

May 2013

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915





Picture: Rifleman Paul Jacobs GM and Lance Bdr Ben Parkinson MBE, feature on pages 10 and 11, as they have followed in the footsteps of the Heroes of Telemark to mark the 70th anniversary of the mission. They are shown at the memorial for those who died.

On the cover: Reg Goding, who was blinded in Montecassino during World War II, receives The Ted Higgs Trophy from the Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex Mr Peter Field.



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Review

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Blind Veterans UK Calendar

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

May

History Week 6th - 11th **L**
 Watersports for heroes 15th **B**
 Frogmore Gardens, Windsor 16th
 Writers' Forum 18th **B**
 Golfing 18th - 19th **B**
 Archery Club (II) 24th - 3rd June **B**

June

Gardening Week 9th - 15th **B**
 Canoe River Trip and Wild Camping
 2nd - 8th **L**
 Sports Week - 10th - 14th **B**
 Writers' Forum 15th **B**

June continued

Advanced Fishing Week 16th - 22nd **L**
 Gardening Week 17th - 21st **S**
 Cricket at Lord's 18th **B**
 Church Stretton 50 year badge holders reunion 26th - 29th

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

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From the Chairman.

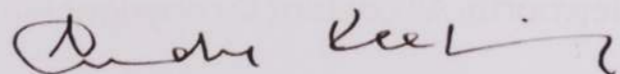
Your message from Major General Andrew Keeling, CB, CBE, RM.

This year we held Founder's Day in the St Dunstan's Chapel at the Brighton centre – a most appropriate place for it – and as always it was a very inspiring experience for me. It is covered in detail in this edition but I would just like to add my heartfelt congratulations to all those who received awards, and huge thanks for what they have done for this charity. They are all very special people and it was a privilege to be there with them.

As I write this (several weeks before you read it) all the news is about the death of Lady Thatcher. She was, indeed, an extraordinary person – a real one-off. All our lives were changed by her, one way or another, and she has already gone down in history as a remarkable Prime Minister. Some say remarkably good, and almost as many say remarkably bad, but whatever your views of her politics and of the way she went about her business, you have to admire her absolute determination to let no obstacle or inconvenience stand in her way. Like Lady Thatcher, one of my old bosses (for whom I still have considerable respect), when confronted with a complicated or difficult or unwelcome decision used to say 'Just do what you know is right', and I have always found that to be sound advice. It's not always easy to decide what is right, and what isn't right, but once that decision is made the way is clear for action. If others don't like it, too bad.

Next month we will hold the third annual 100km London to Brighton Blind Veterans UK fundraising walk. In both 2011 and 2012 these were very well supported events and raised a considerable amount of money for us. I understand that this year someone who is well known to the charity, but who as yet wishes to remain anonymous, intends to enter the event, and also intends to raise as much money as he (or she) can for us. I also understand that through the medium of the June Review he (or she) will be encouraging us all to support him (or her). So please watch out for an announcement next month.

Spring is still eluding us. It must be coming soon – mustn't it?



Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

Amanda Scales, Blind Veterans UK Welfare Officer to cycle 100km.

On Saturday 8th June Amanda Scales, a Welfare Officer with Blind Veterans UK, will cycle 100km around London at night to raise money for the charity, as she takes part in the Nightrider. Setting off from Alexandra Palace she will cycle with 3,000 cyclists through the streets of London.

Amanda Scales says: "It all seemed like a good idea when I made my New Year's resolution! I was inspired last year during the Olympics when I went to watch the men's road race in Dorking, Surrey and then I watched the Tour of Britain in Dartmouth as the elite cyclists went through Devon. This was initially a way to get fitter and I do feel healthier. For training in January I started cycling each morning and also training on a rowing machine each day and I now cycle for around 40 miles at a time at the weekend. I've also upgraded my mountain bike to a hybrid. It's definitely the biggest challenge I've ever undertaken. Add to that the fact we're cycling through the night - and I'm really not good at night! I have the Exeter reunion the following Wednesday so let's hope I'm not walking like John Wayne!"

If you would like to sponsor Amanda you can do so at:

www.virginmoneygiving.com/AmandaScales

Changes to DLA and other benefits in 2013/2014 - Information from DWP and Disability Rights UK websites.

From 8th April 2013 working age Disability Living Allowance (DLA) will be replaced by a new Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in pilot areas in Merseyside, North West England, Cumbria, Cheshire and North East England.

Existing Disability Living Allowance claimants who are aged 16 to 64 on 8th April 2013 will be affected by the introduction of PIP, even if they have an indefinite or lifetime award of DLA. There are currently no proposals to migrate you onto PIP if you are an adult on attendance allowance, or over 65 and claiming DLA.

The Department of Work and Pensions wrote to all existing DLA claimants in February and March 2013 with more information about PIP in their annual letters that tell them what their new benefit rate will be.

The website is at:

www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/example-dla-uprating-letter-2013.pdf

Personal Independence Payment is being introduced in stages over a number of years.

Link to Factsheet 60 Personal Independence Payment:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/f60.htm

From October 2013 – if an individual reports a change in how a health condition or disability affects them, they reach the end of an existing award of DLA (and haven't already received a DLA renewal letter) or they are approaching the age of 16, they will be invited to claim PIP.

From 2015 – they will start to contact everyone else who is in receipt of DLA (unless they report a change in how their health condition or disability affects them, or if their award is due to end). They will write to individuals in plenty of time and they do not need to contact DWP now.

There is no automatic transfer from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payment.

For frequently Asked Questions go to website: www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/disability/personal-independence-payment/pip-faqs-and-myth-buster/

From October 2013: Universal credit will start to be rolled out for new claimants in Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 2014. Eventually all new claimants will claim universal credit. If you are receiving Jobseeker's allowance, employment support allowance, housing benefit, working tax credit or child tax credit you will be moved over at a later date. See Factsheet F55 at website: <http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/universal-credit-uc>

From March 2014: Migration of existing incapacity benefits claimants (incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance and income support on disability grounds) onto employment and support allowance (ESA) should be completed by the end of March.

By gracious permission of Her Majesty The Queen, Frogmore House, Windsor Home Park, opens its gardens for Blind Veterans UK.

We have the honour to have been granted an open day at Frogmore House Garden, Windsor Home Park by our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen. The open day will take place on Thursday 16th May 2013 and tickets cost £5.50. Transport will leave from the Brighton centre, or you can make your own way to Frogmore Gardens. For more information, or to book your place, please telephone: 020 7616 7927. Or email: fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk

Application for the Arctic Star medal.

