



Veterans & Families – Listening Project

email: veteransnfamilies@yahoo.com

www.vflp.org.uk



Welcome to our July 2023 Newsletter

Since our last newsletter, we would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you for all your support. WOW...

We want to keep you all up-dated like previously mentioned, and will continue to create our marvellous, monthly newsletter.

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

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



**James
Lind
Alliance**

Priority Setting Partnerships

Veterans' Health

Initiated by the UK Government's Office for Veterans' Affairs, with agreement from the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, this PSP aims to identify the Top 10 priorities for research to improve the quality of life for former UK service personnel, and their families and/or significant others.



We want to hear from you

This Priority Setting Partnership wants to hear from veterans, their family members, carers and health and care professionals.

What does research need to find out about all aspects of physical and mental health and wellbeing to help improve care for former service personnel and their families, friends and carers?



James
Lind
Alliance

Priority Setting Partnerships

We want to hear from you

The partnership is led by veterans, family members, charities and health professionals and supported by the [Office for Veterans' Affairs](#). The Office for Veterans' Affairs leads UK Government efforts to make sure the UK is the best place to be a veteran, anywhere in the world.

A veteran is anyone who has served for at least one day in the UK Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve), or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations.

The Priority Setting Partnership formed in late 2022 and consulted with veterans, families and carers, and health professionals using a survey that closed on April 30th 2023. The partnership is now putting together a list of summary research questions that represent the comments and concerns received in response to the survey. The next stage will be to ask veterans, families, friends, carers and health professionals to choose the most important questions from that list.

It aims to have identified the Top 10 priorities for research by the end of 2023.

The Veterans' Health Priority Setting Partnership

This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group of the James Lind Alliance (JLA) Veterans' Health Priority Setting Partnership (PSP).

In line with JLA principles, this Steering Group will include representatives of veterans, carers and families, and health and care professionals. These may be people with lived experience, members of a charity or professional organisation or individual health professionals within the area of the PSP. Members will bring with them knowledge of this health area, an understanding of the relevant populations and access to networks of veterans, carers and families and health and care professionals. Members will need to be fully engaged in the process and have the time to carry out the work involved.

The background and wider aims and responsibilities of the Veterans' Health PSP are set out in its Protocol.

For further information on Veterans' Health visit:

www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/priority-setting-partnerships/veterans-health

📅 April 2023

Meet the Expert - Professor Alan Finnegan

Welcome to 'Meet the Expert', our new series bringing you informative interviews with Armed Forces researchers, policy makers and service providers. Read on to learn about current work, aspirations for progress and future work, and for insights into their perspective on key issues impacting ex-Service personnel and their families.



In this issue, we interviewed Professor Alan Finnegan, Professor of Nursing and Military Mental Health and Director of the Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans at the University of Chester. Alan chairs the Armed Forces Network (North West England), Contact Armed Forces Research Sub-Committee, and Cheshire Armed Forces Community Covenant

Partnership. In 2022 Alan was inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame.



Professor Alan Finnegan, please tell us about your background and how you came to be involved in work relating to the Armed Forces Community?

As a dual qualified Registered Nurse Adult and Registered Nurse Mental Health, I worked in the NHS before my wife and I joined the British Army in 1987. During my military career, my primary clinical role was as a Community Psychiatric Nurse, and my appointments included being Manager of Military Departments of Community Mental Health, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Nurse Consultant in Military Mental Health (MMH) and the MOD Nursing Advisor in MMH. I progressed to being the Senior Military Nurse and Commanding Officer at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine during the peak of the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns. My final appointment was as the first MOD Professor of Nursing. I completed tours in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, Northern Ireland and South Africa. During my military career, I lived away from home for 14 years, including several years on operational tours. My wife's and children's experiences are incredibly important to my work focus at the University of Chester.

Follow us today on:



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



www.facebook.com/VeteransnFamiliesListeningProject



@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.



What research projects are you currently working on and how do they fit into the bigger picture of understanding and supporting the Armed Forces Community?

I established the Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans at the University of Chester in 2016.^[1] I have subsequently been nominated as the principal investigator/project lead for over 20 UK Armed Forces Community specific projects, including research awards from the NHS, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (AFCFT), the Forces in Mind Trust, as well as other charities and businesses. In addition, there have been grants from Health Education England and the AFCFT to develop Armed Forces community educational modules and materials. Current projects include studies on Primary Healthcare veteran registration and morbidity rates, minority ethnic populations, and NHS initiatives such as the Single Point of Contact and the Armed Forces Advocates in acute hospital settings. Also, we are currently conducting evaluations of suicide prevention projects, support to female veterans, and assessment of AFCFT projects. I have also worked with professional organisations including the Royal College of Nursing to establish an International Research Webinar Series^[2] and the Royal College of General Practitioners to assess their Veteran Friendly GP Practice project. The aim of all of these projects is to have a positive impact that will inform policy development, clinical delivery, and educational knowledge through empirical evidence.

Find out more...

Frogmore Care & Wellbeing Centre

Age Concern Hampshire are offering free taster sessions for anyone interested in finding out more about the services on offer for older people (including older people who have memory loss/dementia) at their Frogmore Care & Wellbeing Centre in Yateley. The Centre is open 10.00-16.00 - Mondays to Fridays offering day care support and a range of activities including crafts, reminiscence sessions, physical activities etc. Transport and two-course lunch are also provided. Further details and a link to the taster session booking form at this [link](#).



FREE Taster Session

Please Scan to Book Online:



AGEconcern
Hampshire

BOOK ONLINE TODAY
or call: **07842 306 033** or email:
tina.birch@ageconcernhampshire.org.uk

Frogmore Care & Wellbeing Centre | Yateley | **07842 306 033**

Source:

HVA Member News

Hart E-Matters #3 July 2023



V&FLP
Veterans & Families - Listening Project
E: veteransfamilies@yahoo.com
www.vflp.org.uk

FIZZIN' WITH FLAVOUR

V&FLP
Veterans & Families - Listening Project
E: veteransfamilies@yahoo.com
www.vflp.org.uk

May 2023



Recent action in research, policy, and practice for ex-Servicewomen.

