

November 2012

# Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915

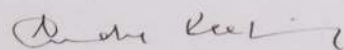


# From the Chairman.

Your message from Major General Andrew Keeling, CB, CBE, RM.

November is the month that all our minds turn to Remembrance – certainly towards the start of the month. As an optimist I generally try to see the glass as half full rather than half empty. I also try to make the most of today, as well as looking forward to tomorrow, rather than dwelling on the past. However, at this time of year I try hard to get my brain to engage reverse gear, at least for a while, to remember the past and to be thankful for it. My father volunteered to join the Army on the day war was declared in 1939 and Served as a front-line doctor in the RAMC for the duration of WWII. This included being one of the very last off the beach at Dunkirk, as well as Service in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. He had many lucky escapes. I am hugely thankful for the sacrifices that his generation made to ensure the future of our country and our way of life, just as I am for today's generation of all volunteer sailors, marines, soldiers and airmen who give so much to enable the rest of us to live peaceful, safe and civilised lives. Standing at the Cenotaph each year brings all this home in a most convincing way, and I am always very grateful for the privilege of sharing the experience with members of our very special charity.

In the past month I have enjoyed a very happy visit to Llandudno and a delightful Reunion lunch in Bodmin. At Llandudno I was the guest at a rip-roaring Regimental dinner held by the staff to celebrate their first anniversary. It didn't go quite the way that the Mess President had intended, for regimental tradition seemed to be either adopted or adapted on the hoof as the evening progressed, but there is no doubt that a good time was had by all. A lot of thought and hard work goes into an evening like that, and it paid off in spades. Like all Reunions, the one at Bodmin was beautifully organised and much appreciated by everyone there. We are lucky to be so consistently well served by Blind Veterans UK staff. I hope your Remembrance-tide is fruitful for you. It may well rekindle some sad memories, but I hope it will also remind you of proud and happy moments in the past, and of people for whom you are still very grateful. Above all we should remember how important it is to make the most of the opportunity we have been given by those who so generously gave us the priceless gift of all our 'tomorrows' in exchange for their 'todays'.



**On the cover:** Blind Veterans UK Membership Officer Simon Brown who took part in the Paralympics closing ceremony.



## Review

Nov 2012 | No 1029

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### Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

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### Blind Veterans UK Calendar

**Key: B for Brighton centre - L for Llandudno centre - S for Sheffield centre**

#### November

Cenotaph 10th - 11th

#### December

Crafty Christmas

Magic S

10th - 14th

# Noticeboard

## Blind Veterans UK Founder's Day Awards for 2013

To celebrate the achievements of the family of Blind Veterans UK and its volunteers, the Founder's Day Awards are made annually in seven different categories. Time is running out to nominate for our Founder's Day Awards in 2013.

Categories include Sports Person of the Year: has your member wife/husband realised a sporting accomplishment in 2012?

Have you been impressed by someone gaining a new skill as a result of training with us; they might be eligible for our Training Achievement Award?

Perhaps you know an excellent candidate for our Community Award, a member who has made a significant input to Blind Veterans UK or their local community?

Has a friend or work colleague introduced a design or idea into Blind Veterans UK that would make them our next Innovator of the Year? Is your arty other half a candidate for our Creative Art Award?

And don't forget the:

Volunteer of the Year Award  
Outstanding Achievement Award.

For a copy of all the categories and guidelines, please contact Barbara Sweeney, PA to Welfare Services, Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London, W1H 4HD, tel 020 7616 7922, email [barbara.sweeney@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:barbara.sweeney@blindveterans.org.uk)

The closing date is 30th November 2012.

Nominations are treated in confidence and discussed by a Selection Committee in January. Nominees are not informed they have been nominated until the Selection Committee has reached its decision. The 2013 Awards ceremony will take place in our Brighton centre on 26th March. This celebrates the date in 1915 on which the first 16 war blinded ex-Servicemen entered the new training centre at the then St Dunstan's Lodge in London's Regent's Park.

## Blind Veterans UK London Carol Concert

The Carol Concert will take place at St Marylebone Parish Church on Tuesday 4th December 2012 at 7pm. Tickets for the concert and the post-concert reception cost £50, and tickets for the concert only £20. You can order online at [www.blindveterans.org.uk/carolconcert](http://www.blindveterans.org.uk/carolconcert) or by telephone on: 020 7616 7966.

Music will include such favourites as O Little Town of Bethlehem, In the Bleak Midwinter, O Holy Night and O Come All Ye Faithful.

The actress Sarah Parish will read Twelve Days of Christmas, a correspondence by John Julius Norwich.

Commodore Barry Bryant CVO RN, Director General of Seafarers UK, will read Christmas Day 1911 on the Plateau, an extract from the diary of W. Lashly, Chief Stoker, RN, who was quoted in The Worst Journey in the World by Apsley Cherry-Garrard.

Billy Baxter, R&T Support Worker at the Llandudno centre, will recite the poem - The Military Wife.

Closing addresses will be made by HRH The Crown Prince Pavlos of Greece and the Rt Hon Nicholas Soames MP.

## Stars for loved ones to shine brightly at our centres

If you visit our Brighton, Llandudno or Sheffield centres from 14th November you will find a Christmas tree adorned with stars in each centre. These stars are memorial stars for loved ones. We are inviting members and supporters to place a star on the tree in memory of someone who was dear to them.

Christmas can be a hard time for people who are on their own, and those who have lost someone they love. The star is a way to remember them, as a message can be written on the back of the star, which is hung on the tree. We hope that by doing this it will bring a small amount of peace and comfort to those who are missing someone special this Christmas.

The stars are available from the reception desk at each centre for a small donation. If you can't get to a centre please contact Joseph Woollcott on tel 020 7616 8365, or email [joseph.woollcott@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:joseph.woollcott@blindveterans.org.uk)

## **Murder - Blind Veterans UK Short Story Competition 2013.**

They say everyone has a book in them, but for the 2013 Blind Veterans UK Review short story competition we want to find out how many people have a great short story in them.

We invite you to send a fictional work on the theme: Murder.

So please get super creative and put your most gruesome heads on to come up with a murder story.

All submissions should be an original work and not previously published. The competition is open to members, their spouses, widows and widowers. The judge's decision will be final.

There will be a prize for the winning story, which will also be published in the Review in 2013.

Please follow these steps when submitting entries for the competition:

- 1) Entries should be typewritten and should not exceed 1,500 words.
- 2) Only one submission per person.
- 3) Entries must be received by the Editor, Blind Veterans UK Review, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by 28th February 2013.

### **Fishing coaching opportunity**

The Sports & Recreation department has been contacted by an educational angling company who would like to provide coaching in fishing - predominantly sea fishing from a beach - to our members. Based in Somerset, Moonfleet Educational Angling is keen to hear from members who are interested in taking up the sport.

For further details please contact Ian Houlton on 01935 471005 or email [moonfleet\\_angling@btinternet.com](mailto:moonfleet_angling@btinternet.com) You can also check out their website at [www.moonfleet-educational-angling.co.uk](http://www.moonfleet-educational-angling.co.uk)

# Letters to the Editor

As we welcome your letters please do send them in to us. They could be in response to an article in the Review, or something you feel to be of interest to your fellow members. You can send letters by post to Blind Veterans UK Review, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Please mark them Letter to the Editor. Or if you prefer please send an email to the Review at email: [revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk)

Dear Editor

### **What a lucky bunch of lads**

The first week of August saw a group of Blind Veterans UK members spend time enjoying the summer camp at HMS Sultan. And what a grand time we all had thanks to Dave Burrows and his hard working committee.

As members of Blind Veterans UK we are honoured and privileged to be invited to this annual event where we can enjoy a full week of activities that include sailing, gliding, archery, 10 pin bowling, fly fishing and an afternoon with the crew on the RNLI inshore lifeboat. With so many activities to fill each day there was no time to feel life was passing me by, as we were just having so much fun. The evenings were spent in the club house with a drink or two, a good chat and a quiz to keep things ticking over. All this meant the week flew by and the final morning arrived all too soon when it was time to say our goodbyes, exchange numbers and hope summer camp would take place the following year.

The Commodore, his officers and staff made us feel at home for the week. Thanks Dave for heading up this wonderful event, thanks must also go to the committee for their valued input, and of course to the dogs who look after us so well. In fact I would like to thank everyone who makes this week so enjoyable, exciting and interesting. We come away wiser, happier and filled with pleasure.

Yes I was one of the lucky lads to be invited to summer camp this year.

Yours sincerely

John Taylor

Dear Editor

It was with great regret that we learned the excellent staff at the Brighton centre no longer contains the redoubtable presence of our Martin (Shail). It seems that he has retired.

When we first visited St Dunstan's, now Blind Veterans UK, we were welcomed by this impressive figure, who conducted our induction into the details of the workings of this magnificent organisation. His encouragement, kindness and remarkable memory was an inspiration to us all.

We later learned over many visits that Martin was a legend amongst all the members for his dedication to the welfare of each and every person.

His cheerful voice would ring out a personal greeting to every voice that he recognised - and he did recognise every voice. How this was accomplished with new arrivals whom he had only met a few hours earlier we shall never know. It was a considerable surprise to discover that he was totally blind.