The Arctic Star is granted for operational Service of any length north of the Arctic Circle (66 degrees, 32'N) from 3rd September 1939 to 8th May 1945, inclusive. The Arctic Star is intended to commemorate the Arctic Convoys and is designed primarily for the ships of the convoys to North Russia and their escorts. If you are eligible for the Arctic Star please contact the Review to request an application form. You can telephone: 020 7616 8367 or email: revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

Pensions Supplement.

Details of the War Pension rates, which came into effect on 8th April this year, can be obtained from Inderpal Kallah, Medical Clinics and Reunions Co-Ordinator. You can telephone him at Blind Veterans UK on 020 7723 5021 or email: inderpal.kallah@blindveterans.org.uk Please state if you prefer information in print or Braille, on tape or by email.

Trooping the Colour - Ticket Draw.

The Queen's Birthday Parade will be held on Saturday 15th June 2013 on Horse Guards Parade. The Colour will be trooped by 1st Battalion Welsh Guards in the presence of Her Majesty. As Blind Veterans UK has been allocated tickets, members who wish to attend should send their name and address to Barbara Sweeney, Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by 15th May, or telephone 020 7616 7922. A draw will determine the final allocation of tickets; please note these will be limited to two per applicant. Those who are selected from the draw will be responsible for arranging and paying for their travel and accommodation.

Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP).

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has issued new guidance to local authority housing benefit departments in relation to the introduction of the Armed Forces Independence payment (AFIP).

In HB/CTB Circular A5/2013, the DWP advises that, from 8th April 2013, the Ministry of Defence is introducing AFIP and that, whilst the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency will make the decision on entitlement, the DWP will administer payment and any ongoing maintenance of the claim.

The DWP goes on to provide detailed guidance on the new benefit including that:

- Service personnel and veterans who are entitled to a guaranteed income payment of 50% or higher through the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) will be eligible for the payments.
- People who receive AFIP will not be eligible for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Attendance Allowance (AA) at the same time. Although claimants can claim and receive PIP/AA/ DLA in advance of any AFIP application or whilst they wait for the outcome of an AFCS decision - any AFIP payment due will take account of any PIP/ DLA/AA already paid for the same period with only any applicable balance paid.
- AFIP claimants will be eligible to a flat rate payment of £134.40 per week from 8th April 2013 which is equivalent to the amount payable either through DLA higher rates of both components (care and mobility) or PIP enhanced rates of both components (daily living and mobility).
- AFIP is awarded for life, is not subject to review or further medical assessments and will not be stopped when the claimant is in hospital (except The Royal Chelsea Hospital), care home or prison.
- Claimants who choose not to apply for AFIP can still apply for DLA, PIP or AA in the usual way but they would have to relinquish any DLA, PIP or AA award if they subsequently chose to claim AFIP.
- AFIP will be non taxable, non means tested and is payable anywhere in the world; and
- AFIP, like DLA and PIP, will provide access to the appropriate disability premiums payable with other DWP benefits in the UK, as well as access to other schemes such as a motability vehicle.

The War and Peace Revival invite veterans of World War Two, the Korean War and those who did National Service to attend their Revival in July 2013 in Kent by Rex Cadman, The War and Peace Revival Organiser.

We are inviting all World War II veterans, including those who Served in such support organisations as the Red Cross, the Land Army and the WRVS, to join us at our show. In addition, as 2013 is the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War and the 50th Anniversary of the end of National Service, we are extending our invitation to veterans who Served in Korea and to all those who Served as National Servicemen at any time. Your presence will help us commemorate these significant anniversaries.

The War and Peace Revival would be honoured to welcome you as our guests at our inaugural event at our new larger venue, where all veterans will be made welcome in the new 'V' Marquee close to the heart of the show.

You will have an opportunity to meet up with old comrades, enjoy a drink and exchange reminiscences. Take a trip down Memory Lane with the vehicles and equipment you once used. Meet re-enactors and living history groups who keep the memories of what you did alive. Enjoy music, fashion and entertainment from the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

All men and women who Served in either World War II, the Korean War or in National Service will be admitted FREE OF CHARGE to The War and Peace Revival which takes place from 17th to 21st July 2013 at RAF Westenhanger, Folkestone Racecourse, Stone Street, Westenhanger, near Hythe, Kent CT21 4HX. Special rates will apply for carers and families. Westenhanger mainline station is next to the showground.

If you would like to join us on any day of the show please call us on telephone: 01304 813945 or 913337 for an application form. The completed form should be sent to: Bill Fowler, The War and Peace Revival Office, The Old Rectory, 45 Sandwich Road, Ash, Kent CT3 2AF by 8th July 2013 at the latest.

The hire of mobility scooters for use at the showground can be arranged in advance from Safe Hands Mobility on 01303 274574, or by email to: folkestone@shmobility.co.uk We look forward to meeting you.

Paul Jacobs, GM, joins with the Pilgrim Bandits to follow in the footsteps of the Heroes of Telemark.

Blind Veterans UK member Paul Jacobs GM, completed a gruelling trek in Norway from 15th to 26th March. The expedition, organised by charity Pilgrim Bandits, retraced the footsteps of the Second World War Heroes of Telemark to mark the 70th anniversary of the mission. The group of 12 travelled 65 miles across the Hardangervidda, in up to 80 mile an hour winds, and temperatures of -30 degrees Celsius (-22 degrees Fahrenheit).

Wounded Service personnel who took part were Rifleman Paul Jacobs GM, who lost his sight in Afghanistan in an IED explosion, and Lance Bdr Ben Parkinson MBE, one of Britain's most seriously injured soldiers to survive the Afghanistan war. Ben made headlines in July 2012 when he carried the Olympic Torch in his home town of Doncaster, despite the loss of both legs above the knee and a catalogue of over 40 other serious injuries.

The Heroes of Telemark mission is regarded as the most successful act of sabotage during the Second World War. Against all odds, six courageous Norwegian members of the British Special Operations Executive braved temperatures of -40°C across a frozen wilderness to deal a serious blow to Nazi attempts to build an atomic bomb. The February 1943 operation cost the lives of some 30 British Commandos. Some were killed when two gliders crashed while attempting to land in Norway, and others were captured, tortured by the Gestapo and shot.