'News Features' aim to share and highlight new research, policy, and practice developments and updates about thematic areas and topics relevant to the sector. The first in this series focused on ex-Servicewomen. This 'News Feature' includes an overview of some of the existing evidence about the in-Service and post-Service experiences of women, outlining how this evidence led to recent developments including the opening of the Centre for Military Women's Research, OVA developing a Women Veterans' Strategy, and an award of £300,000 being given to the Women's Royal Army Corp and Cobseo to improve service delivery for ex-Servicewomen. You can read the full article in the link below, and look out for the next in this series to be released soon.

[Read 'News Feature'](https://www.fimt-rc.org/news/20230531-recent-action-in-research-policy-and-practice-for-ex-servicewomen)

www.fimt-rc.org/news/20230531-recent-action-in-research-policy-and-practice-for-ex-servicewomen



“When I was younger, carrier pigeons like me were on the cutting edge of wireless communication technology. Unfortunately, I never bothered to update my training!”

© Randy Glasbergen / glasbergen.com

TALKS AND TOURS



Volunteer Insights: **10** Minute Talks at IWM North

Free introductory talks

Join our volunteers for a free ten minute talk on an item or key figure linked to our collection or subject matter. Talks are given on a range of topics on the following days:

**Every Tuesday,
Wednesday and Sunday**

 **IWM North**
Foyer/Main Exhibition Space

 **Free**
Subject to availability



IWM

FOR FAMILIES

Life at Sea: Lost Laundry Challenge

HMS Belfast
Weekends in June and July and
everyday 22 July to 3 Sep 2023



IWM

FOR FAMILIES

We Were There Family Day: HMS Belfast

HMS Belfast
4, 11, 18 and 25 August 2023



Veterans & Families – Listening Project
 email: surreyheath.veterans@yahoo.com
www.shvflp.wordpress.com






FOR FAMILIES

Family Activities: IWM Duxford

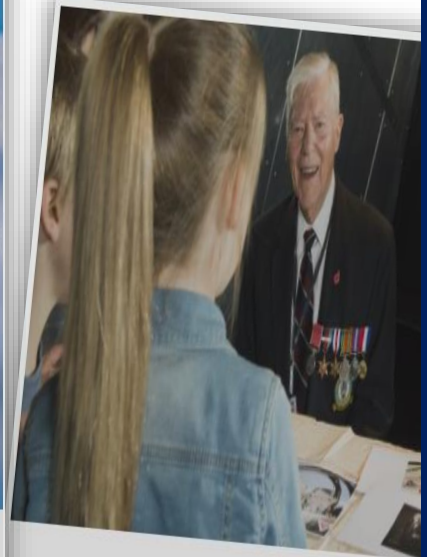
IWM Duxford
Every weekend and daily in school
holidays.



DUXFORD FLYING SEASON

Flying Days: The Americans

IWM Duxford
Friday 28 July 2023



FOR FAMILIES

We Were There: Family Day IWM Duxford

IWM Duxford
9, 16, 23 and 30 August 2023



Now Open



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Anzac Portal
anzacportal.dva.gov.au

Vietnam War medallion and certificate

The Australian Government has produced a commemorative medallion and certificate to recognise those Australians who served in the Vietnam War. We encourage all Vietnam veterans, or families of Vietnam veterans no longer with us today, to [apply for a medallion](#).

[Medallion Application](#)



©IWM

Family Mission: D-Day Edition

Prepare for the big jump.

It's 1944 and the most important day of the war so far is looming. You and your family are needed as the latest recruits of paratroopers.

As a team use your Jump Bag to spot a Spitfire from just its sound, perfect how to land safely and be assigned your rank.

Learn about the biggest invasion in history as you explore IWM Duxford. This interactive storytelling experience is based on personal stories from those who served on D-Day.

Collect your Jump Bag from the Visitor Planning Point as you enter AirSpace. This activity directs you around different areas of IWM Duxford. For the best experience we recommend setting aside an hour for this activity.

- Weekends until 16 July.
- Times: 10am – 3pm, drop-in.

Created by KIT Theatre and Kirsty Harris.



 <p>ARMED FORCES COVENANT</p>	<p>EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME</p> <p>SILVER AWARD 2021</p> <p><i>Proudly serving those who serve.</i></p>	<p>Don't forget</p>  <p>to thank a vet!</p> <p>Follow US Today on:</p> <p> www.linkedin.com/in/veterans-families-listening-project-aa9a74b0/ www.facebook.com/VeteransnFamiliesListeningProject @VnF_LP V&FLP Veterans & Families Listening Project <small>Email: veteransandfamilies@iwm.org.uk</small> <small>www.vflp.org.uk</small> </p> <p>V&FLP is an independent member of ASDIC. The association of Ex-Service Drop-in Centres. Linking Veterans, Drop-ins together across the United Kingdom.</p> 
---	--	--

Copyright © Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com



“Actually, I’m a litigator.”

Camp LeJeune, and how new legislation affects those who trained there

Thousands of military personnel suffered serious illness after there was water contamination at the Camp – new legislation means compensation can be awarded. If you were stationed at Camp LeJeune in the US, between 1953 and 1987, our team may be able to support you.

[Find out more](#)

Source: Military in Focus – June 2023

IM, irwinmitchell

The landmark case that allowed a veteran to re-enter the UK after medical discharge

Fijian veteran Ioane Koroiveibau suffered noise-induced hearing loss whilst serving in the Armed Forces. He was medically discharged and returned to his home country, where he was diagnosed with PTSD. With support from Commonwealth Neglected Veterans, Koroiveibau sought Indefinite Leave to Enter the UK, so he can access the treatment he needs.

Read what happened next

Source: Military in Focus – June 2023

IM irwinmitchell





Losses outside the battlefield: Is the Ministry of Defence doing enough to prevent military suicides?

Worrying statistics suggest the suicide rate amongst service personnel is rising, with 20- to 24-year-old males and females being two of the most affected groups. As a result, there's calls for the MoD to be more supportive and better awareness of mental health issues.

[Find out more](#)

Source: Military in Focus – June 2023



Our Walking Talking Group returns for Summer 2023!



Our next walk is on:
Friday 14th July
Meet at 10.15am
Woking Park,
GU22 9BA

A lovely walk through this beautiful park supported by Headway staff and volunteers

For more information or to book a place email:
enquiries@headwaysurrey.org
or telephone:
01483 454433



UNION JACK FIGHTBACK

A PLANNING battle is rumbling in London amid claims that a "catastrophic" development could overwhelm a popular military venue.