Martin is an inspiration to us all and he embodied the spirit of Blind Veterans UK. One hopes that he will enjoy good health and happiness, encouraged by the good wishes of so many members.

During our visit last week one member suggested that he deserved a medal for his fine work.

Yours sincerely

Spencer Netherstreet.

Dear Mr Netherstreet

Thank you so much for your letter and I am sure that many of our members, and staff, across the UK will share your views on the legendary Martin Shail.

Yours sincerely

Editor

## Harry Beevers 10 questions on the subject of... Politics

1. In years, what is the full term of a British Parliament?
2. Which former British political party leader was quoted by bookmakers at 100,000-1 to become England's next soccer manager?
3. Who has anchored the BBC coverage of every General Election since 1979, David Dimbleby or his brother Jonathan?
4. What was officially first given in Britain to the Leader of the Opposition in 1937?
5. The film based on the book *The Eagle has Landed*, by author Jack Higgins, features a plot to kidnap which former politician?
6. Which future US President was once voted Mr American Adonis of 1939?
7. Who in 1920 became the first woman to speak in the House of Commons? She once wrote, "I married beneath me, all women do".
8. Derived from the Greek language, what is meant by the term Aristocracy. Government by the rich or Government by the best?
9. Traditionally, being commoners, MPs are not allowed to do what in the Palace of Westminster? If they do they are said to have done it in St Thomas' Hospital over the river.
10. Who is the only MP to win two Oscar acting awards?

Answers on P.19.

## Blind Veterans UK wins Best Brand Development award.

As readers of the Review will know we did not enter lightly into the name change from St Dunstan's to Blind Veterans UK. It took two years to develop our new name as we worked with focus groups formed of members, staff, volunteers, supporters and the public. We wanted a name that would immediately tell people who we are. We wanted a name that would help us to once again make our great charity a household name, while retaining our heritage.

We want to thank each of you who worked with us and supported us, as on 27th September our work was recognised when we won the Best Brand Development award at the prestigious Third Sector Excellence Awards. The judges said it was a "very brave step to rename and rebrand an organisation that can trace its roots back to 1915, but the execution is very good and results look extremely promising".

As you will have read in previous issues of the Review the two year rebranding process began in 2010 and involved interviews, surveys, open forums and 11 focus groups. Members and staff suggested more than 250 new names that were all featured in the Review, which focus groups then reduced to just four.

On 21st February 2012, St Dunstan's became Blind Veterans UK, as it was proven that the name was clear about who we are and what we do. Our logo, which is based on the Union Flag, captures the spirit of the Armed Forces and would get to the heart of the public and the organisation. Research by charity consultancy nfp Synergy suggested that, although only 16% of the British public would consider supporting St Dunstan's, 22% would consider supporting Blind Veterans UK. Among other initial successes we can also attribute a 30% increase in sign ups to our 100k London to Brighton Walk in 2012.



**Pictures:** Left poster with member Wendy Kane.

Right the prestigious Third Sector Award.

## 100K success

Led by Lt Kneale members of 3 Military Intelligence Battalion (Volunteers) took part in the second Walk 100K from London to Brighton on 9th and 10th June. A test of endurance even for the super fit, Lt Kneale said. 'It is very difficult to train for a distance of this kind, especially with the ever increasing demands put on all participants from their civilian jobs. However, the team put in an exceptional amount of effort to the training and this paid off. The walk itself was tough, and the first of this distance for many involved. After enduring many blisters, aches and pains, we completed the challenge and were relieved to reach the finish line. I think I speak on behalf of the whole team when I say we could not have achieved half of what we did, had it not been for our support crew, who worked tirelessly to ensure we were happy, well fed and watered throughout the day and night. We managed to raise a staggering £6,746.75 from the event and it was an honour and a privilege for 3 Military Intelligence Battalion (Volunteers) to have managed to raise this money for Blind Veterans UK. In addition, it was excellent to have the opportunity to welcome Simon Brown into our mess on 1st August and for us to present the money we raised to him in person. An amazing experience for all who were present and one which the battalion will remember for a long time to come. Thanks Blind Veterans UK. See you at the start line next year!'

To find out about next year's event visit website: [www.walk100.org.uk](http://www.walk100.org.uk)



**Picture:** Blind Veterans UK Membership Officer Simon Brown and Inderpal Kallah accept the cheque with Lt Kneale left.

## Snowdrops at the Brighton centre.

Tony Harbour may be a new member of Blind Veterans UK but he has supported our members for more than 20 years as an escort at Cenotaph. With fellow members of the RAF Police Association he recently made a presentation at the Brighton centre to David Habershon, Head of Memberships & Reunions.

Here Tony speaks of his long standing link to Blind Veterans UK. "The 17th Branch of the RAF Police Association adopted Blind Veterans UK some five years ago. In that time we have helped out at fundraising events, collecting at stations, air shows, garden centres and running raffles. Many of our members have carried out escort duties at the Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph in London in November. My links with Blind Veterans UK started some 20 years ago. In that time I have been honoured to escort the late Colin Beaumont Edmonds MC, a former President of St Dunstan's, Ron Freer, Jason Hobday (RIP), Nick Barber (RAFPA), John Taylor, Tony Lee and many others. This year will be my first marching to the Cenotaph as a member of this great charity that I now have the honour to belong to."



**Picture:** From left to right: Ted Hellewell (National & South Downs Chairman), Peter Barr, Archie Heath, David Habershon, Tony Harbour, David Hilton and Eric Harrison (National & South Downs Secretary).

## The BIG DRAW at the Brighton centre.

After months of anticipation the BIG DRAW arrived at the Brighton centre. The BIG DRAW is a nationwide initiative run by the Campaign for Drawing throughout October, encouraging everyone to engage and have fun drawing.

For those of you who are familiar with the layout of the centre, this year the Art & Craft department took over the annex corridor overlooking the swimming pool, where they displayed a range of tactile drawing techniques for both sighted and non sighted people to try.

Below is just one of the drawings, a wonderful cat and mouse woolly line drawing.



**Picture:** A cat and mouse woolly line drawing at the Brighton centre as part of THE BIG DRAW 2012, which ran throughout October.

## Return to Bletchley Park by Catherine Goodier

"I was something very humble; I worked on the Enigma Code, working from teleprinter messages using a pencil and paper, a very small cog that made up a computer as we worked on various permutations."

Those were the words Nancy Jackson used to describe her role at Bletchley Park during World War II, as she spoke with Iain Standen, Chief Executive Officer at the Park. What transpired from that one sentence was truly wonderful to witness as Iain told her of the importance of her time at Bletchley Park.

Our visit to Bletchley Park on 23rd August 2012 was the first time Nancy had returned to the Park since 1945, when she left as Wren Petty Officer Nancy Atkins. When Iain enquired which hut Nancy had worked in she couldn't immediately recall as her post war life had been rather busy, as she went on to read Zoology and met and married Richard, a Botanist. They moved to Nigeria where two of their three sons were born and later to New Zealand. Nancy trained as a teacher, becoming Deputy Headmistress at the George Abbot School in Guildford. When her eyesight started to fail she gave up teaching and had the good fortune to become an advisor at the Citizens Advice Bureau for 10 years.

Iain Standen checked the records for Nancy's hut and found she had been based in the Newmanry, named after Max Newman, mentor to Alan Turing. Iain informed Nancy that she hadn't worked on the Enigma Code, as she had believed for the past 67 years. She had in fact worked on the Lorenz Code, the highest level code, it was the code used by Hitler to communicate with his chief commanders and allied leaders.

Iain Standen, a former Officer with the Royal Signals, said: "It's always fascinating to meet our veterans when they return to the Park. It's even more poignant in cases like Nancy's where, like many, they can only now learn the true extent and significance of the incredible codebreaking factory of which they were a part. The level of secrecy during World War Two was such that each department only knew their own small part of the large and complex operation leaving many veterans, like Nancy, with great gaps in their knowledge which it is our privilege at the Bletchley Park Trust to help fill."