The operation that blew up the heavy water plant and saw the team escape on skis inspired the 1965 film *The Heroes of Telemark*, starring Kirk Douglas and Richard Harris.

Mike Witt, veteran and CEO of Pilgrim Bandits, explains; "Rifleman Paul Jacobs lost his sight in Afghanistan, Ben Parkinson sustained horrendous injuries too, but they are both here today, they both came home to their families. Marking the 70th anniversary of the Heroes of Telemark has been a hugely moving experience for both these young men. To retrace the steps of those brave

soldiers who took part in the dangerous series of missions to prevent Hitler creating an atomic weapon has been incredible for all of us. Conditions were very tough, but everyone there was determined to pay a personal tribute."

The expedition was made up of veterans and injured Servicemen, along with fee paying members of the public. The hard-core nature of the event is designed to push injured Service men and women, encouraging them to use their training and experience from their time in the Forces. Pilgrim Bandits is a 'no sympathy' charity that organises challenges and then shares those experiences with children and young people.

If you think you would like to join a Pilgrim Bandits adventure please get in touch with them at: www.pilgrimbandits.org



Picture: Rifleman Paul Jacobs GM (kneeling front) with Lance Bdr Ben Parkinson MBE front in blue jacket. Mike Witt of the Pilgrim Bandits far left and members of the expedition team.

The Brighton centre beats 1500 events with The Physical Line to win a Drawing Inspiration Award from the Campaign for Drawing, for an outstanding Big Draw event.

You may recall that in October 2012 the corridor at the Brighton centre was dedicated to The Big Draw, with woolly line drawings running the length of the corridor and acetate cut-outs placed along the swimming pool window to create a wonderful gallery. The drawings so impressed the judges of The Big Draw that The Physical Line was chosen as the Runner Up Award from over 1500 events that took place throughout the UK and other parts of the world. Kathryn Jones-Romaine, Art & Craft Instructor and Esther Freeman, Art & Craft Manager at the Brighton centre collected the Award on behalf of all Blind Veterans UK members in a glitzy ceremony.

The Big Draw is an annual drawing bonanza, involving an estimated 200,000 people in inclusive creative activities. This year it will take place from 1st - 31st October 2013.



Picture: Kathryn Jones-Romaine and Esther Freeman receive the certificate from the Campaign for Drawing. **Photo courtesy of:** Cristina Coculla.

Join with us in our No One Alone campaign to find the 68,000 veterans in the UK who are eligible to join us.

This month marks 50 years since the end of National Service, which ran in Britain from the Second World War to 1963. In that time 2.5 million young men were called up. Many of our members at Blind Veterans UK Served their country for National Service and we estimate there are more than 68,000 veterans in the UK, many National Service veterans, who are eligible to join us.

We have launched a campaign entitled No One Alone, to find those 68,000 veterans so that like you, they too may benefit from the services of Blind Veterans UK and the support and friendship of their fellow members. If you know any men and women who have Served in the Armed Forces, or for National Service, and have sight loss please tell them about us. Or if you would like to help us by displaying a poster in your community to raise awareness of Blind Veterans UK and the No One Alone campaign, please do contact us on 0800 389 7979.

**Do you know a
National Service
veteran battling
sight loss?**

We can help you.

Visit noonealone.org.uk
or call **0800 389 7979** for
support through sight loss.



The naming of St Dunstan's Chapel.

Members and staff of Blind Veterans UK are proud of the long heritage of the charity they belong to and, that after almost 100 years, it still helps those who have Served their country and lost their sight. As we march towards the next 100 years as Blind Veterans UK, to remember our past on 26th March 2013, the Chapel at the Brighton centre was named St Dunstan's Chapel, in a ceremony ahead of this year's Founder's Day Awards.

Father Martin Morgan of the Parish Church of St Margaret's in Rottingdean, who has a long association with the charity, performed a simple but moving ceremony before the plaque, commemorating the date the Chapel was named, was unveiled by The Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mr Peter Field.

The Lord-Lieutenant spoke of his fond memories of Blind Veterans UK and the honour it afforded him to unveil the plaque. He said that attending the naming of the Chapel and Founder's Day, where he met members and staff of Blind Veterans UK, was what made his role of Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex so special, as he carried out his work on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen.

Following the unveiling of the plaque the Chairman made one of his rousing speeches when he told those present of the history of the Chapel. He explained that it is based on the three Services, with St Dunstan's as the fourth Service. He spoke of the significance of the Chapel's stained glass windows. And as one would expect of a Royal Marine, the Chairman started with an introduction to the stained glass window for the Royal Navy — in order of seniority of Services!

On the recommendation of the Prime Minister, Peter Field was appointed by The Queen as Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for East Sussex on 19th August 2008, having served as Her Majesty's Vice Lord-Lieutenant from 2000.

A Chartered Surveyor by profession, he has always used his skills to support and help the single homeless, notably he helped in the introduction of the Foyer Federation to the UK and in the development of several major Sussex Housing Associations, including Brighton Housing Trust and Southdown Housing Association. A Magistrate for more than 20 years before becoming Lord-Lieutenant, he also chaired the highly successful Brighton and Hove Business Community Partnership since its inception in 1994, and for many years served on the South East Leadership Team for the Prince of Wales' charity Business in

the Community (BITC) being appointed the Prince of Wales' Ambassador for the South East in 2003. For more than 10 years from the 1990s he chaired the City of Brighton and Hove's Regeneration Partnership, successfully using close on £50m of Government money to lever in a further £100m, which contributed to many of the changes to the fabric and culture of the City that are visible today.

Notwithstanding his considerable duties representing HM The Queen, he takes seriously the Monarch's request that he provides encouragement and support for all sectors of the community. This includes supporting and encouraging military organisations, the business sector, statutory undertakings, and charitable and voluntary groups (he is Patron or President of some 40 local organisations). He sits on the board of several commercial companies in the County and is currently also interested in developing and supporting social enterprise, youth employment and environmental initiatives in particular.



Picture: The Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mr Peter Field and the Chairman, Major General Andrew Keeling CB, CBE, RM, stand either side of the unveiled plaque for St Dunstan's Chapel.

'This chapel is the heart of this lovely new place' the St Dunstan's Chapel, by Rob Baker, Information and Archives Officer.

The Bishop of Chichester, the Right Reverend George Bell, described what is now the St Dunstan's Chapel at our Brighton centre as 'the heart of this lovely new place' at its dedication on 25th October 1938, soon after the centre itself had opened. However although the centre and its chapel were indeed new, Blind Veterans UK of course was not, and the religious needs of members had been taken account of ever since our early days when we were based in Regent's Park.