Bosses at the Union Jack Club in Waterloo said they were heartened by huge support after contesting plans for a 20-storey office building, which they say will wreak havoc on the area's character.

Some 1,800 letters of objection, many from furious former and serving members of the Armed Forces, have been received by Lambeth Council since the application was lodged by Bourne Capital late last year.

The developer has insisted the project will deliver "real, positive change" to the area. Local authority members will now meet to discuss the proposal but a date had not been set as this issue went to press.

As reported in January's *Soldier*, Bourne's proposals would see the construction of a 70-metre towerblock. Union Jack Club CEO Hugh Player (pictured) said the plans would have a "catastrophic effect" – wreaking havoc on the character of the area and blocking out light in rooms at the venue.



He continued: "We're not opposed to the area being developed, but to the overwhelming nature of these plans."

However, Bourne Capital boss Ben Bourne insisted the work would support Waterloo's role "as a cultural hub for London", in addition to creating "a world class amenity, community arts and performance space".

Got a view? Tell *Talkback*
mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Source: July 2023; pg. 12:
soldiermagazine.co.uk



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

SILVER AWARD 2021

Proudly serving those who serve.





A MILITARY SEND-OFF

■ A FORMER soldier has set up a new – if sombre – line of business by offering unique transport to take lost comrades to their last resting place.

Colin Port (ex-AGC (RMP)) started Hero's Farewell after buying an ex-Royal Artillery Land Rover and gun tractor and providing them for use as a hearse.

The veteran – who served in the Army for six years before joining the civilian police – told *Soldier* he started the business after a suggestion from an undertaker.

"I'm hoping to provide a good service and send-off," he added.



"The squirrels are messing with your bird feeder."

JimBentonGocomics.com

Source: *Soldier Magazine*. July 2023; pg. 18

news@soldiermagazine.co.uk

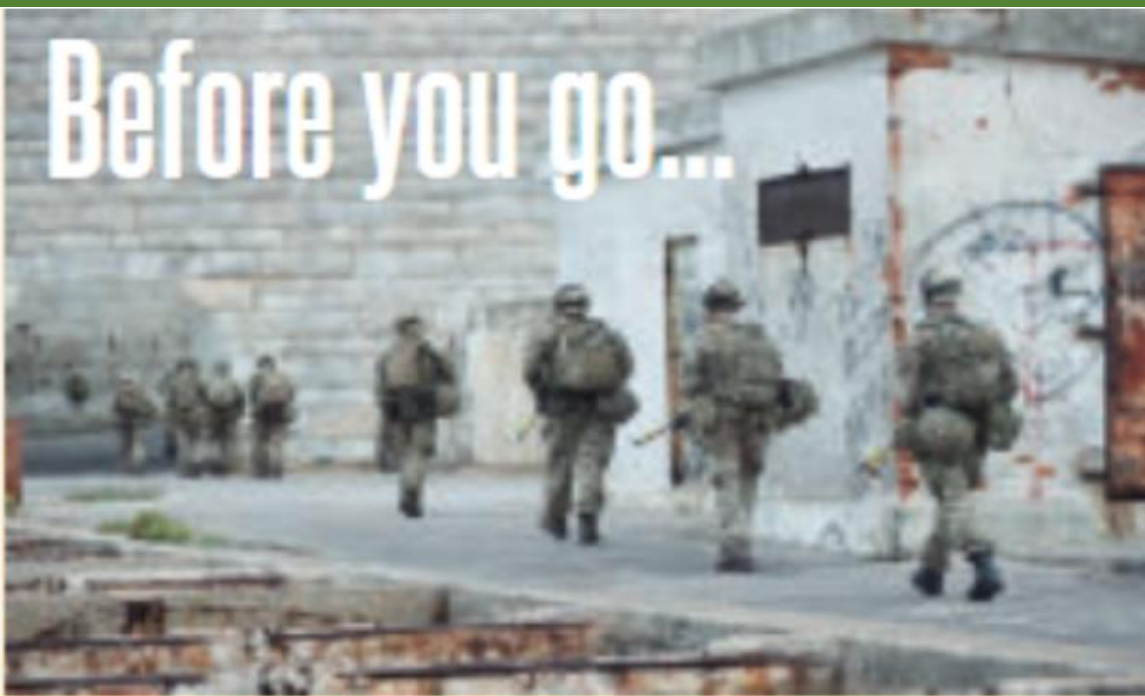


FIZZIN'
WITH
FLAVOUR



Before you go...

Picture: Graeme Main



RESERVISTS quitting the ranks are being urged to complete an online survey to explain why. It poses several questions about their Army experience and reasons behind the decision to go. Lt Col Glenis Maloney (R Signals), who helped devise the initiative, said dozens of responses had been received so far and it was set to become a regular feature of the departure process. She added: "Over time, this will help us establish trends and potentially help improve the experience on offer. While there are some areas of a soldier's life over which we have no control, the Reserve exit survey may identify others that the Army can influence. Over a number of years this could help us to improve retention rates."

Source: Soldier Magazine. July 2023; pg. 19

news@soldiermagazine.co.uk



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

SILVER AWARD 2021

Proudly serving those who serve.





WW2 survivors honoured

TWO remarkable sailors who endured 50 days in a life raft have been honoured in their hometowns thanks to Petty Officer Richard Jones.

Seaman Colin Armitage from Hull and Kenneth Cooke, the ship's carpenter from nearby Bridlington, were not the only survivors when their steamer, SS Lulworth Hill, was sunk by an Italian submarine in the South Atlantic at the end of March 1943.

Fourteen men – roughly one third of the crew – scrambled into a life raft when the merchant vessel was torpedoed, 600 miles northeast of St Helena and 800 miles off the coast of Angola.

One by one the survivors succumbed either to wounds or starvation and exhaustion, until just Armitage and Cooke remained, living on the most meagre of rations, while sharks circled the raft in anticipation.

They were eventually picked up in early May by the crew of destroyer HMS Rapid as it escorted a convoy off Sierra Leone; the raft had drifted more than 1,500 miles in the intervening seven weeks.

Kenneth kept a diary written on a piece of sailcloth which would eventually turn into a memoir of the tragedy. The



cloth eventually went on display at the Imperial War Museum while Kenneth, who became a gamekeeper in his native Yorkshire post-war, was featured on popular TV show *This Is Your Life*.