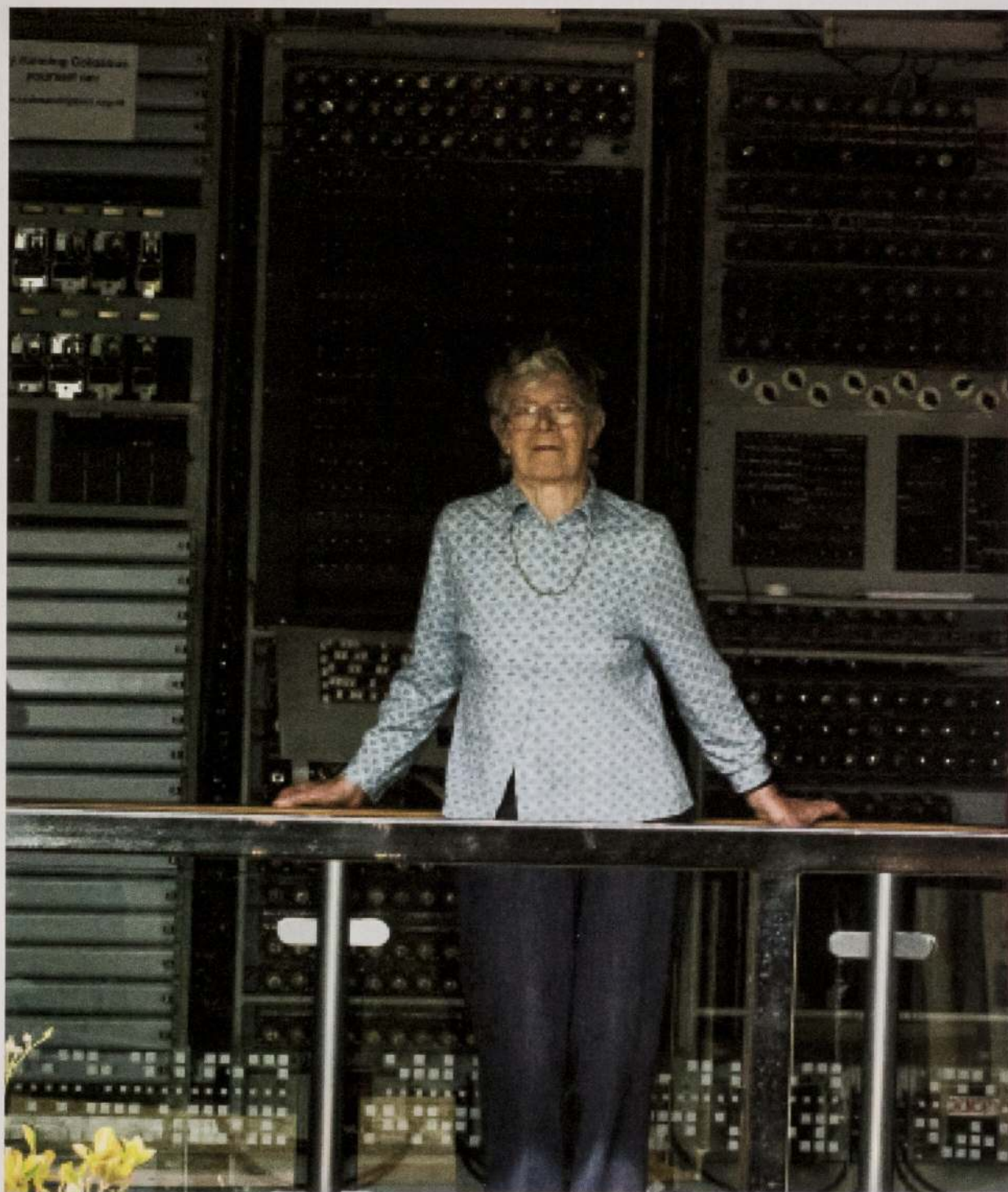
We were included in a tour of the Park where Teng Chang, our very knowledgeable guide, announced to an audience of 30 people taking the tour: "I must be careful of my facts today as we have someone with us who worked at the Park. She is sitting over there and her name is Nancy Jackson." The room was immediately filled with the sound of applause.

Speaking of her time at Bletchley Park Nancy said: "I joined the Wrens and think I must have been recruited to Bletchley Park because of my school certificate results. We were billeted at Woburn Abbey and we would be bussed in each day. As Bletchley Park was manned 24 hours a day we worked a watch system that was 9 - 5, 9 - midnight and midnight to 9. It was pretty repetitive work as we sat in a hut working on different permutations. The tour was extremely interesting and I've learnt more about Bletchley Park today than I did during the war years. It's been a wonderful experience to come back and quite incredible to find out after all these years that I worked on the Lorenz Code and not the Enigma Code. At the time we knew we had worked on messages sent to Mussolini, as a high ranking official once came into our hut to say that 'we had done well', cracking a message that was meant for Mussolini. I had no idea until today that those messages were from Hitler. The main building brought back memories of my time at the Park as I remember going into it as a young Wren for my meals. I would like to thank everyone who made today possible."

Bletchley Park, once Britain's best kept secret, is now a heritage site and museum, with exhibitions, activities and events. The Park's breathtaking Second World War codebreaking successes helped shorten the War by around two years, saving countless lives. The true Bletchley Park Story is more incredible than fiction. A desperate race against time, pitting Britain's best brains against Hitler and his chief commanders.

The World War Two codebreakers' mission was to crack the German Enigma machine and decode other seemingly unbreakable messages. Against them? Odds of 158 million, million, million. Their reward? 'Ultra' Intelligence that saved Allied convoys carrying essential supplies from U Boat wolfpacks on the prowl. So effective was Bletchley Park that the decoded messages sometimes reached the Allies before the enemy. Today, you can discover how it was done, be amazed by the total secrecy in which 8,500 people worked and lived and marvel at the technology they designed to do the job. To find out more the website is at: [www.bletchleypark.org.uk](http://www.bletchleypark.org.uk) or telephone: 01908 640404.





**Picture:** Nancy stands in front of a Colossus computer at Bletchley Park.

The Colossus computers were used to help decipher teleprinter messages, which had been encrypted using the Lorenz SZ40/42 machine. The Colossus was used to find possible key combinations for the Lorenz machines – rather than decrypting an intercepted message in its entirety. The destruction of most of the Colossus hardware and blueprints as part of the effort to maintain a project secrecy that was kept up into the 1970s, deprived some of the Colossus creators of credit for their pioneering advancements in electronic digital computing during their lifetimes.

## Personal Independence Payment – what's the score? By Maria Pikulski, Blind Veterans UK member.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a new benefit that will start to come in from 8th April 2013. It will be paid to people who are of working age, 16 to under 65, at the time of claim. It is hailed by the government as a replacement for Disability Living Allowance (DLA), which in their opinion is 'outdated, inconsistent, with too many automatic awards and entitlements'.

What is Personal Independence Payment, how will it work, when will it happen and how is it likely to affect vision impaired people?

Personal Independence Payment is a new benefit that looks similar to DLA, in that it will be non-means tested, non-taxable, and not based on National Insurance contributions. Like DLA it will have two components – one for personal care called the 'daily living component', and a mobility component. A major difference is that there will be only two rates of the daily living component and you won't be able to get an award solely on being unable to prepare and cook a main meal. The higher rate of the daily living component will be based on severity rather than the need for day and night care. Other differences include a requirement that your level of care and mobility needs remain the same for the next nine months, as opposed to six months at present, though it is unlikely that this will affect most people with sight loss.

The biggest change will be the way it is assessed. Assessment will start by completing a questionnaire about your disabilities and how they affect you. You will be able to support this with recent evidence such as a Certificate of Vision Impairment (VI), an up to date eye test report or a letter from your GP or consultant. You will then, in most cases, have a face to face assessment. The assessor will ask questions about the level of difficulty you have in doing a set list of daily living and mobility activities, and will give points for each set of activities.

An award, and the amount of that award, will depend on the number of points scored. The contract for the assessments in most regions has gone to 'Atos', who are experienced in assessing for Employment and Support Allowance.

The timetable for the introduction of Personal Independence Payment started in the North of England on 8th April 2013. From that date no new claims for DLA were taken from people of working age. They will have to claim the new benefit. In June 2013 it started to affect new claims nationally. Between October 2013 and March 2016 people of working age at 8th April 2013 who are getting Disability Living Allowance will be assessed for Personal Independence Payment. Once a decision has been made their DLA will end, and if they qualify they will be paid Personal Independence Payment.

It is estimated by the government that half a million people currently getting DLA will not be entitled to PIP. How this will affect people with vision impairment is difficult to say.

Disability Living Allowance has never, in my experience, been particularly favourable to people with sight impairment. Far too often, and certainly in recent years, the DWP has awarded the lowest rate for care often on the cooking test alone, when the criteria for an award of the middle rate would appear to have been met. In my opinion, many decision makers have used their discretion to award down rather than up. A point score given by a healthcare assessor should eliminate some of this discretion. Points for being unable to cook a main meal will be added to those for problems with washing, dressing and communication.

However I can see hope here. People who have been given what I would consider to be too low an award of DLA should get a fairer deal with Personal Independence Payment. Those people whose only difficulty is preparing and cooking a main meal will lose out.

At the other end of the scale, some people with severe sight loss have very substantial daily living needs. They may have been unable to get the highest rate of the care component of DLA because their needs are confined to just the day. This will not be the case with Personal Independence Payment where the highest rate is a possibility, so some may find themselves better off.

Some people have expressed concern about the mobility component in PIP. We fought hard for the right to have the higher rate mobility component of DLA paid on sight grounds, and fortunately this has not been lost. The highest

rate of the mobility component of PIP will still be paid if you need supervision, prompting or a support dog to follow a journey to a familiar destination. Personally I feel this is fairer as it considers how sight loss is actually affecting the individual's ability to get around, rather than applying rigid medical requirements.

**So what's the score?** People who have a level of sight considered to be sight impaired or partially sighted and no other disabilities may struggle to get an award. Those with a level of sight such as to be considered severe sight impaired, or blind, could fair better. The proof of the pudding will be in the eating. There will be winners and losers, but unlike in the Olympics there'll be no satisfaction from taking part.