The first chapels of our own, one Church of England and one Roman Catholic, were consecrated in 1917. The Anglican Chapel was also used by members of other denominations. Much of the woodwork in the chapels was made by the men, in the carpentry workshop. It was also in 1917 that we acquired our West House centre in Kemp Town, Brighton. In 1924 a chapel was opened there, with the altar and furniture being transferred from Regent's Park.

Our first honorary Chaplain, at Regent's Park, was the Reverend Ernest Sharpe, who was Rector of nearby Holy Trinity Church, Marylebone. He conducted services for us on Sundays, and also selected a collection of well-known hymns which was collected together and printed in Braille as the 'St Dunstan's Hymn Book'. Holy Trinity Church has itself played a very significant part in our history; many of our members have married there, the funeral of our founder Sir Arthur Pearson was held there, and today it is the venue for our annual carol service.

Our honorary chaplains have generally been drawn from nearby parishes; the vicar, with the aid of his curate, would conduct services and care for the spiritual needs of the members. Roman Catholic priests who were based close to the centre would also attend as and when required. However, we have also had a number of members who were themselves ordained, and several of those also became honorary chaplains. They would preach once a year in the chapel, in addition to undertaking occasional additional duties elsewhere.

One such member who regularly took services at the St Dunstan's Chapel was the Reverend Harold Gibb. He had Served in the Boer War, and then following

his ordination in 1910 Served in France in the First World War as an Army Chaplain, acting against the wishes of the Archbishop of Canterbury in enlisting. He was severely wounded and blinded, and came to us in September 1917. He took some services at the chapel at Regent's Park. In 1921 he became Vicar of Sherbourne, Warwick, a position he held for 15 years. It is also through Gibb that we have in the chapel a piece of sixteenth century glass from the original Cloth Hall at Ypres, which was ruined by artillery fire in the First World War. The glass was recovered by Captain Percy Palmer of the Welsh Guards, and was later presented by his widow to Gibb; with her agreement, he gave it to us.

The chapel at the Brighton centre, like the rest of the building, was designed by architect Francis Lorne. Originally from Scotland, Lorne spent much of his early career in the United States. He moved to Canada during the First World War, and Served with the Canadian Engineers. After returning to the UK he became a partner in the Burnet, Tait and Lorne practice in the early 1930s. An outgoing personality, he was apparently renowned for receiving clients wearing a silk shirt without a jacket, which was unheard of at the time! Lorne was present when the chapel was dedicated.

The sculpture above the chapel is by Julian Phelps Allan. Originally Eva Dorothy Allan, she changed her name in 1929. Allan had served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps during the First World War, and went on to do so in the Auxiliary Territorial Service during World War II. In 1938 she wrote: "I am now working on what will be a 20ft figure for the new St Dunstan's Convalescent Home which is being built outside Brighton. This is a "Winged Victory" holding the insignia of St Dunstan's. It is rather an adventure, especially as no one knows whether the floor of my studio will hold it!" Allan herself lost her sight later in life.

The St Dunstan's Chapel has been used primarily for wedding services, blessings and funerals but other events have also been held there. On 9th December 1961, the 40th anniversary of the death of Sir Arthur Pearson, the memorial service in the chapel was broadcast on national BBC Home Service radio.

The first wedding to take place in the chapel was on 10th February 1951, between John Simpson and Esther Ellison. John, who died in 1982, was one of Blind Veterans UK's most active members, especially in sporting events. His achievements included competing in the International Games for the

Blind in Austria in 1973. John also provides a connection to us today through his daughter Paula, who has recently been supporting Blind Veterans UK by undertaking 50 challenges for her 50th birthday to raise funds for our work.



Picture: Dedication of the Chapel at the Brighton centre, 25th October 1938.



Picture: Lord Fraser and the Rev Harold Gibb, far right, by the stained glass window from the Cloth Hall in Ypres.

Blind Veterans UK Founder's Day Awards 2013.

'I will not be a blind man; I will be the blind man.' Spoken by Sir Arthur Pearson, his words are regularly quoted by our members, as they take inspiration and strength from his words and actions. While none of us at Blind Veterans UK today knew our founder, we each feel we have a connection with this extraordinary man of vision. It is this connection that pushes members, staff and volunteers to ensure they are the best they can be.

Each year on 26th March we celebrate Sir Arthur through The Founder's Day Awards, which go to members and volunteers who have achieved something outstanding. The date is significant, as it was the date in 1915 when the first 16 war blinded Servicemen entered the Blind Veterans UK training centre in London's Regent's Park. This year's Founder's Day Awards ceremony took place in the Chapel at the Brighton centre. The Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mr Peter Field, and Mrs Margaret Field were the guests of honour. Barry Porter, Director of Welfare Services, was an outstanding MC, introducing each award winner with a speech that outlined their journey and their achievement.



Picture: Barry Porter, Director of Welfare Services, who was the Master of Ceremonies at this year's Founder's Day Awards.

The Founder's Day Awards were presented by Mr Peter Field, the Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex. As each member proudly accepted their award it was apparent that the spirit of Sir Arthur Pearson pulsed through their veins.

Community Award – Tom Bryden, Tyne & Wear.

For years Tom has dedicated his time selflessly for the benefit of others with sight loss through his tireless and dogged determination and championing to make others aware of the needs of those with sight loss, as well as other disabilities. He has done this as an NHS Governor for a second term – the only vision impaired Governor on the Board of Directors — and his input has been instrumental in leading to improvements in local hospitals in the patient care pathway, for those with sight loss. Tom is a shining example of a Blind Veterans UK member who lives and breathes our values in enabling others with VI needs in his local community to achieve independence.

This unpaid work requires him to work in a collaborative way with local forums, local authorities, councillors, chief officers, fire and ambulance services, highways and transport staff to name but a few. He is committed as he has been engaged in these activities for years. He has had to be courageous and stick his neck out and show great determination in challenging some myths, misconceptions and ignorance about what it is like to have sight loss.



Picture: Tom Bryden with the Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mr Peter Field. Tom completed his National Service from 1946 to 1948 in the Royal Tank Regiment in the Middle East, Italy and Palestine.

Training Achievement Award – Paul Egan, The Wirral.