His fellow survivor was not so fortunate. The ordeal in the raft wrecked Colin Armitage's health and he died aged just 28 in 1950, leaving a young widow with three children.

Both men were awarded the George Medal and Lloyds Medal for Bravery. As the years passed, their celebrity and the

fame of the act of the survival gradually faded.

But when weapons engineer Petty Officer Richard Jones, serving with Portsmouth Forward Support Unit, stumbled across Kenneth's story while researching World War 2 in his hometown of Bridlington, he decided to bring his and Colin's deeds back into the public eye.

The senior rating has made it his mission to champion and honour forgotten or overlooked disasters, from writing a slew of books, to seeing memorials erected, including one in Bridlington to a former pleasure cruiser lost in action.

"I was working on a book about Bridlington during the war and came across the story of Ken," says Richard.

"When I found out Colin was from Hull it soon became apparent that I was able to put a blue plaque up for each person to honour them in their home towns."

He was joined by Kenneth's family, Bridlington RNA and Submariners Association for the unveiling of a plaque by the town's harbour, and by Colin's family for the dedication of the waterfront memorial in Hull.



Nuclear test vets decorated

THE first batch of decorations for ex-troops involved in the UK's nuclear test programme will be ready for presentation at the end of the summer, defence chiefs have confirmed.

Forms for the Nuclear Test Veterans Medal are now available online via the MoD Medal Office and ex-personnel are encouraged to submit their applications.

A history project collating stories of those on the atom and hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific from 1952-67 has also been launched by the government – interviews with witnesses will be held in the British Library.

Veterans have given the thumbs-up to both initiatives, pointing out that those who served during the era had long deserved recognition.

Ex-sapper Brian Hogan, who arrived on Christmas Island in 1958 for the Op Grapple H-bomb tests, said the medal

was a welcome move.

He told *Soldier*. "I'm 84 years old now and it has been a very long time coming – but I honestly think it is justified given all we experienced."

As reported in this magazine, veterans of the tests have long been campaigning for recognition.

Many claim to have suffered cancers and other serious illnesses as a result of radiation and toxins related to the numerous explosions.

The new medal was announced late last year by PM Rishi Sunak, although the qualifying criteria has only recently been fully firmed up.

Around 22,000 former British and Commonwealth personnel are expected to be eligible for the decoration, which can also be presented posthumously.

See the medals section of [ukafvp.mod.gov.uk](https://www.ukafvp.mod.gov.uk) for further details. ■

Source: Soldier Magazine. July 2023; pg. 20

news@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Office for
Veterans' Affairs



23 June 2023 — News story

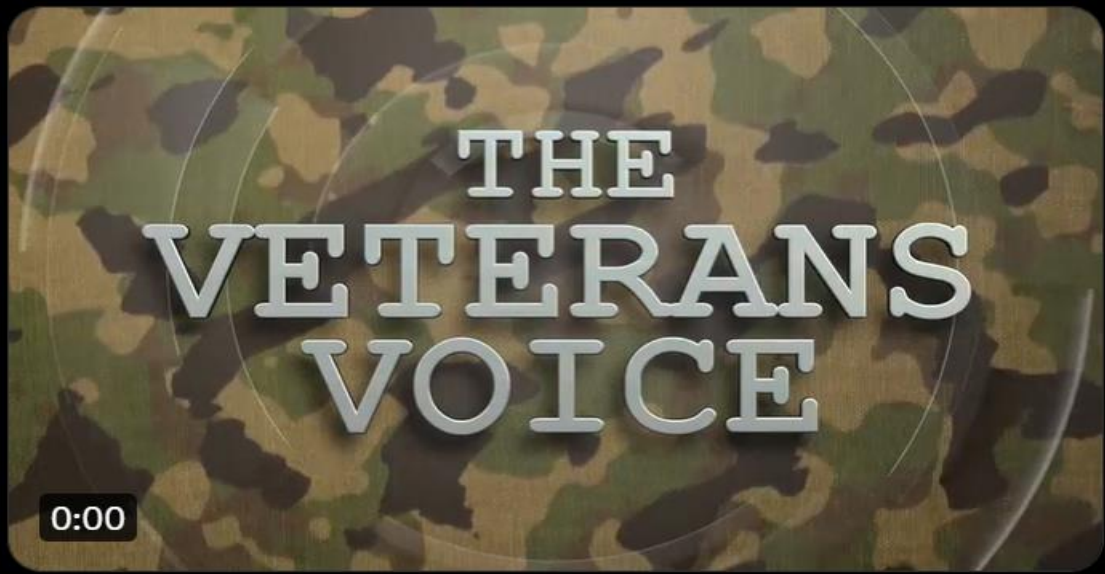
[Community projects to celebrate, support and memorialise nuclear test veterans announced](#)

Thousands of schoolchildren will learn more about the British nuclear testing programme thanks to a £70,000 grant from the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA). Another £34,000 grant will bring hundreds of veterans together at reunion events, and others from the nuclear test community will receive wellbeing grants thanks to new government funding.



ForceSelect @ForceSelect · Jun 30

Veterans Voice starting now on @TalkTV A big shout out to @Iromg who along with our CEO @andree_hugh will discuss the challenges veterans face in the UK. Don't miss it. EVERY FRIDAY at 12.30pm. The only programme dedicated to veterans #veterans #weareveterans #veteransvoice #tv



Spotted on Twitter 03.07.23

Medals and Veterans Badges



Medals and
Veterans Badges



Veterans UK

Part of [Ministry of Defence](#)



Veterans UK Home
Page

We provide free
support for veterans
and their families,
including a helpline,...

Welfare support for you and your family



Welfare support for
you and your family



Defence
Business
Services

Welcome to the DBS UK Armed Forces & Veterans Portal

Information on MOD support services for our Armed Forces and Veterans

www.ukafvp.mod.gov.uk

For more information visit:
Veterans Portal
www.ukafvp.mod.gov.uk

Information on MOD support services for our Armed Forces and Veterans



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

SILVER AWARD 2021

Proudly serving those who serve.



© Randy Glasbergen
glasbergen.com



“Hi, this is Mom! If you’re calling to complain about your sister, press 1. If you’re calling to ask for money, press 2. If you can’t find something in the laundry, press 3. If you’re hungry, press 4...”



