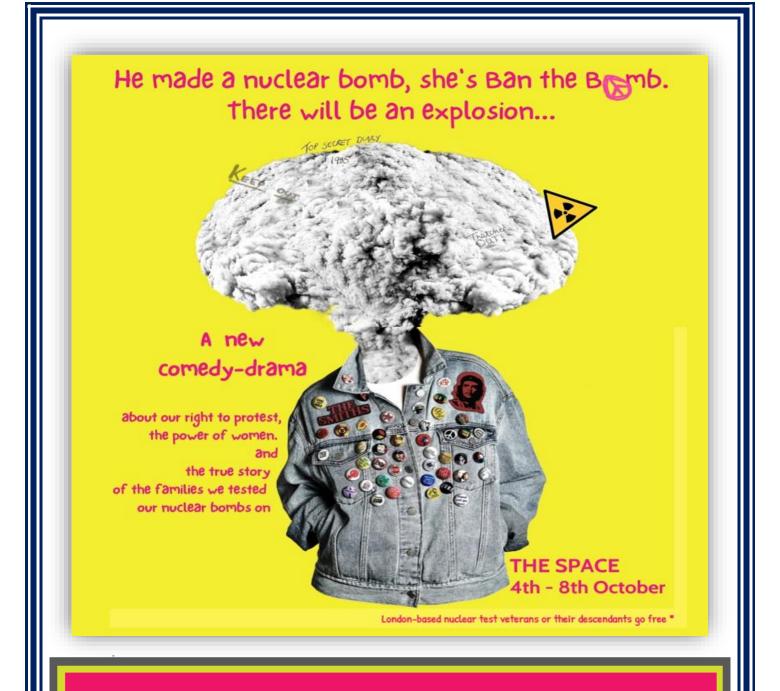
"He wanted an apology - like that given for the Hillsborough victims - and proper care for the families left behind."

Mr Doyle went on to work for the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA), fighting for veterans to be compensated.



Many veterans were proud of their work and would do it again, the BNTVA said

For further reading: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-63079621



# GUINEA PIGS A new play by Elin Doyle

### \* NCCF / GUINEA PIGS TICKET OFFER

If you are a veteran or descendant member of the Nuclear Community and would like to see the play at the Space in London, the Nuclear Community Charity Fund (NCCF) will pay for your tickets. Please call the NCCF on 0115 8883442 and leave a message or email office@thenccf.org telling them when you'd like to attend. \*Tickets are subject to availability and the discretion of the NCCF.

Please note The NCCF are unable to reimburse anyone who purchases tickets themselves.







\*Subject to change