Before losing his sight Paul had an active and varied career working for the NHS and then in the oil and gas industry as a trainer. After losing his sight Paul believed that he would not be able to do the things he had done in the past. He gave away his computer and stopped cooking for himself. In June 2012 Paul attended an introduction week at the Llandudno centre. He was immediately booked in for an independent living skills course and started on the touch typing course. In November 2012 Paul came back for touch typing training. When he returned, Paul was a different person. Not only had he continued to cook for himself, he arranged and cooked a dinner party for six friends. In addition Paul had contacted a local day centre and arranged support to learn how to touch type. When Paul came back for IT training he was extremely enthusiastic about learning to use SuperNova. This enthusiasm was spurred on by the fact that Paul had gone out and signed up for a course at John Moores University in Liverpool. During the intervening months Paul had visited John Moores on a number of occasions and spoken to the support service about arranging assistance with his course. In 2013 Paul plans to start the course in Psychometrics, with the hope of returning to the world of work.



Picture: The Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mr Peter Field, presents the Training Achievement Award to Paul Egan, who Served in the Royal Navy.

Sports Person of the Year – Gerry Jones, Cornwall.

Gerry came to Blind Veterans UK in 1973. He is a war blinded member and former helicopter pilot, who has never let his sight loss stand in the way of living life to the full. From 4th to 7th May 2012, Gerry rowed in the 23rd World Pilot Gig Championships on the Isles of Scilly. He also organised the ski trip for members to Italy for many years, but felt the time was right to hand this over, to give others the opportunity, which he did in 2012 to Carl Williams, Mark Brewin and Jamie Weller, three younger members of Blind Veterans UK. It takes a lot of time to organise the week, but Gerry ensured everything was perfect. He gave up his own time for many years to make sure the annual trip took place. It is very clear that without Gerry's enthusiasm, commitment and organisational skills the trips wouldn't have happened. It is clear from the reviews written by participants how they benefitted from the skiing, the friendships formed, an increase in confidence through the sense of achievement and there has been a lot of laughter along the way. Gerry was very positive about handing over the organisation to others. He has enjoyed relaxing on the ski trips without any of the headaches and anxiety as the organiser!



Picture: Gerry Jones, who Served with the Royal Corps of Transport, receives his Founder's Day Award from the Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex.

Creative Art Award – Ron Gerrard, Birmingham.

Before losing his sight Ron very much enjoyed working with wood. Ron was invited for training at the Brighton centre to see if he could continue with this hobby and passion. Ron started with woodturning training; having worked on a lathe for many years he was very proficient and got great pleasure from creating a wide range of items. He then learnt the skill of woodturning and decided that he would like to try wood carving techniques, or other woodworking projects/ skills that he could continue at home independently. He returned to Brighton to investigate.

He was introduced to wood carving. Never having done this before, he liked this technique and media and immediately felt comfortable when working. He works hard, dedicating himself to whatever task he takes on. During the week he practiced a series of techniques, trying different approaches to achieve examples of relief and incised carvings with great success.



Picture: Ron Gerrard receives his Founder's Day Award. Ron Served in the RAF in the UK and Singapore.

Volunteer of the Year Award – Callum Rolf, East Sussex.

Callum has been a volunteer at the Brighton centre since he was just 16 years old and he has been with us for over a year now. Callum comes in each week and helps out with the evening activities and socialises with the residents. Callum never moans about anything he is asked to do and he is gaining experience - rumour has it he is now interested in working in care. For someone who is just 17 years old he is a very motivated and committed volunteer. Callum came in on Christmas Day and gave one of our residents a present. When the resident sadly passed away he attended his funeral.



Picture: Callum Rolf receives his Volunteer of the Year Founder's Day Award from the Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mr Peter Field.

Volunteer of the Year Award – Dave Burrows, Hampshire.

With so many great volunteers it was impossible to choose just one winner. Dave Burrows was chosen for his work with the running of the annual HMS Sultan Summer Camp. In 2003 Miss Elspeth Grant retired from running the annual HMS Sultan Summer camp for members of Blind Veterans UK. The camp may have ceased to function had it not been for Dave. At this time Dave was a 'dog' with only the experience of being a 'dog'. He was a Serving Warrant Officer in the Fleet Air Arm. Dave took over the help of running the camp, with a committee of 'dogs' and Blind Veterans UK members. Under his dedicated guidance, the camp has gone from strength to strength. This is a fantastic achievement considering that Dave has a full-time job as an instructor with the MoD. Dave will be the first to admit that he has had the support of the team of 'dogs'. It is, however, his strong personal leadership that has kept the team together. His purely voluntary actions have changed the lives of every person, both blind and sighted, who have attended the camp. Dave uses all his powers of persuasion to make the camp a success, he puts in a full week at camp and is the ultimate as an organisational secretary and asks for nothing in return, other than the camp be an annual success.



Picture: A beaming Dave Burrows with his Volunteer of the Year Award.

Special Achievement Award – Valerie Tomalin, London and David Castleton, Surrey.

David Castleton worked for Blind Veterans UK for 35 years. To him it wasn't a job, or a career, it was a way of life. The members became his friends and an extension of his family. He cared about them and about the charity. After his retirement he started to read the Review for Ray Hazan, a young Army Officer he employed in the 1970s. David continues to read the Review each month, bringing something extra to it as he adds stories from his time at Blind Veterans UK at the end of articles. Although, being a very modest man, he sometimes has to be pushed to do this by his co-reader Valerie and the Review!

Valerie Tomalin has read the Review for the last eight years and like David she is super professional. Valerie receives her script at least three days before recording and she spends that time rehearsing to ensure she is word perfect on the day. Valerie has always been keen to meet our members as she wants to engage with Blind Veterans UK. Each month members look forward to listening to David and Valerie reading the Talking Review.



Picture: David Castleton and Valerie Tomalin, who each month read the Talking Review, are pictured with the Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex.

Outstanding Achievement - Maria Pikulski, Preston.

Maria Pikulski has been a member of Blind Veterans UK since January 2004. She is a woman who possesses great strength and determination and continues to persevere in the face of adversity. Nothing ever seems to stand in her way. She has adjusted remarkably to her sight loss and has become an outstanding Ambassador for Blind Veterans UK. Maria's sight loss resulted in an end to her professional career as a qualified nurse and instead she has forged a new career as an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO), working at St Helen's Hospital. There she regularly advocates the role of Blind Veterans UK with VI patients and has recruited a significant number to the charity at a time when membership recruitment has become a high priority. A Daredevil, Maria takes part in sporting activities, and in 2012 did a wing walk hundreds of feet above Yorkshire, to raise awareness of Blind Veterans UK.