BRAIN INJURY GROUP FOR YOUNG ADULTS

18-35

Monthly group starting on
Wednesday 28th June 2023

Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Location: Headway Guildford Centre
21 North Rd, Guildford GU2 9PU

£2.50pp

Contact us for more information and future dates

- Coffee and cake
- Get to know others with a brain injury
- Support group
- Learn new things
- Set yourself goals
- Games, quizzes, talks, outings and more



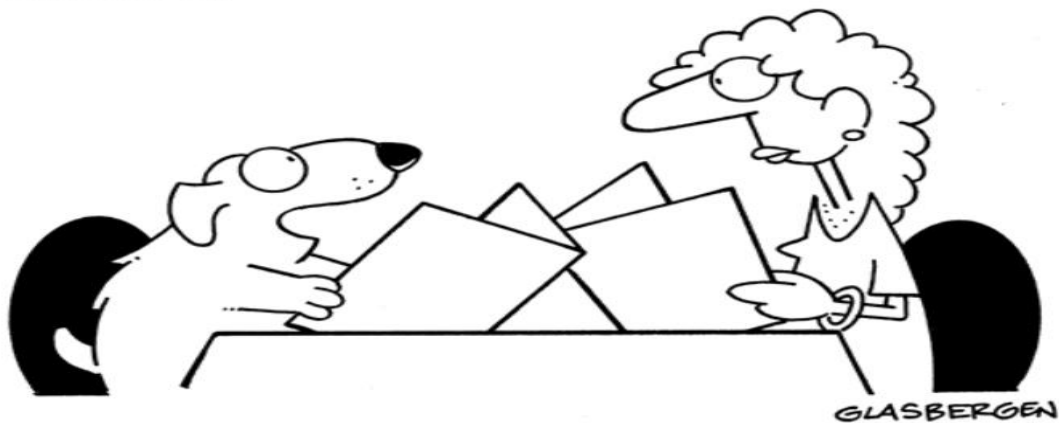
www.headwaysurrey.org
Registered Charity no. 1046893

Contact: referral@headwaysurrey.org
01483 454433

Or scan the QR code



© Randy Glasbergen.
www.glasbergen.com



“When you asked me if I want to go out, I thought...”

Scientists 'find' WW1 Royal Navy submarine in Dartmouth park



Source:

News 30 June 2023

Scientists believe they've confirmed a Dartmouth urban legend of more than 80 years by 'finding' a Royal Navy submarine buried in the town park.

Experts from the University of Winchester used ground penetrating radar to scan the site where the old boat was believed to rest – along with landfill – which created Coronation Park.

The vague outline of what is thought to be HMS E52 can be made out on the resulting scans – as well as a second object, a German torpedo boat, longer but also more narrow.

The findings were made by Dr Simon Roffey, Reader in Archaeology, and Dr David Ashby, who manages Winchester University's Soil Laboratory.

The pair were intrigued by the research of Lieutenant Tom Kemp, who last year put a name to the submarine locals had talked about for years.

After extensive research in the archives, serving submariner Tom – who teaches navigation at Britannia Royal Naval College overlooking the town – identified the craft as HMS E52. 24

Two sailors and Royal Marine celebrate their centenaries in style



Stan Thomas was visited by sailors from HMS Forward to mark his birthday; George Notley is flanked by Dave Kersley and Dave Saxby for his 100th

MILESTONES MARKED

Source:



royalnavy.mod.uk/havynews

MANY happy returns to two men who served their nation in its darkest hour and marked their 100th birthdays in nautical style.

Sailors from Birmingham's Reservist unit HMS Forward joined a family celebration marking the milestone for former gunner Stanley Albert Thomas in Solihull.

And in Salisbury, Arctic and Atlantic Convoy veteran – and oldest member of the town's Royal Naval Association branch – George Notley was surrounded by friends and fellow former sailors to mark his big day.

Dressed in No.1s, Forward's Able Seamen Laura Stewart-Hammond and Dillon Cavil added a little present-day Royal Navy recognition to Stanley's celebration in the West Midlands.

Stan was one of three brothers who served their nation between 1939 and 1945. Two went into the Navy, a third with the Army in North Africa. All survived the conflict, although eight decades on, Stan is the last of the trio still with us.

He served as an able seaman gunner – first with destroyer HMS Ilex for more than two years, then a draft in excess of four years to HMS Guardian, a netlaying vessel which supported operations in the Mediterranean.

Stan's son-in-law Mark Forty said the centenarian found a letter he received from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key thanking the gunner for his World War 2



George with his letter from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key; Stanley gets a kiss from AB Laura Stewart-Hammond

service to be "most touching" and was full of praise for Laura and Dillon, who gave up time from their weekend to join the veteran's party.

"The expression on his face said it all when they appeared around the corner to people singing happy

birthday, holding the cake!" said Mr Forty.

"In true naval tradition, he noticed how well their boots were shining and how smart they looked."

George Notley's naval career spanned a tumultuous 33 years from joining as a boy in 1936 to leaving at the height of the Cold War and moon landings in 1969.

His wartime service thrust him into the most hazardous of duties on convoy duties in the Arctic and Atlantic.

He would also have seen action in the Pacific, but the war with Japan was effectively over by the time his ship arrived in Singapore in 1945; instead he helped return prisoners of war back to the UK.

He's also one of the last survivors of Operation Pedestal, the crucial convoy in the summer of 1942 which demonstrated the resolve of the Allies to sustain Malta.

The convoy suffered heavy losses – George witnessed the loss of carrier HMS Eagle – but reached its destination and delivered its supplies.

Like Stanley, George received a card from the King and Queen, as well as a cake and a bottle of rum.

"George is the life and soul of the Salisbury RNA and it was an absolute honour to celebrate this incredible milestone with him," said Dave Kerley, secretary of the RNA's Salisbury branch.

"Wishing you a very happy birthday George!"

Tom recounts days of being led by Fleming

THREE Royal Marines travelled to Toronto in Canada to help one of their own mark his centenary.

Marine Tom Boneham, a former member of 30 Assault Unit, deployed to Algeria during World War 2 to prepare for the invasion of Sicily – led by Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond.

30 Assault Unit were tasked with stealing enemy intelligence, and this was their mission during the invasion of Italy.

Tom remembered he “could see the smoke coming from the top of Mount Vesuvius”.

He was champing at the bit to deploy however, at the last minute, a shoulder injury stopped him from going.

Major Ric Cole, WO2 Mathew Dewsnap and Marine Walker were the surprise guests at a party to mark Tom’s 100th.