I would strongly advise anyone about to claim or be re-assessed for PIP on sight grounds to seek advice from RNIB or Action for Blind People. RNIB and Action for Blind People has produced a very informative Personal Independence Payment fact sheet. This is available from the RNIB website [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk) or Email [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk) or telephone: 0303 123 9999.

## Answers to 10 questions on... the subject of ... politics from page 9.

1. Five years.
2. Screaming Lord Sutch of the Monster Raving Loonie Party.
3. David Dimbleby.
4. A salary.
5. Winston Churchill.
6. Ronald Reagan.
7. Lady Nancy Astor.
8. Government by the best.
9. Die.
10. Glenda Jackson.

## Blind Veterans UK Masonic Group by W. Bro Ernie Bignell.

The Masonic group met for their Annual Weekend on Friday 27th April. Friday, being the arrival day, the members gathered for their yearly 'catch up chat,' with both good and sad news.

The AGM as usual, rather a chaotic but of course a friendly affair, was held on Saturday morning. Sixteen members being present, when arrangements were finalised for the evening's ceremony in Brighton, as 'guests' of the Temple Lodge No. 4962.

Tentative arrangements for next year were also discussed. Further discussion regarding the point that any Freemason member of Blind Veterans UK wishing to join our group should contact R.A. Freer, 23 St Michael's Avenue, Cliftonville, Margate, Kent CT9 3UH. Tel: 01843 601421 or email: [ronfreer1915@gmail.com](mailto:ronfreer1915@gmail.com) for further information relating to the group and our next meeting. New members are always welcome to our Masonic group.

On Saturday afternoon we were transported to the Brighton Masonic Centre and were received by the Temple Lodge. I must explain to any Freemason reading this article that we, members of our group, carry out a ceremony, and I must say, very well considering that we come from all parts of the country. The evening went very well, much to the satisfaction of our members, and the members of the Temple Lodge. On departure, one of our 'old' members suffered some heart pains and we had to wait for an ambulance to take him to hospital. Our driver transported us back to the Brighton centre where we arrived at around 10.15pm, all quite happy with the evening out. On Sunday, the 29th, The Masonic luncheon was held in the Winter Garden, with members, partners and friends, together with a small party from the Temple Lodge, making up a total of approximately 60. In the 'Chair' was Bob Strickland, but due to an oversight, we did not have a guest of honour from the Province of Sussex.

As usual, PBK caterers did us proud. Thank you Trevor. I would end by reporting that after four or five days in hospital, our 'Brother' was discharged back to the Brighton centre. Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

## Paralympics glory by Catherine Goodier.

I have a weather house that gives me hours of pleasure as I wait for the figures to come out and tell me it's rainy, or sunny and dry. This summer I didn't see much of the sunny and dry figure as the constant rain kept her indoors and my companion was the wet weather gentleman with the rolled umbrella. I like to think that she made good use of her time inside the weatherhouse, and that like me, she too was glued to the TV watching the Olympics and Paralympics. At the Review we want to keep the memory of the glory days of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics alive. That's why Simon Brown, Blind Veterans UK Membership Officer, is featured on the front cover, as he enjoyed a once in a lifetime experience when he took part in the Paralympics closing ceremony.

Ken Maidens from Blackburn had the honour to carry the Paralympics Torch in London on 29th August. Recreating the Beatles iconic Abbey Road album cover, Ken and four fellow Torchbearers walked the zebra crossing. In Ken's words: "We left the coach and were told to walk the 50 yards to Abbey Road. It was mind blowing as the streets were lined with people all there to cheer us on. It was all the more special as my two sons, daughters in law and five grandchildren had come down and were in the crowd. We walked along the zebra crossing and as soon as we tried to get onto the pavement people ran up to us asking to have a photograph taken with the Torch. It was fantastic. They were so appreciative that all five of us were willing to let people share what we were doing. That's what made it so wonderful for me and put a lump in my throat. It is something I will never, ever forget."



**Picture:** Lucy Priest, Ketaki Vaidya, Graham Helm, Ken Maidens and Christopher Tattersall on the Abbey Road zebra crossing. **Photo:** PA.

## **American Veterans Agency gives Project Gemini its full support by Colin Williamson, Cadet Challenge Project Officer.**

You may recall the second Project Gemini featured in the July edition of the Review, when members of the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) of America travelled to our Brighton centre for the week long peer support programme.

I have just returned from the BVA Convention in Texas, more on the following pages, where I heard first hand of the success of Project Gemini. At the BVA Convention we were welcomed by the keynote speaker, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Four Star General Eric K Shinseki. A highly decorated Vietnam veteran, he singled out Project Gemini for praise, saying: "Project Gemini is a terrific initiative and the Veterans Agency give it their full support and backing". This is quite an accolade as Secretary Shinseki represents the US Department of Defense and is its highest ranking representative.

During the week we heard more news of the success of Project Gemini from the US Vision Centre of Excellence Director, Colonel Don Gagliano, who took part in this year's Project Gemini. He spoke of an exchange of emails between him and Air Vice Marshall Dr Paul Evans, the Surgeon General of the UK Armed Forces. This is a direct result of our visit to Moorfields Eye Hospital in London during Project Gemini week in May. The emails focused on:

- The management of combat eye trauma and joint cooperation between military surgeons and treatment facilities.
- Rehabilitation services in both countries and eventually other allied countries in relation to current and future practice.
- Vision research for military Service members and veterans.

Colonel Gagliano said he regarded these exchanges as: "Showing signs of senior level support for our continued Project Gemini efforts and the need to take this as a positive signal of UK Ministry of Defence support and cooperation." Air Vice Marshall Evans is scheduled to visit Colonel Gagliano and BVA's Director of Government Affairs Dr Tom Zampieri at the BVA HQ in Washington DC for a meeting to discuss future cooperation between the UK and US military eye trauma surgeons.

It was a great week that started on Saturday 18th August when five members of Blind Veterans UK made the long journey across the Atlantic to spend a week with the BVA, our American counterparts, as part of the annual Project Gemini/Operation Peer Support exchange programme. The five members, Simon Brown (Iraq), Colin Williamson (organiser), Billy Baxter (Bosnia), Billy Drinkwater (Afghanistan), Ken Facal (Afghanistan) and volunteer Marika Kato, had previously spent a week with our American hosts at our Brighton centre in May.

We were met at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, Texas, by the BVA's Director of Government Affairs, and longstanding friend of Blind Veterans UK, Dr Tom Zampieri, who has visited the Brighton centre on two previous occasions in his role as Project Gemini/Operation Peer Support coordinator. We were then chauffeured to the Galveston Island Hilton hotel, our base for the week, by retired Army Colonel Richard Brunk and his partner Kathy, who were on call to ferry us about and who we would like to thank very much for their kindness and hospitality throughout the entire week.

Sunday was spent acclimatising (at midday the temperature was up in the high nineties) and in the evening we were all invited to attend the formal Operation Peer Support dinner at the Galveston Island Convention Centre, which overlooked the Gulf of Mexico. Following the introductions and speeches we sat down to a lovely meal, after which we presented the two Operation Peer Support coordinators, Christina Hitchcock and Tom Zampieri, with our new Blind Veterans UK plaques, which were very well received. We also presented everyone who had previously participated in Project Gemini with specially minted medals.

Monday morning was spent at the convention centre listening to presentations and guest speakers. At midday we boarded the bus to Moody Gardens indoor rainforest, where the kayakers amongst us spent an afternoon kayaking in the bay. That evening we attended the official BVA welcome reception and dinner.

In the convention centre on Tuesday morning the session was opened by BVA President Sam Huhn, who would make an excellent stand up comedian as he had everyone in stitches with his one liners. The American and British National Anthems were sung and the colours were presented to Sam by an honour guard of the First Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas.

On Thursday we set off on the early bus to the Lone Star Flight Museum in Galveston. The museum is home to one of only 13 airworthy B17 bombers. During the course of WWII, 13,000 of these four engine aircraft were produced and the public can take to the skies every weekend during the summer in the aircraft we were shown around. The museum also houses a B25 Doolittle Mitchell Bomber, a P51 Mustang, a PT17 Stearman Biplane and many other aircraft, all in excellent airworthy condition.

Later that afternoon we headed into Houston and the NASA Johnson Space Centre. After a detailed briefing by the staff we were escorted through the security doors into the Mission Control Centre. The space centre has actually two control centres, one for the Space Shuttle and one for the International Space Station. We were allowed access into both and what an incredible honour it was; this was every schoolboy's dream! Usually visitors to Mission Control aren't allowed to take photographs or even enter into the control room; we were encouraged to do both. The massive monitors on the wall showed live feeds from the International Space Station and views of earth and our solar system. It was a really incredible experience and one that I will never forget. To show our appreciation, we presented the staff from Mission Control with a Blind Veterans UK plaque, which was gratefully received.

We were then escorted into the main hangar where we were introduced to astronaut Mike Fossum who has just returned from the International Space Station. He took us onboard the mock up Space Shuttle where astronauts bound for the space station learn to fly the craft and operate the myriad of switches and instruments required for safe flight. We were also introduced to Robonaut, a humanoid robot which will eventually take over the tasks that are deemed too dangerous or mundane for astronauts on the space station. It was, as the Americans are fond of saying, Awesome!