Picture: Maria Pikulski receives her award from the Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mr Peter Field.

The Ted Higgs Trophy – Reg Goding, Brighton.

The Ted Higgs Trophy is presented to a war blinded member of Blind Veterans UK, in memory of the late Ted Higgs, who died on 4th April 2011. It was initiated by his children in 2012 in memory of their father. This year it was awarded to Reg Goding, a former Lance Corporal in the Royal Fusiliers, who was blinded at Montecassino during World War II. Reg has been a member of Blind Veterans UK since 1944 and he and his wife Eileen have a long history with the charity.

Reg was recognised for his work in the Art & Craft Workshop at the Brighton centre, where he has attended on and off for many years. Reg has settled on the skill of mosaics. He works on ever increasingly intricate, difficult mosaics, working without any sight; he achieves the most remarkable finish, some of which would test the patience of any man! He regularly gives the works that he has completed as gifts to family or friends, and has contributed to a number of exhibitions and events that Blind Veterans UK has taken part in. At 96, Reg is quite remarkable. He comes to the workshop four mornings a week, working solidly on one piece until he has completed it. His sense of humour and character is always an asset to the Workshop.



Picture: The children of the late Ted and Winifred Higgs with Reg Goding and the award they established in memory of their late father.

Cadets from Sutton Valence Combined Cadet Force tour the Brighton centre.

Cadets from Sutton Valence School Combined Cadet Forces, Kent, with their Lt Col Anne Wilkinson, visited our Brighton centre on 25th March, when they were presented with their trophies as Runners Up in the 2012 Cadet & Youth Challenge Competition. The Cadets completed a sponsored 466 mile bike ride from Margate to Lands End in July 2012.

Colin Williamson, Cadet Youth Officer, said: "The Cadets were also presented with the Top Fundraisers Trophy as they raised a fantastic £11,000 for Blind Veterans UK through their Cadet Challenge. Cadet Lewis Burnham received the Top Individual Fundraiser Trophy as he raised over £1,050. Following the presentation of trophies the Cadets toured the building and were really impressed with our facilities and the way we support our veterans."



Picture: Cadet Lewis Burnham accepts the Top Fundraiser Trophy from Colin Williamson, Cadet Challenge Officer. **Photo:** Natasha Cartwright.

Blind Veterans UK Amateur Radio Society, 1st to 10th March at the Llandudno centre, by Ray Hazan OBE.

This was the first meeting of the Society at the Llandudno centre. We were met with the usual cheery and helpful welcome from all the staff we met. Dick Hardy had organised a lounge to be used as a 'radio shack' and together with his son Peter and a local amateur radio enthusiast, Tony Carr, had seen to erecting an aerial.

The AGM was held on the Saturday during which several amendments were made to the Articles of Association, dealing with vote entitlements, subscriptions and quorums. We held a silence for members who had gone 'silent key'. We heard reports on the Society's past year and discussion on updating equipment. A Kenwood TS590S has been purchased for the Society. This has been described as one of the most accessible rigs for visually handicapped amateurs as it has synthetic speech support. John Bell was standing down from the committee. He was thanked for his contribution to the Society. Harry Docherty was elected in his place. It was decided that the next AGM would be held at the Brighton centre in August 2014, and that meetings would alternate between the Brighton and Llandudno centres.

Understandably, a new location poses unexpected problems. In this case, the effect of electrical items within the building, causing a noisy reception, but these were largely overcome by our technical experts! We had pleasure in entertaining some members of the North Wales Radio Society. They were very interested in offering help and advice - the fraternity of radio hams! They will be erecting a permanent aerial for our future meetings. We enjoyed one of the largest number of operators in attendance for a long time: John Bell, Dick Hardy, Ray Peart, Harry Docherty, Steve Claxton and Ray Hazan, with help with log keeping by Edna McGoff and Julia Hardy.

In total 269 contacts were made from the US to Europe. We explained, especially to the UK callsigns, the explanation behind our 'special event' callsign, GB0BVL (Blind Veterans Llandudno), our name change and what we do - all good publicity for the organisation. Well done and thank you to all the operators and thank you to our wives for their support.

The next meeting of the Society will take place at the Brighton centre from Friday 2nd to Saturday 10th August.



Picture: QSL Manager Edna McGoff and Ray Hazan OBE on air.



Picture: QSL Manager Edna McGoff and Harry Docherty on air.

Bowling Club report by Alan Gibson, Chairman.

It was with great sadness that we met for our March Tournament with the loss of our Vice Chairman, Colwyn Lloyd, together with Marjorie Scott and Roy Scadden. We were also without Jim Willingham and Jim Booth, known as 'Jimbo,' our 101 years old bowler, as both were feeling poorly. However we were pleased to welcome four new bowlers: Charles Clements from Cornwall, Robert (known as McGrab) Harvey, Tony Heathcote and Bob Kinch.

A new committee was formed. Alan Gibson was made Chairman and Ron Jones, Vice Chairman. They had both served on the committee for many years, together with Robbie Roberts and Graham Johnson and our President Joan Osborne.

Our 24 bowlers had some good games as somebody jokingly said — with a variety of techniques — but they were all enjoyed by everyone. The winners were as follows:

Singles winner - Graham Johnson.

Runner up - Alan Gibson.

Pairs winners - Graham Johnson with Jim Glendenning.

Runners up - Pete Rolfe and John Russell.

Triples winners - Pete Bradshaw, Robert Harvey and Charles Glendenning.

Runners up - Brian Taylor, Ken Stinchcombe and Norman Mills.

I would like to thank all the ladies who worked very hard, particularly with calling the games: Daphne Brownhill, Iris Rolfe and Joan Osborne, together with Roger McMullan who helped in the mornings. Cathy Sullivan helped the men on the green and Shirley Russell did a great job supplying us with refreshments. Joan says a big thank you to Anne Bradshaw who did sterling work in 'the office'. In conclusion we must thank the staff for their help and PBK for a meal, which was enjoyed by all.

We look forward to meeting you all again for the October tournament.

Family News.

Births:

John and Beryl Whitcombe on the birth of their first great-grandson, Rory John Whitcombe, who was born on 4th March 2013 to their grandson Mark Whitcombe and his wife Jane.

Birthdays:

Sidney Woods who celebrated his 100th birthday on 27th April.