“With his friends Christine, Jacob and family member Simon, we sat and talked for hours sharing stories, asking questions and listening to Tom’s history of the time of the formation of the modern Commandos,” said Mne Walker.

Tom shared stories of his beloved dog that he smuggled onto the ship in his personal kit bag, his time in Algiers and of being both shot and stabbed.

Much to his surprise, it was not a Nazi sniper who had shot him but a fellow soldier, whilst cleaning his weapon.

During the discussions there was a mention of Hitler’s infamous Commando Order. The order offered no commandos the benefit of surrendering to save their own life or that of their oppos. Tom believes this was a mistake by Hitler, as when he received the news of this in Algiers it only made him and his Commando brethren even more keen to go and take it to the enemy.

Maj Cole presented Tom with some gifts, including a Yomper, a Globe & Laurel, a Beret, a letter from the Commandant General RM and the original style of commando flashes that he had worn.

Maj Cole read a speech to commemorate Tom’s service and congratulate him.

Mne Walker presented Tom with a birthday cake – and Tom thanked everyone and recited a poem by William Shakespeare.

Afterwards, a moment of silence before Tom turned and asked ‘do you happen to have a bayonet? With knuckle dusters attached!’

The request was met with laughter and the phrase ‘Once a Marine, Always a Marine’ sprang to mind.



“The dog’s fine, but there’s a lump in your wallet that needs to be removed.”



'Human minesweeper' John Payne and his wife Jill visiting the Diving Museum in Brockhurst with today's generation of clearance divers

Farewell to the last 'P' man

ANOTHER living link with the WW2 generation has been broken with the passing of former diver John Payne – who helped pave the way for the Allied advance to victory in 1944 and 1945.

At 98, John Payne is believed to have been the last surviving member of what were known as P Parties or, colloquially, 'human minesweepers' – specialist teams of mine/bomb disposal experts who cleared Europe's ports of explosives, reopening harbours first to military, then civilian traffic.

John and his colleagues spent 600 days dived in cold, muddy, murky waters, dealing with some of the most complex and thorough demolition jobs in history.

Collectively, they searched more than 20 million square feet of harbour and port facilities, and dealt with hundreds of mines, charges, bombs and booby traps, and one V1 rocket. They would become one of the most highly decorated units of the war.



Crash site visit helps re-build

AVIATION historians and archaeologists returned to the site of a wartime tragedy to help bring a legendary naval bomber back to life.

A team from the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton headed to Derry in Northern Ireland to add the 'human touch' to their efforts to rebuild a Fairey Barracuda - and thank the local community for their assistance.

For several years a team have been painstakingly recreating the torpedo/dive bomber which served extensively with the Fleet Air Arm in World War 2.

It was never an aircraft of beauty and wasn't especially good as a torpedo bomber, but the navy's greatest pilot, Captain Eric Brown, praised its dive-bombing abilities and hailed it as the "easiest aeroplane to land on an aircraft carrier". It also played a key role in the closing stages of the Battle of the Atlantic providing anti-submarine protection to convoys.

Despite more than 2,600 Barracudas rolling off the production lines - aside



A local Sea Cadet and Standard Bearer bow in reverence at the graves of the three Barracuda crew and (below) a formation of Barracudas in flight in late WW2



Cont d

Crash site visit helps re-build

Source:

JUNE 2023

Despite more than 2,600 Barracudas rolling off the production lines – aside from the FAA, it also served with the French, Dutch and Canadians from the second half of the war through to the mid-1950s – none survives.

For the past decade and more a team at the FAA Museum has been recreating/rebuilding a Barracuda in tribute to the wartime aviators.

They are using the original plans as well as the remains of five crashed Barracudas to recreate a pristine version of the bomber, with what was salvage from Northern Ireland at the heart of the project.

Aircraft DP872 was part of a formation of three Barracudas which took off from RNAS Maydown just outside Derry for what should have been a routine flight to another naval air base, East Haven, near Arbroath on Scotland's East Coast on August 29 1944.

The ill-fated aircraft got no further than the eastern shore of Enagh Lough, which splits Derry in two, where it spun out of control and plunged into a bog known as The Moss.

All three crew – aged between 19 and 21 – were killed, but the Barracuda sank before their bodies could be recovered.

And there they and most of the aircraft remained undisturbed for more than a quarter of a century, until a combined Army-Navy excavation of the wreck site in 1971; the wreckage was given to the Fleet Air Arm with the nose section subsequently going on display in Yeovilton, before the decision was taken to rebuild an entire bomber.

With the permission of the families, the bodies of the crew were exhumed



and subsequently buried with full military honours at St Canice's Church in Eglinton.

Five decades later, the church was the setting for both a memorial service honouring the three aircrew, and a push from the FAA Museum to gather memories and photographs both of the dig in 71 and also the crash itself (there are still eyewitnesses who remember the tragedy vividly), while Diana Davis, Head of Conservation, and Dave Morris, Principal Conservator, explained the work achieved so far.

Having been involved with the project for many years, Dave was delighted both to meet a couple of eyewitnesses of the crash (now in their 90s), local historians and above all visit the wreck site (which is plagued by "smelly mud and millions of peat bog midges").

Crash site visit helps re-build

Source:
ROYAL NAVY
JUNE 2023



“I’ve known the story and the project of the Barracuda since I joined the museum, but to actually be here – I’ve had a big thought process of what was it like, where was it, what did it actually look like and today I can do that,” said Dave, who returned to Yeovilton hopeful the trip will spawn “some good future potential results”.

Renewed interest in the fate of DP872 was sparked by students from Foyle College – just half a mile from the crash site – who have been working the local historians to scour the crash site and environs one last time in the hope of recovering any final parts/wreckage perhaps missed by their predecessor.

“It’s tragic to find out their ages,” said student Alex Bradley. “In a couple of years’ that could have been anyone in our year group.”



Caroline is open again

WELCOMING visitors again for the first time in three years is the UK's floating memorial to the men of WW1, HMS Caroline.

The Princess Royal formally reopened the cruiser in Belfast, allowing the public to see how sailors lived in the Great War and fought the German Fleet at Jutland on May 31-June 1 1916 still afloat.

The ship has served as a museum in Belfast - where she spent the bulk of her RN career as a base for reservists - since 2016, but closed in lockdown... and did not reopen when the pandemic ended.