That evening we were invited to attend the formal Blinded Veterans Association closing dinner, when Simon Brown, Blind Veterans UK Membership Officer, and BVA honorary life member, thanked the BVA for their tremendous hospitality and for all of their hard work to make the week a success. Friday was spent saying goodbye to the many friends that we made during the week. Our visit attracted quite a lot of media attention with live radio interviews and several articles in local newspapers - we even featured in the New York Times.

We made some great contacts which included, Jerry Schutter, the Chief of Hines Blind Rehabilitation Centre in Chicago, who is very keen for two of his VIST Coordinators (their equivalent of our ROVIs) to visit our Brighton centre. We met Dr Sally Dang, a low vision optometrist at Long Beach V.A. Blind Centre, who hopes to come across in 2013 as part of Project Gemini. Colonel Robert Mazzoli, former Army Chief of Ophthalmology, would also like to join us next year in Brighton. Charles Young, President of The Hadley School for the Blind in Illinois, has already made contact with our Rehabilitation & Training Department. Urban Miyares, a co-founder of a charity for blind and physically disabled people with an interest in sailing, would like to explore the possibility of taking some of our members on a voyage from Los Angeles to Hawaii in 2013.

There were blind U.S. veterans at the convention from all corners of America and her dependencies, including Puerto Rico and Honolulu. Everyone we came into contact with had heard of Project Gemini and all had added their names to the list of potential participants in 2013. We made some great new friends and renewed our acquaintances with those US veterans who have previously taken part in the exchange programme.

We were the recipients of some wonderful hospitality and generosity from the BVA. Simon Brown, who has attended five BVA conventions in the past said this visit was very special. It was a similar week to the one we host at our Brighton centre and the BVA is already planning next year's event in Spokane, Washington State, which will once again see Operation Peer Support/Project Gemini as an entirely separate entity from the BVA convention, but it will sit firmly under the security of the BVA umbrella. I for one can't wait!



**Picture:** Featured: Marika Kato, Cpl Billy Drinkwater, American veteran Kenta, Private Ken Facal and Simon Brown at the Lone Star Flight Museum.

## A Scotsman in New York by Rob Baker, Collections & Archives Officer.

Our involvement with Project Gemini reminds us of our long-standing connections with the United States. These date back to the very earliest days of Blind Veterans UK, and the investment banker, philanthropist and patron of the arts Otto Kahn. German-born, he later became an American citizen and a wealthy and influential society figure. He had a large London property, St Dunstan's Lodge, and kindly agreed to lend it to our founder, Arthur (later Sir Arthur) Pearson, for the duration of the war as the home for his new organisation for the rehabilitation and training of blinded soldiers and sailors.

One of the first residents was Robert Middlemiss. A Sergeant Major in the 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers, Middlemiss had been blinded during the battle at Gallipoli. He had been training in physiotherapy but this was interrupted by a very unusual request. He was asked to go to the United States for a year-long lecture and fundraising tour on behalf of the B.F.B. (British, French, Belgian) Permanent Blind Relief War Fund. Together with his wife, Beatrice, he travelled on the SS Adriatic on 3rd May 1916. They left behind them their three year old daughter, Muriel.

The B.F.B. Fund had its origins in a dramatic story from the sinking of the RMS Lusitania in 1915 as a result of a torpedo attack by the Germans. Nearly 1,200 people were killed, but amongst those who survived, rescued after four hours, was a flamboyant American wine agent, George Kessler. Whilst recuperating afterwards in London, Kessler met Arthur Pearson and decided to aid the cause of war blinded people. Together with his wife, Cora Parsons, Kessler set up the new fund with committees in Britain, France and Belgium to raise money and supervise its distribution. The British committee included Pearson, and Blind Veterans UK as St Dunstan's was amongst the recipients of the funds. In 1917, with America entering into the war, the Fund expanded to include an American committee, of which Otto Kahn was a member. As the A.B.F.B. Permanent Blind Relief War Fund it continued after the war and it still exists today as Helen Keller International.

The Middlemiss's spent time in New York with the Kesslers before travelling to a number of other cities in the United States and Canada. They met with many

significant people of the time, including the world-famous deaf and blind author, political activist and lecturer Helen Keller and her companion Annie Sullivan. Keller worked with Kessler in establishing the B.F.B. Fund, and she would herself later visit St Dunstan's.

The Middlemiss's also met with many people who would have been celebrities at the time including the British actor and theatre manager, Sir Herbert Tree, who was the founder of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and the grandfather of actor Oliver Reed. Others included the American actresses Mary Pickford, Lillian Russell and Edna May and a former US Secretary of State, Robert Bacon. They visited cities including Chicago, Cincinnati, Boston, Nashville and Toronto, sending postcards to their little daughter from each so she could keep up with where they were.

The Middlemiss's return in May 1917 was reported in the Review and it was said that 'The Sergeant Major's eloquence bore wonderful fruit among the Americans'. Robert also wrote a piece later that year for the Review about Helen Keller, in which he mentions that they wrote to each other for some time after first meeting, and that she was keenly interested in all that he told her about the then St Dunstan's. Robert Middlemiss's efforts must have done a great deal to raise the profile of our charity and its work in the United States and to help develop relations between us. The time he spent there represents a remarkable commitment for somebody who, having enlisted at age 17, had no background in public speaking or fundraising. After his return Robert went on to work for many years as a physiotherapist. Our thanks go to his granddaughter Anne Hawthorne for her help with information and photograph for this article .



**Picture:** Robert Middlemiss in uniform. Helen Keller is seated. Mrs M far right.

## **HMS Sultan summer camp by Dave Burrows, Organising Secretary.**

We gathered on Friday 3rd August at HMS Sultan in Gosport all set for another week of 'fun in the sun'. This year we welcomed 24 members from Blind Veterans UK and 26 helpers, otherwise known as 'dogs', for a week packed with activities that included sailing, gliding, pillion rides on motorbikes, quizzes, visits to the Ghurkha and Rifles museums, coarse water fishing and so much more.

My gratitude is extended to Cdre JM Slawson Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan for authorising the use of the Establishment facilities and to Defence estates for issuing the licence to occupy spare Service accommodation. Friday was given to settling into the accommodation, familiarisation of surroundings and the mandatory brief on H&S matters and the outline program of events, as always weather dependant! The evening was spent relaxing in the Warrant Officer and Senior Rates Mess and mingling between the 'dogs' and other campers.

Saturday dawned grey and overcast with steady rain threatening to sabotage the program, however not to be beaten we set off in the morning for the Gosport Sailing and Cruising Club. We have enjoyed their company for many years and numerous boat owners turned out to offer a few hours sailing around Portsmouth Harbour, with some venturing into the Solent. They are a truly wonderful group of people. The afternoon however was not so good, with a low cloud base and strong winds over the Daedalus airfield runway. The gliding event sponsored by the RN Gliding Club was regrettably rescheduled.

Sunday morning started in traditional manner with an invitation to the Establishments Church service. During the service I read the St Dunstan's prayer and the names of former campers who have passed away.

My grateful thanks are extended to the RN Motorcycle Club who gave up their time providing three bikes (with riders of course) who whisked Jack Hadnum, Bill Goddon and Peter Price into the Hampshire countryside for four hours. That afternoon the gliding event took place with most people getting two flights in an open topped glider (rather them than me!). The annual archery competition was conducted in good spirits with some fine displays of accuracy. One of Sammy Dyer's famous quiz evenings completed the day. A great success and

the winning team even got a bottle of wine for their efforts.

Monday started with the sports competition, as campers were split into teams of four to compete against each other in penalty goals, ball into basket, throwing a hula-ring over wickets, hockey puck into goals and finally the walking race, which was won by Charlie Eastwood! The trip to Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue (GAFIRS) took place, as usual the crews manned the fast rescue rib and suitably dressed in dry suits off went the campers two at a time. The evening was spent in the company of the Court Barn Conservative Club in Lee on Solent, where once again we were warmly welcomed by the President Mrs Pat Homer and members. On Tuesday we boarded a coach and set off for the Ghurkha and Rifles museums in the former Peninsula Barracks in Winchester. On Wednesday some of the group did Canadian canoeing. Another group departed for East Meon springs for coarse water fishing. Dave Hazlewood, the sponsor, showed the guys how to fly fish and Paul Palmer was the outright winner, landing a 6lb trout. The day was completed with an invitation to join the President and Officers for a group photograph and dinner followed by a quiz evening in the Wardroom HMS Sultan.

Thursday was always planned as a quiet day and adventure golf was on the menu, hotly contested with Brian Lang being the outright cheat (sorry winner). A trophy was presented to him by Amber, the sponsor. The highlight of the week was the presentation evening in the WO & S/Rates Mess. Cdre Slawson and his family were our guests of honour and by kind permission of the Mess President; we invited representatives from all of the organisations who played a part during the week.