James Edwards who celebrated his 100th birthday on 13th April.

Anniversaries:

Platinum (70th):

Eric & Grace Beck of Clacton on Sea, Essex on 10th April.

Charles & Gladys Pay of Maidstone, Kent on 17th April.

Bo & Edna Boakes of Worthing, West Sussex on 24th April.

Silas & Agnes Morum of Cobham, Surrey on 28th April.

Blue Sapphire (65th):

Wally & Doreen Smith of Gillingham, Dorset on 1st April.

Frank & Ida Doran of Wigan, Lancashire on 10th April.

Diamond (60th):

Doreen & George Timmins of South Wirral, Cheshire on 4th April.

Charles & Greta Leckie of Eastbourne, East Sussex on 4th April.

Robert & Teresa Scott of Gateshead, Tyne and Wear on 6th April.

Noel & Ingeborg Fitzgerald of Sutton on Hull, East Yorkshire on 16th April.

Ruby (40th):

Timothy & Maureen Alwen of Dartford, Kent on 7th April.

Albert & Maureen Southerden of Halifax on 14th April.

Pearl (30th):

Christopher & Joyce Ottewell of Llandrindod Wells, Powys on 7th April.

Michael & Jeanette Woodcock of Valencia, Spain on 26th April.

Silver (25th):

Bert & Sheila Goodwin of Monmouth, Gwent on 30th April.

We regret to announce the death of:

Christine Adams who died on 10th December 2012. She was the wife of John Adams.

Sheila Boyce who died on 14th March 2013. She was the widow of the late Edward Boyce.

Monica Burt who died on 20th March 2013. She was the widow of the late Carl Burt.

Betty Clegg who died on 30th March 2013. She was the daughter of the late William Carlton who was blinded in 1918.

Joan Davies who died on 11th April 2013. She was the wife of William Davies.

Alan Dean who died on 27th November 2012. He was an overseas affiliate from Australia.

Mavis Golding who died on 9th April 2013. She was the widow of the late Kenneth Golding.

Annette Paxford who died on 28th March 2013. She was the wife of Gordon Paxford.

Mildred Pointer who died on 31st January 2013. She was the wife of George Pointer.

Jean Smith of Morley, Leeds who died on 27th March 2013. She was the wife of Geoffrey Smith.

Renee Smith who died on 8th March 2013. She was the wife of Frank Smith.

Betty Thornton who died on 28th January 2013. She was the widow of the late Ivan Thornton.

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

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

Winifred Adlam of Ynystawe, Swansea Served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1946.

Peter Ashton of Windsor, Berkshire Served in the Royal Berkshire Regiment and the Royal Engineers from 1957 to 1962.

James Bannister of Glasgow Served in the Royal Signals from 1951 to 1957.

Harold 'John' Beardmore of Weston, Crewe Served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1957.

Maurice Bennett of Wednesfield, Wolverhampton Served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1958.

Barry Birbeck of Crook, Co. Durham Served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1957.

Thomas 'Tom' Buckley of Sunderland Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Sidney 'Jim' Butler of Wrexham, Clwyd Served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1948.

John Bull of Reading, Berkshire Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1952 to 1956.

Kathleen Carroll of Wimborne, Dorset Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1946.

Joseph Chippendale of Darwen, Lancashire Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Lindley Clowes of Eastbourne, East Sussex Served in the Royal Navy from 1932 to 1955.

Patrick Coadey of Oswestry, Shropshire Served in the Somerset Light Infantry and the King's Shropshire Light Infantry from 1950 to 1956.

Emily Cousins of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire Served in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service from 1940 to 1946.

Andrew Dalgarno of Mastrick, Aberdeen Served in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders from 1942 to 1947.

William Davidson of Edinburgh Served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

David Davies of Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd Served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1947 to 1949.

Colin Dennis of Doncaster, South Yorkshire Served in the Royal Army Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1950 to 1955.

Luke Devlin of Dundee Served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1945.

Terence Dibbs of Southwark, London Served in the Shropshire Light Infantry from 1951 to 1953.

Donald Donaldson of Boston, Lincolnshire Served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1948 to 1950.

Albert 'Rowland' Edwards of Stafford Served in the Royal Tank Regiment from 1942 to 1946.

James Flynn of Port Talbot, West Glamorgan Served in the Royal Ordnance Corps from 1948 to 1950.

William Forshaw of Morecambe, Lancashire Served in the Royal Artillery, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1940 to 1946.

Sheila Francis of Yeovil, Somerset Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1944 to 1947.

Thomas Gilmour of Glasgow Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1952.

Robert Goddard of Redcar, Cleveland Served in the Green Howards from 1954 to 1958.

Eric Guy of Wilmslow, Cheshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.

George Green of Southport, Merseyside Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

William Hall of Leeds Served in the West Yorkshire Regiment, Corps of Royal Military Police and the Royal Military Police from 1951 to 1955.

Rupert Harland of Prescot, Lancashire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

Edna Harris of Wantage, Oxfordshire Served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1944.

Jean Howie of Lymington, Hampshire Served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1943 to 1946.

Kenneth Hughes of Wrexham, Clwyd Served in the Royal Air Force from 1957 to 1966.

George Hutchinson of Goole, North Humberside Served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

Peter Kendall of St Peter Port, Guernsey Served in the Sherwood Foresters (Nottingham and Derbyshire Regiment) from 1956 to 1965.

Reginald King of Addlestone, Surrey Served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1956 to 1958.

Jessica Kiss of Brighton, East Sussex Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1945.

John Leigh of Manchester Served in the Royal Artillery and the South Staffordshire Regiment from 1942 to 1946.

Lawrence Lewis of Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1947.

Shaun Liddle of Sunderland, Tyne & Wear Served in the Royal Navy from 1987 to 1996.

David Magenis of Liverpool Served in the Lancashire Fusiliers from 1958 to 1959.

Robert Makin of Accrington, Lancashire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Nancy Martin of Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire Served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

William Mawby of Long Buckby, Northampton Served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1945.

Ian Metcalfe of Darlington, Co. Durham Served in the Royal Marines from 1952 to 1958.

David Michell of Dulwich, South East London Served in the Royal Artillery from 1947 to 1970.

Stanley Miller of Heywood, Lancashire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1954.

Brian Mogford of Holt, Norfolk Served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.

Nicholas Moore of Worcester Served in the Royal Artillery from 1976 to 1989.

Frances Mullen of Deal, Kent Served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1944.