With the long-term future of the ship assured thanks to Northern Ireland's Department for the Economy and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and a Covid overhaul of some displays, Caroline is open 10am-5pm daily.

royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews



ARMED FORCES COVENANT

EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

SILVER AWARD 2021

Proudly serving those who serve.

Don't forget to thank a vet!

Follow US Today on:

www.linkedin.com/in/veterans-families-listening-project-a9a74b0/

www.facebook.com/VeteransFamiliesListeningProject

@VnF_LP

V&F L.P. Veterans & Families Listening Project

www.vnf.org.uk

ASDIC®

Op FORTITUDE Overview One Page Summary

Op FORTITUDE

Op FORTITUDE is funded by The Armed Forces Covenant Fund to deliver a centralised referral pathway to end veteran homelessness. The remit of the team will be to work with individual veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness, supporting them either into suitable accommodation, or supporting them to maintain their current home.

Why is it needed?

Veterans may find it hard to engage with and trust professionals who have no military background and haven't shared or have an awareness of the unique experiences, circumstances, and situations that members of the armed forces encounter.

If given the choice between engaging with mainstream homelessness services or not engaging at all, too many veterans will choose not to engage at all. Veterans take longer on average than others before asking for help.

Who is it for?

- Veterans of the U.K. Armed Forces
- Veterans applying for assistance as an individual, not as a family unit
- Veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness

Who can refer?

- Anyone in contact with an eligible veteran, with the veteran's permission, can refer into Op FORTITUDE
- Eligible veterans can also self-refer using the 0800 number below
- Referrals can be made to the 0800 number 24/7 and emergency accommodation will be sourced for veterans actively sleeping rough at the point of referral

How do I make a referral?

Tel: 0800 952 0774

riv.org.uk/opfortitude



The Riverside Group Limited is a charitable Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014

THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST



1

GENERAL - EXTERNAL

OpFORTITUDE

The Riverside Group

The Riverside Group (TRG) is the sixth largest registered provider of social housing, and the largest provider of supported housing, in the U.K., operation in over 150 Local Authority areas in England and Scotland.

The Group comprises of Riverside and One Housing Group (OHG), a London based subsidiary of Riverside.

Both have large Care and Support functions, providing supported housing, floating support, outreach services and care services covering homelessness, mental health, young people, older people, as well as veterans.

The Riverside Group operates its Care & Support functions nationally across circa 110 Local Authority areas in England.

Demand

Due to inconsistency in recording and reporting of veteran status in rough sleeping statistics, the level of demand is difficult to state with 100% accuracy. As a result, some assumptions have been made using the data that is available.

The Rough Sleeping Strategy¹ revealed that 6% of UK Nationals who responded to the Rough Sleeping Questionnaire in 2020 said they had served in the Armed Forces, 2% in London. This data, when compared to the 2021 Census data of 3.8% national and 1.4% in London, indicates that veterans are overrepresented in the rough sleeping population. We also know from the 2021 Census data that veterans are overrepresented in communal living facilities.

As of September 2022, there were estimated to be 2,900 people sleeping rough in England², and 160 in Wales as of end September 2022³. There were 6,631 people estimated to be sleeping rough over the course of September 2022 – up 1,063 people or 19% since June 2022 and up 1,344 people or 25% since the same period last year. This is more than double the number of people seen sleeping rough on a single night, illustrating that the flow of people onto and off the street over the course of a month is significantly higher than those seen on any given night due to the dynamic nature of rough sleeping. Using the upper

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-rough-sleeping-for-good>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-people-sleeping-rough-in-england-september-2022/support-for-people-sleeping-rough-in-england-september-2022>

³ <https://www.gov.wales/homelessness-accommodation-provision-and-rough-sleeping-september-2022>

estimation of 6% of rough sleepers being veterans, this equates to 184 veterans sleeping rough on the night of the estimate take in September 2020, and 398 over September 2022.

During 2021/22, the most recent available data, there were estimated to be 8,239 people who had slept rough in England⁴. Using the same assumption of 6%, this will equate to 500 veterans sleeping rough in 2021/22. This figure should be considered in light of the achievements of *'Everyone In'* and estimates for 2020/21 were much higher at 11,018 (661 potential veterans).

It should be noted, however, that the rough sleeper snapshot methodology is generally viewed as flawed, and the true number likely to be higher.

While the potential number of veterans sleeping rough is low enough to feasibly take these individuals off the streets and into accommodation, Op FORTITUDE will only be successful in ending veteran rough sleeping if there is an additional focus on the prevention of new flow on to the streets.

Measuring Success

The 2022 DLUHC rough sleeping strategy 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good' introduces the definition for 'ending rough sleeping: that 'rough sleeping is ended if it is **prevented** or is otherwise **rare, brief, and non-recurring**'.

For any gains in reducing the number of veterans currently sleeping rough to be maintained, prevention needs to be a focus.

However, this is less likely to be effective for early service leavers, and service leavers discharged at short notice due to conduct, including those who fail mandatory drug testing and inmates of the Military corrective Training Centre. It will also not impact on the current veteran population who are either currently rough sleeping, or at risk of.

Therefore, for Op FORTITUDE to be successful, our focus needs to be ensuring that veteran rough sleeping is **rare, brief, and non-recurring**. In addition to this, we should challenge ourselves to ensure that rough sleeping is **prevented** where possible to minimise the flow of new veterans finding themselves sleeping rough.

Op FORTITUDE Service Design Overview

The team will work with veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness, supporting them either into suitable accommodation, or supporting them to maintain their current home.

Referrals will come from a range of sources, including, but not limited to, the public, the homelessness sector, the veteran charity sector, Local Authorities, His Majesties Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS),

⁴ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/381356/london-homelessness-rough-sleepers-timeline/>

The Defence Transition Service (DTS), The Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC), The Veterans Gateway. Or directly from the veteran themselves.

Referrals will be made through a dedicated webpage, and telephone access, with referrals going to the team that will facilitate referrals.

On receipt of the referral, we will assess:

- The immediate safety of the veteran
- Their current housing situation and location
- Areas, levels, and complexity of need

From an assessment of need, and led by the veteran's own choice, we will match the veteran with the appropriate supported housing or engage in tenancy sustainment activities to prevent homelessness occurring.