They included: The Havant & Hayling Bowmen, The Gosport Sailing and Cruising Club, The Conservative Club, Adventure Golf, The RN Motorcycle Club and the RN Gliding Club. Prizes were awarded to Blind Veterans UK members for events during the week and the biggest cheer of the evening was reserved for Maurice Bowley who received the Don Minter Trophy for the person who contributed most towards the success of the camp. It is truly well deserved as Maurice, a gentleman approaching his 90th year, would put to shame many of today's youngsters by his sheer determination, courage and gracious nature. My thanks are extended to Blind Veterans UK Chairman, Chief Executive and Barbara Sweeney and the Transport Department, without whom we would not be able to provide this service. Until the next time. Dave Burrows.

## **The Listening, Advice & Counselling Service by Emma Swayne, Case Management Team at Wellbeing Solutions.**

It is now just over six months since the confidential Listening, Advice, & Counselling Service (or counselling service for short) started at Blind Veterans UK. We thought we'd give everyone a quick update of how it's going, a summary of what it's all about, as well as an invitation to try it out if you have not already done so.

But before we go any further, a quick reminder of what it is: The Listening, Advice, & Counselling Service is a free and confidential support service, offering Blind Veterans UK members, their families and their carers confidential counselling and expert advice on any subject. Appointments can be arranged by Welfare Officers, or by contacting us direct, using the phone number shown at the end of this article. It's free and confidential.

First the numbers: Since February this year we have provided counselling and emotional support services to just over 100 people. This is a great start and we're really pleased with how it's taken off. Ninety of the people we've worked with have been members of Blind Veterans UK, and around 10 have been family members. We've provided almost 450 confidential counselling sessions, in all parts of the UK, and mostly in members' homes.

The feedback from members who have used the service has been heart warming and moving. The service is confidential, so of course we can't talk about actual people we've worked with. However what we can say is that a wide range of members have benefited, ranging from gents in their nineties, to younger lads in their twenties. We help people come to terms with their very recent sight loss, and talk with people who lost their sight over half a century ago. And by no means are all conversations about sight loss and associated issues – we talk to people about everything and anything that is worrying them, from relationships, money worries and family problems.

We find that whatever our age, circumstances, background or role in life, from time to time we all have problems – whether personal, family, or practical.

Talking to a counsellor or advisor can help us understand a problem, make a tough decision, try a different approach or just learn how to cope with a situation that we can't change. Our aim is to help you find your own answer or solution to whatever is worrying you.

Our team of counsellors are wonderful, and they have really settled into the service. All of our counsellors are carefully selected, fully trained, professionally qualified and properly insured. They are accredited with the appropriate and recognised professional body in their field of practice, for example, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). I also want to reassure everyone that it's a confidential service. What you discuss with a counsellor is private, between them and you. This is an important ethical principle at the heart of counselling. Your confidentiality and anonymity would only ever be broken in the most extreme circumstances, for example, if a counsellor considered that you may pose a significant danger to yourself or others around you.

So to everyone within the Blind Veterans UK family, please don't hesitate to try this service out if you would like support. Remember, if you want to talk in confidence to a friendly and sympathetic counsellor, or want useful practical advice, the Listening, Advice, & Counselling Service is there for you. We can help with any issue, problem or subject that may be troubling you. Alternatively you may just feel a bit low or sad and want someone understanding to have a chat with. You do not pay for the counselling.

And as I said at the beginning, there are two ways to get in touch. Either ask your Welfare Officer to refer you, or call us direct. Our number is (freephone) 0800 328 1437. We answer the phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We're delighted to be working with Blind Veterans UK to provide this wonderful service, and look forward to helping many more members and their families and carers in the months to come.

The service is free and everything you say to a counsellor is treated with the strictest confidence. You can contact The Listening, Advice & Counselling Service on:

- Freephone 0800 328 1437 - Via mobile: 800 328 1437
- Via Minicom: 01482 661 911



# Family News

## Congratulations to:

**Christopher Bennett and Shiryl Hamilton** on the birth of their son Bailey on 27th July 2012.



**Picture:** Bouncing baby Bailey Bennett.

## Birthdays:

**Betty Hallett** of Surrey on her 100th birthday on 2nd October.

**Edna Banister** of Hertfordshire on her 100th birthday on 13th October.

**Joan Trench** of Worcestershire on her 105th birthday on 16th October.

## Anniversaries:

### Platinum (70th):

**Desmond and Lillian Dowding** of Ruislip, Middlesex on 8th October.

### Blue Sapphire (65th):

**Bill and Rene Pepperell** of Gloucester, Glos on 11th October.

### Diamond (60th):

**Thomas and Ivy Williams** of Mablethrope, Lincs on 11th October.

### Golden (50th):

**Ken and Angela Ripp** of Henfield, West Sussex on 4th October.

**Bob and Barbara Thirtle** of Brighton, East Sussex on 5th October.

**Ken and Mavis Maidens** of Blackburn, Lancashire on 6th October.

**William and Liz Doran** of Sunderland, Tyne and Wear on 13th October.

### Ruby (40th):

**Alan and Liz Warren** of Felixstowe, Suffolk on 7th October.

**Jack and Jean Milward** of Guisborough, Cleveland on 14th October.

### Silver (25th):

**Kay and Geoffrey King** of Poole, Dorset on 21st October.

**Edward and Enid Waugh** of Bishop Auckland, Co Durham on 24th October.

## We regret to announce the death of:

**Benjamin Bernardo** who died on 4th August 2012, he was an overseas affiliate from Mmabatho, South Africa.

**Alma Morley** who died on 13th September 2012, she was the wife of William Morley.

**Mabel Porter** who died on 10th September 2012, she was the wife of Arthur Porter.

**Eleanor (Ray) Sheridan** who died on 17th September 2012, she was the widow of the late Henry Sheridan.

**Dorothy Spink** who died on 1st May 2012, she was the wife of Wilfrid Spink.

**Mary Tipple** who died on 6th September 2012, she was the wife of Ronald Tipple.

We offer our heartfelt condolences to their widows, widowers, family and friends.

# Welcome to Blind Veterans UK

**Donald Allen** of Worthing, West Sussex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

**Ruth Altoft** of Stockport, Cheshire Served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1946.

**Monica Ayres** of Bognor Regis, West Sussex Served in the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service from 1950 to 1958.

**Arthur Bell** of Dunfermline, Fife Served in the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) from 1956 to 1965.

**Iris Blackburn** of Newcastle upon Tyne Served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

**Nadia Boys** of Brighton Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

**John Bruscini** of North London Served in the Irish Fusiliers and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1951 to 1957.

**James Cameron** of Gravesend, Kent Served in the Scots Guards from 1960 to 1963.

**Brian Capstick** of Derby, Derbyshire Served in the Royal Engineers from 1970 to 1973.

**Brendon Carroll** of Swindon, Wiltshire Served in the East Lancashire Regiment from 1942 to 1946.

**Frank Carter** of Bridgwater, Somerset Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1948 to 1950.

**William Chamberlain M.M.** of Sittingbourne, Kent Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1942 to 1947.

**Gerald Chambers** of Sheffield Served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

**John Churchyard** of Ipswich Served in the Royal Norfolk Regiment and the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1956.

**Arthur Cole** of Guildford, Surrey Served in the Royal Pioneer Corps from 1941 to 1946.

**Raymond Collins** of Epsom, Surrey Served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

**Leslie Darby** of Daventry, Northants Served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1957.

**David Dilley** of Aylesford, Kent Served in the Royal Artillery from 1980 to 1993.

**Violet Douglas** of Westbury, Wiltshire Served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1941 to 1944.

**John Drummond** of Alloa, Clackmannanshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1946.

**Bernard Dunne** of Portsmouth, Hampshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

**Neville Edwards** of Colwyn Bay, Conwy Served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949.

**Joseph Everall** of Crewe Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1949 to 1955.

**Reginald Gibson** of Lowestoft, Suffolk Served in the Royal Green Jackets, Queen Victoria's Rifles and the Royal Artillery from 1949 to 1953.

**Reginald Greisen** of Alresford, Hampshire Served in the Royal Air Force from

1940 to 1947.

**Leslie Hammond** of Solihull, West Midlands Served in the Royal Signals from 1948 to 1950.

**Edna Harrington** of Barnsley, South Yorkshire Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1945.

**Kenneth Harvey** of Wadhurst, East Sussex Served in the Royal Army Service Corps and the Dorset Regiment from 1941 to 1946.

**Patrick Hendry** of Maldon, Essex Served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards from 1948 to 1953.

**Francis Hillier** of Stroud, Glos Served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1955.

**John Hobbs** of Worcester Served in the General Service Corps and the South Staffordshire Regiment from 1946 to 1948.

**Rose Holt** of Sheffield Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1944.

**Joseph Houghton** of Attleborough, Norfolk Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Pioneer Corps from 1947 to 1949.

**Jenny Hudson** of New Milton, Hampshire Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949.

**Donald Hurst** of Barnsley, South Yorkshire Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1945 to 1948.

**Jeffrey Ingham** of Holt, Norfolk Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1952 to 1957.

**Derrick Launchbury** of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire Served in the Royal Armoured Corps (54th Training Regiment) and the Royal Armoured Corps (12th Lancers) from 1942 to 1947.