While the focus of the pathway is placing veterans into appropriate veteran specific supported housing, there may be occasions where referrals to mainstream homelessness services may be appropriate, either because no veteran supported accommodation is available, or the needs of the veteran require a specialist intervention that will be better met by a specialist mainstream service.

If no placement is available and the veteran is actively sleeping rough, they will be placed in temporary B&B/Hotel accommodation until a more sustainable solution can be found.

As mentioned, moving into supported accommodation may not always represent the best outcome, and we will need to consider wider implications, such as the impact of losing a local connection to the area they are currently residing in.

From an assessment of need, and led by the veteran's own choice, there could be a range of supportive interventions taken, including, but not limited to:

- Tenancy sustainment
- Reconnection to family where safe and in the veteran's best interest
- Referral to specialist mainstream service where they will be best met
- Referral to veteran supported
- Referral to veteran social housing
- Referral to mainstream social housing

Hours of Operation

The Op FORTITUDE Pathway Team will operate Monday till Friday 8am until 6pm, known as the Core Hours. Referrals can be made online at any time, but these will not be acted on outside of core hours.

Op FORTITUDE will have a dedicated 0800 line which is primarily for open referrals, specifically for veterans sleeping rough to refer themselves to Op FORTITUDE directly.

Referrals via the 0800 line can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round. The Pathway Team will operate the 0800-line Monday to Friday 9am to 5 pm.

We will operate an Out-Of-Hours on call system to facilitate emergency referrals using the 0800 number outside of these times. The Officer on call will source emergency temporary accommodation until the following working day when the Op FORTITUDE team can undertake an assessment and source more suitable accommodation.

Referral Assessment and Allocation

On receipt of a new referral an initial eligibility check is conducted against the Op FORTITUDE criteria to:

- a) Confirm 'single' status
- b) Confirm the veteran status of the person referred.
- c) Confirm that the person referred is either experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness

If the person referred is a veteran, but they do not meet the Op Fortitude criteria (e.g., families), then they

If the veteran is currently experiencing homelessness, and a referral to Veteran Supported Housing (VSH) is the appropriate action, then the areas and levels of need is used to identify the services most suitable for the veteran's needs, and a referral on made.

It is likely that the VSH will want to conduct their own assessment as part of their referral process. If the outcome of that referral is that they choose to not accept the referral, then the Op FORTITUDE Pathway Team should be informed of the decision and the reason why. The Op FORTITUDE Pathway Team will then refer to the next VSH provider.

Recording refusals and the reasons for them is important to enable review of the effectiveness of the pathway through pathway governance structures.

Referrals to Veteran Supported Housing

As part of the assessment process, and identifying the most suitable VSH scheme to refer to, a number of factors is considered when prioritising where referrals are allocated:

- The areas and level of need the veteran presents with
- Availability of suitable accommodation
- Veteran preference
- Date order

Allocations Based on Need

Another key success factor is ensuring that referrals into supported housing are allocated in such a way that the needs of the veteran are matched to the level of support provided.

Placing veterans with high needs into a service only able to delivery support to meet a lower level of need increases the likelihood of that placement failing, and the veteran returning to homelessness, potentially returning to the streets.

Obverse to this, placing a veteran with low or no needs into a high support service will represent poor value for money and a diminished return on investment, as high needs services cost more to deliver.

When making decisions on allocations, we will refer to the needs and risk assessment carried out using the Outcome Star and define the veteran as being either:

- High Need
- Medium Need
- Low Need
- No Need

Matching Referrals to Available Vacancies

Being aware of current vacancies is clearly an important part of the assessment and allocation process. We will use the Inform CRM system to create a 'Vacancy Portal' for VSH providers to inform the Op FORTITUDE Pathway Team of any vacancies they have.

As part of the Op FORTITUDE Pathway Team's quality assurance processes, they will proactively contact every participating VSH scheme weekly to verify that the information on the portal is up to date.

Tenancy Sustainment

Where the veteran is currently housed but at risk of homelessness, it may be suitable to refer instead to the case work team to engage in tenancy sustainment.

Given the current regulation in relation to local connection, moving someone who is currently housed, albeit it insecurely, out of their home borough and into veteran supported housing could have potential unintended consequences. This could include losing their level of existing priority on the local Housing Register, so working with them to prevent eviction could be the best outcome for those veterans in these cases.

This could be by referring them to the Local Authority for them to accept as a duty under the Homeless Reduction Act, or referring to suitable veteran charity sector organisations for support around income maximisation etc.

Creating Sustainable Pathways Out of Supported Housing

Where Op FORITUDE supported housing providers are located in areas where Riverside deliver social housing, we will facilitate a relationship between them and our Riverside local colleagues with a view creating a pathway into our social housing.

We will also use our high profile in the social housing sector to encourage others to do similar and support them to create relationships with their local Op FORTITUDE supported housing providers, as well as direct access to Riverside's 5,500 units of social housing for people over 55.

Pathway Partnership Governance Structures

Another key success factor for Op FORTITUDE is the quality of collaborative working across a number of different agencies. We will hold quarterly meetings with key stakeholders to ensure that the pathway is being delivered effectively, identify any potential areas of improvement, and to have honest discussions on how we can improve the service to veterans.

At the quarterly Pathway Partnership meetings, we will review the quarterly performance data to identify blockages and areas of performance that need to be improved.

These meetings will be Chaired by the Director of Operations for Riverside.

Quarterly updates could then be presented to the Veterans Advisory Board, the OVA, and the Minister of State (Veteran Affairs).

Membership of the Pathway Partnership will include:

- *OVA*
- *Veteran accommodation providers*
- *Homeless Link*
- *Defence Transition Service (DTS) – Housing Lead*
- *NHS Armed Forces Commissioning Led*
- *His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) – Veteran Leads*
- *Veterans Gateway*
- *The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)*
- *Local Government Association (LGA)*
- *Representation from the Devolved Administrations*
- *Veterans Commissioners from the Devolved Nations*
- *Housing Options Scotland*
- *National Housing Federation (NHF)*
- *Confederation of British Services Charities and Organisations (Cobseo)*
- *The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust*
- *A service user Representative*



**“Explain it to me one more time.
Why do you need £200 pair of trainers,
but I have to do 5 miles in bare feet?”**

Take care
From the team V&F-LP
All information is correct at the time of going to press & PDF
Veterans & Families-Listening Project (V&F-LP)
does not endorse any products or service(s) advertised
*Subject to change