**Edward Lyon** of Dereham, Norfolk Served in the General Service Corps, Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-Shire Buffs, The Duke of Albany's) and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1946 to 1948.

**Herbert Macklin** of Hull Served in the Royal Signals from 1939 to 1946.

**Robert Manton** of Luton, Beds Served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1949.

**Clement Martin** of Stockton on Tees Served in the Royal Engineers from 1944 to 1948.

**David McAvoy** of Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, Served in the Lowland Brigade, Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons) and the Scottish Division from 1967 to 1971.

**Derek McDonald** of Edinburgh Served in the Royal Signals from 1959 to 1961.

**Joan McVee** of Darwen, Lancashire Served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1948.

**John Mills** of Barnsley, South Yorkshire Served in the Merchant Navy from 1941 to 1947.

**Bertram Morris** of Slough, Berkshire Served in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry from 1944 to 1947.

**Kenneth Nolan** of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1943 to 1947.

**Renee Pawelczyk** of Billingham, Cleveland Served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1950 to 1953.

**Dennis Pennicott** of Gosport, Hampshire Served in the Royal Engineers from 1948 to 1960.

**Gordon Pettinger** of Rochester, Kent Served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1952 to 1958.

**Thomas Phillips** of Eastleigh, Hampshire Served in the Royal Engineers from 1939 to 1946.

**James Philipson** of Colne, Lancashire Served in the Royal Engineers from 1949 to 1955.

**Phyl Pipe** of Stowmarket, Suffolk Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1945.

**Sylvia Schofield** of Rotherham, South Yorkshire Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1945.

**Andrew Scott** of Plymouth, Devon Served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1954.

**Olive Spillett** of Bexhill On Sea, East Sussex Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1945.

**Sheila Starns** of Hailsham, East Sussex Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1946.

**Roy Truan** of St Albans, Herts Served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1957.

**Arthur Watson** of St Leonards On Sea, East Sussex Served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946.

**David Welbrock** of South Shields, Tyne and Wear Served in the Royal Engineers from 1945 to 1947.

**Christopher White** of Notting Hill, West London Served in the Royal Navy from 1956 to 1979.

**Harold Whitmore** of Gloucester Served in the Fleet Air Arm from 1943 to 1946.

**Harold 'David' Wiggett** of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1948.

**Doris Wilkinson** of Blackpool, Lancashire Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1954.

**Doris Wilkinson** of Seaford, East Sussex Served in the Royal Signals from 1942 to 1944.

**Donald Williams** of Southport, Merseyside Served in the King's Regiment from 1970 to 1976.

**William Williams** of Port Talbot, W Glamorgan Served in the Welsh Regiment, the Royal Army Service Corps and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers from 1950 to 1956.

**Andrew Wilson** of Leeds Served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Adjutant General's Corps from 1989 to 1999.

## Colin Williamson's Beer of the Month

### Pelforth Brune.

This is a delightful French beer, which is reminiscent of an English Brown Ale, but has a character all of its own. It pours a dark reddish brown with a nice big white foamy head and smells of sweet chocolate maltiness (which reminds me of a 'Crunchie' bar) and dark fruits. The taste is of malt and red berries with a sweet 'fudge' feel, ideal for those with a sweet tooth! The ABV is 6.5% but you can hardly taste the alcohol due to the malty and slightly hoppy aftertaste.

Pelforth Brewery was founded in Lille, France, in 1914 and originally called Pelican, after a popular dance at the time. It changed its name to Pelforth in 1972. The name came from "Pel" for Pelican, "forte" for strong and the "h" to give it an English feel. Production was stopped during World War II and resumed in 1950.

This is one of the most popular dark beers in France and is widely available in bars, restaurants and off licences throughout the country. Unfortunately it can be hard to track down here in the UK but is well worth the effort. I happened to stumble across it whilst wandering around the port of Cherbourg recently on a nice sunny October afternoon and spent a glorious hour or two sitting outside a rather quaint old harbour side bar sipping my beer and enjoying the sunshine.



# In Memory

**It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following members and we offer our heartfelt condolences to their widows, widowers, family and friends.**

## **Cyril Boyden, Royal Engineers, Royal Artillery, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers**

Cyril Boyden of Lincolnshire died on 9th September 2012, aged 93. He joined the Royal Engineers searchlight unit in 1939. In 1940 he transferred to the Royal Artillery as a Gunner and in 1943 became an Instrument Mechanic with the REME. He served in the UK and in Europe and was in Germany prior to discharge in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

## **Joseph 'Peter' Brecknell, General Service Corps, Royal Signals, Royal Navy**

Joseph 'Peter' Brecknell of Kendal, Cumbria died on 14th September 2012, aged 88. He joined the General Service Corps in 1943. He specialised as a signaller and transferred to the Royal Signals a month later. He was discharged from the Army in 1943 and joined the Royal Navy, serving on HMS Gazelle until discharge in 1946 as a Telegraphist. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

## **William 'Bill' Carter, Royal Marines**

William 'Bill' Carter of Plymouth, Devon died on 10th September 2012, aged 90. He joined the Royal Marines in 1939 and served in HMS Ceres, an aircraft carrier for three years. He then joined HMNZS Bellona in New Zealand for two years before returning to the UK. He was in HMS Eagle in the 1950s and took part in the Pacific atomic experiments. He was discharged as a Sergeant in 1961. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

## **Anthony Chapman, Royal Army Medical Corps**

Anthony Chapman of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire died on 3rd September 2012, aged 92. He joined the RAMC in 1940. He completed his medic training at Crookham and was posted to Netley Hospital in the Isle of Wight. He was later posted to Southampton where he dealt with the wounded being evacuated from France and then to Liverpool where he remained for a year. He later joined the Yeomanry and worked with the Tank Regiment but following an accident in

1943 he was medically discharged in 1944. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

## **John Colborn, Grenadier Guards**

John Colborn of Dursley, Glos died on 3rd August 2012, aged 77. He Served in the Grenadier Guards in 1953 until his eyesight failed and he was medically discharged as a Guardsman. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

## **Gordon Coldrick, Royal Army Ordnance Corps**

Gordon Coldrick of Bungay, Norfolk died on 18th September 2012, aged 81. He joined the RAOC in 1947 for National Service, Served in Germany and was discharged as a Private in 1950. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

## **Robert 'Bob' Cotton, Royal Engineers**

Robert 'Bob' Cotton of Brighton, East Sussex died on 19th September 2012, aged 80. He Served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1952, leaving as a Sapper. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

## **Thomas 'Tom' Coupe, Royal Signals**

Thomas 'Tom' Coupe of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire died on 16th September 2012, aged 96. He joined the Royal Signals in 1940 and was posted to Egypt before moving to North Africa, and then Sicily. He landed in Italy and worked on the telephone and signal equipment attached to the US and Australian forces. He was discharged in 1946 as a Signaller. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

## **Charles Dark, Royal Navy**

Charles Dark of Plymouth died on 20th September 2012, aged 96. He joined the Royal Navy in 1942 and trained at HMS Raleigh. He served in HMS Mallard and HMS Mandate in the North Atlantic, English Channel, America and Canada before discharge in 1946 as a Leading Seaman. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

## **Philip Duffee, North Stafford Regiment (The Prince of Wales's)**

Philip Duffee of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 15th April 2012, aged 83. He Served in the North Stafford Regiment from 1946 to 1949, leaving as an acting Sergeant. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Mary Evans, Royal Artillery**

Mary Evans of New Hartley, Northumberland died on 10th June 2012, aged 86. She joined the Royal Artillery in 1944, and qualified as a height and range finder. She was posted to Ramsgate and attempted to ensure that the V1 and V2s were shot down. She was later transferred to Wilmslow and assisted with armoured vehicle maintenance. She was discharged in 1947. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

**Roy Forrest, Royal Navy**

Roy Forrest of Burnley, Lancashire died on 19th September 2012, aged 84. He joined the Royal Navy in 1946 and began his training at HMS Gosling followed by HMS Collingwood where he qualified as a Radio Electrical Mechanic 1st Class. He was discharged in 1949. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**George Fortescue, Royal Air Force**

George Fortescue of Rushden, Northants died on 13th September 2012, aged 92. He joined the RAF in 1941 and specialised as an electrician. He was posted to Limavady in Northern Ireland where he dealt with Blenheim Bombers and he also served in a variety of coastal command locations in the UK and Gibraltar. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Olive Gardiner, Women's Auxiliary Air Force**

Olive Gardiner of Peterborough died on 16th September 2012, aged 91. She joined the WAAF in 1941 and served in RAF Chivenor as part of Coastal Command. She specialised as a shorthand typist and did all the accident reports on the aircraft in the engineering section. She was discharged in 1945. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

**Winston Greatorex, Royal Artillery, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers**

Winston Greatorex of Whitby, North Yorkshire died on 26th August 2012, aged 92. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1941, five months later he transferred to the RAOC and finally to the REME when it was founded in May 1942. Qualified in electronics he worked on radar development and carried out secret work at Loughborough and Waltham. He then became a PT instructor before he was discharged in 1946 as a Corporal. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**James Greenwood, Royal Artillery**

James Greenwood of Ashted, Surrey died on 10th July 2012, aged 93. He joined the Militia on call up in 1939 and five months later transferred to the Royal Artillery. He was commissioned in early 1940 and posted to the 2nd Surrey Regiment who were tasked with locating enemy gun positions and passing them on to the Artillery. He went to France but was cut off while trying to slow down the German Panzer Division and he was eventually evacuated from Cherbourg. He then went to Lancashire and was involved in home defence before being posted to India in early 1942 as part of an advance party in Burma. He remained in India until the end of the Far East war. He was discharged in 1946 as a Captain. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Gordon Harvey, Royal Air Force**

Gordon Harvey of Hastings, East Sussex died on 2nd October 2012, aged 92. He joined the RAF in 1941, trained in the UK and served in Alexandria, Egypt, Somalia and Palestine as a radio operator. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Kenneth Heath, Royal Army Service Corps**

Kenneth Heath of Chippenham, Wilts died on 27th September 2012, aged 92. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1940 and was involved at El Alamein, followed by the invasion of Sicily. He fought through Italy until the end of the war when he returned to Catterick for discharge in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**George Hewitt, Royal Army Service Corps, London Irish Rifles**

George Hewitt of Cheltenham, Gloucester died on 26th August 2012, aged 94. He joined the RASC as a Driver in 1940. He was posted to an Army mobile bakery before returning to driving and a posting to Algiers, North Africa. He took part in the invasion of Sicily followed by Italy and transferred to the London Irish Rifles in 1945; he was discharged as a Rifleman in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Bernard Holden, Royal Engineers**

Bernard Holden of Burgess Hill, West Sussex died on 4th October 2012, aged 104. He served in the Royal Engineers from 1941 to 1943. During the Burma campaign he operated trains close to the Japanese front line. He was then posted to India and appointed to a commission in the Indian Army. He was

discharged as a Captain. He devoted his life to railways and was responsible for helping to save the Bluebell Railway, a heritage steam line in Sussex. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Bryan Hopkins, Royal Air Force**

Bryan Hopkins of Maidstone, Kent died on 18th September 2012, aged 85. He volunteered for the RAF in 1945, just as the war in Europe ended. He continued to do his National Service, serving in the UK and Singapore and was discharged in 1948. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**George 'Melvyn' Howe, Royal Air Force**

George 'Melvyn' Howe of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan died on 27th August 2012, aged 92. He joined the RAF in 1940, after training he became attached to the newly uniformed meteorological branch serving at RAF Marham, Glasgow, N. Ireland and the Western Isles. He then gained a commission and as a Pilot Officer was posted to the Suez via West Africa and Cape Town. He joined the Middle East Intelligence Unit and Served in the Western Desert, Greece and Palestine before returning to the UK. He was demobilised in 1945 as a Squadron Leader. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Brian Kirton, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Royal Army Service Corps**

Brian Kirton of Huddersfield, Yorkshire died on 23rd September 2012, aged 87. He joined the REME in 1943 but was later transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps, where he served in a motor boat unit at West Mersea, Essex. Subsequently posted to the Isle of Wight, in 1945 he suffered serious injuries in an explosion and was discharged as a Private. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Raymond 'Ray' Lowe, General Service Corps, Royal Signals**

Raymond 'Ray' Lowe of Carnforth, Lancashire died on 27th August 2012, aged 85. He joined the Army in 1944 and initially Served in the General Service Corps, before transferring a month later to the Royal Signals. He Served in Northern Ireland and the UK before being posted to India, Serving with BHQ Signals in New Delhi. He was involved in the Burma Campaign and was discharged as a Corporal in 1948. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Peter McCabe, Border Regiment, East Lancashire Regiment, Lancashire Fusiliers**

Peter McCabe of Bath died on 15th August 2012, aged 83. He joined the Border Regiment in 1946, transferred to the East Lancashire Regiment in 1947 and Served in Germany and Northern Ireland, before transferring to the Lancashire Fusiliers. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Norman Morley, 14th Battalion (Hove) Sussex Home Guard**

Norman Morley of Brighton, East Sussex died on 29th February 2012, aged 87. Due to an accident he was rated as Grade 4 and joined the Home Guard. He was attached to the Royal Sussex Regiment but because of his building experience spent most of his time from 1942 to 1945 repairing bomb damage in London. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Trevor Nathan, Army Catering Corps**

Trevor Nathan of Putney, London died on 2nd September 2012, aged 81. He Served in the Army Catering Corps (Southern Command) from 1949 to 1954, leaving as a Private. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Eva Parnell, Auxiliary Territorial Service**

Eva Parnell of Norton, Cleveland died on 29th August 2012, aged 88. She Served in the ATS from 1943 to 1946. After training she was posted to Leicester where she was allocated to the RAOC, based at Weedon near Northampton and later Bicester. She was discharged as a Corporal. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

**William Parry, Royal Marines**

William Parry of Porthmadog, Gwynedd died on 28th August 2012, aged 91. He Served in the Royal Marines from 1940 to 1956 in Ceylon, Crete, India, the Middle East and the UK. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Thomas Revill, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Royal Army Medical Corps**

Thomas Revill of Sheffield died on 26th September 2012, aged 78. He Served with the RAOC from 1952 to 1954. After discharge as a Private he served a further two years in the RAMC (TA). Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Douglas 'Doug' Robertson, Royal Army Medical Corps**

Douglas 'Doug' Robertson of Ipswich died on 29th August 2012, aged 92. He joined the RAMC in 1939. Having trained in medical hygiene he was posted to Nigeria on malaria control in 1941, followed by a year in the Orkneys and Shetlands. He landed in Belgium a few months after D-Day and moved through Holland and Germany, eventually being discharged as a Sergeant in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Francis 'Frank' Smith, King's Regiment (Liverpool), Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers**

Francis 'Frank' Smith of Merseyside died on 23rd August 2012, aged 93. He enlisted in the King's Regiment in 1939 and transferred to the RAOC in 1941, then the REME after its formation as a driver mechanic. He was posted to North Africa and took part in the invasion of Italy, landing at Salerno. He was discharged in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Clifford Spencer, General Service Corps, Royal Army Service Corps**

Clifford Spencer of Burnley, Lancashire died on 1st August 2012, aged 86. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1944 and served in England and Scotland. He was discharged in 1946 as a War Substantive Corporal. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Winifred 'Winnie' Timmins, Women's Auxiliary Air Force**

Winifred 'Winnie' Timmins of Derby died on 31st August 2012, aged 92. She joined the WAAF in 1942 and cooked for the 93Gp Bomber Command Sergeants' Mess for four years. She was discharged as a Leading Aircraftwoman in 1946. After the war Winnie took over Timmins bakery and was much in demand for her wedding cakes. She ran Timmins until her eyesight failed in 1993. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

**Dennis 'Den' Underwood, Royal Navy**

Dennis 'Den' Underwood of Spalding, Lincs died on 25th September 2012, aged 87. He joined the Royal Navy 1942. After training he joined Coastal Forces and was drafted to Fort William, Portland and towards the end of the war he went to the Far East. He was discharged as a Temporary Leading Seaman in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Colin Ward, Royal Air Force**

Colin Ward of South Humberside died on 25th August 2012, aged 82. Called up in 1948, he joined the RAF. After training he was posted to Lüneberg, Germany where he served as a specialist ground to air signaller until he was discharged as a Gunner in 1950. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Peter Waring, Royal Air Force**

Peter Waring of St Helens, Merseyside died on 30th August 2012, aged 72. He joined the RAF in 1959. He served at Kirton in Lindsey and with Bomber Command at RAF Finningley. He was posted to Cyprus and then to Oman, serving at RAF Masirah. He was later with 16 MU Stafford before discharge as a Corporal in 1971. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**Desmond Whitley, Royal Engineers**

Desmond Whitley of Chesterton, Cambridge died on 21st August 2012, aged 85. His first job was as an apprentice to a scientific instrument maker. He learnt to make bomb sights and drift recorders for aircraft. He Served with the Royal Engineers from 1945 to 1959 as a Sapper. He worked with the 20 Bomb Disposal Unit throughout the south of England. He was then posted to Palestine and later to Egypt. He finally moved to Kenya and built a pipeline. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**George Wikeley, Royal Army Medical Corps**

George Wikeley of Middlesbrough died on 25th August, aged 91. He enlisted with the RAMC in 1939 and after training deployed to France with the BEF. He was evacuated from Dunkirk and then deployed to the Middle East where he served in Sudan, Ethiopia, Syria, Palestine and then South Africa. He was discharged in 1945 as a Private. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

**John Williams, Welch Regiment**

John Williams of Swansea, West Glamorgan died on 16th August 2012, aged 96. He joined the Welch Regiment in 1940. He served in the UK working at the Swanage Battle School. He was then posted to the Orkneys and then Northern Ireland before discharge in 1946 as a Warrant Officer 1st Class. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.





**Picture:** Simon Brown, Membership Officer, hangs out with Paralympians, including swimmer Andrew Mullens at the Paralympics closing ceremony.



**Picture:** Lucy Priest, Ketaki Vaidya, Graham Helm, Ken Maidens and Christopher Tattersall on the Abbey Road zebra crossing. **Photo:** PA.