William Nash of Duston, Northampton Served in the Royal Engineers from 1940 to 1946.

Edith North of Stanley, Co. Durham Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1945 to 1947.

Richard Northam of Wellington, Somerset Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1947.

John Osborne of Westbury, Wiltshire Served in the Royal Ordnance Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1941 to 1942.

Joseph Pickin of York Served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

Violet Rees of Hinckley, Leicestershire Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1945.

William Simmonds of Leatherhead, Surrey Served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1956.

David Skeffington of Pershore, Worcestershire Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1949 to 1961.

Morley Skipper of King's Lynn, Norfolk Served in the Royal Artillery from 1955 to 1960.

Harry 'Micky' Southgate of Helston, Cornwall Served in the Royal Engineers from 1942 to 1947.

Anthony Spencer of Nottingham Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1951 to 1953.

Phillip Stevens of Plymouth Served in the Royal Artillery from 1954 to 1956.

Robert Stevens of Milton Keynes Served in the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) from 1974 to 1986.

Alan Temple of Fakenham, Norfolk Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1950 to 1952.

Stanley Tomlin of Lowestoft, Suffolk Served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1950 to 1952.

Umberto Tondo of Hastings, East Sussex Served in the Royal Fusiliers and the Army Catering Corps from 1948 to 1950.

Keith Urwin of Chester Le Street, Co. Durham Served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

John Van Hegan of Walton-On-Thames, Surrey Served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946.

Brian Wallinger of Billingham, Cleveland Served in the Royal Signals from 1952 to 1955.

Eamonn Ward of Coningsby, Lincoln Served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1975.

Graham Ward of Fleetwood, Lancashire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1975 to 1976.

Frederick Watts of Croydon, Surrey Served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1970.

Dennis Wood of Yeovil, Somerset Served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Raymond Wood of Crawley, West Sussex Served in the 17th/21st Lancers from 1952 to 1959.

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.

Ruth Altoft of Stockport, Cheshire died on 15th March 2013, aged 87. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1944. After training at Loch Lomond she Served at Mill Hill before being discharged as a Wren in 1946.

Kenneth Baker of Ipswich died on 3rd September 2012, aged 89. He joined the Suffolk Regiment in 1942 and transferred to the Buffs, Royal East Kent Regiment in 1943. He fought with his Regiment in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. In 1944 he transferred to the Royal Fusiliers and ended the war in Greece. He was discharged in 1947 as a Corporal.

Donald 'Don' Barton of Stockport, Cheshire died on 10th April 2013, aged 88. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1943 and after training at Aldershot was posted to Egypt. He was demobilised as a Sapper in 1947.

Benjamin Bent of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on 4th March 2013, aged 93. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1937, training as a ground wireless operator. He volunteered for aircrew duty with 25 Squadron Fighter Command and was involved with radar and night fighters, the Blenheim Beau Fighter and then the Mosquito. He was demobbed in 1947, leaving as a Flight Lieutenant.

Douglas 'Doug' Betts of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 1st March 2013, aged 93. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1939. He went to France with the British Expeditionary Force and was evacuated from Dunkirk in 1940. He then became an Army photographer and was posted to India, Ceylon and Singapore, before being discharged as a Staff Sergeant in 1946.

Thomas Birchall of Ormskirk, Lancashire died on 2nd April 2013, aged 81. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1950 for National Service and Served in the UK. He was discharged in 1952 as a Private, but remained in the TA until 1956.

Charles Blockley of Sileby, Leicestershire died on 23rd February 2013, aged 92. He came to Blind Veterans UK in 1997 as his sight loss was attributed to malnutrition and retrobulbar neuritis, as a result of his time as a Far East Prisoner of War. He was called up early in 1940 and joined his local Regiment,

the Leicestershire Regiment (known locally as the Leicestershire Tigers). After completing his training, he was posted to their 1st Battalion, which was then preparing to move out to the Far East. Whilst on embarkation leave, he married his childhood sweetheart Peggy. His Battalion arrived in Malaya just in time to be caught up in the Japanese invasion. After the Fall of Malaya, he spent five months in hiding, supported by the local Chinese people and was not captured by the Japanese until April 1942. He started life as a PoW in a civilian gaol in Penang and was later transferred to Changi gaol in Singapore. He was finally moved up to Thailand to work on the Burma railway and after his release from captivity, he returned to the UK and spent some time in Service hospitals before he was discharged in 1946.

Irene Brown of Romford, Essex died on 25th December 2012, aged 85. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in June 1945. Having Served in Oxford, Derby and Aylesbury, she was discharged as a Private in 1948.

Mary Byham of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on 11th March 2013, aged 90. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1942 and specialised in Accounts. She was based at Highgate and Felixstowe and was demobilised as a Leading Wren in 1945.

Eric Cotton of Harleston, Norfolk died on 29th December 2012, aged 93. He joined the Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1939. He worked on anti-invasion preparations. He was posted to India and he fought in Burma until the end of the war. He was discharged in 1946 as a Lance Corporal.

Christopher Coxall of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands died on 6th March 2013, aged 83. He Served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps for National Service from 1951 to 1953, Serving in Aldershot, Hilsea Barracks, Portsmouth and Deepcut Barracks. After National Service he remained in the TA until 1956.

William 'Bill' Coysh of Brighton, East Sussex died on 19th March 2013, aged 98. He joined the RAF in 1941. Qualifying as a Pilot he flew Blenhiems and later flew as a bomb carrier on Sterling 4 engine bombers. He was demobilised as a Flying Officer in 1946.

Joseph Crowther of Rotherham, South Yorkshire died on 9th March 2013, aged 87. He Served in the Home Guard before joining the General Service Corps in 1943, then transferred to the Royal Corps of Signals the same year. He Served in the UK followed by a deployment to Egypt for some 18 months. He was demobilised in 1947 as a Signaller.

William 'Bill' Davis of Normanton, West Yorkshire died on 30th March 2013, aged 92. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1941, qualifying as a tank transporter driver. He was posted to India and later fought in the Burma campaign; he was there when the war ended. He was discharged in 1946.

Marjorie 'Marje' Dean of Bristol, Avon died on 24th March 2013, aged 91. She joined the Women's Royal Air Force in 1942, training at RAF Innsworth and Morecambe. Posted initially to the Records Office at RAF Innsworth, she later served at both the Air Ministry in London and with an RAF unit in Kenya after which she discharged as an Aircraft Woman First Class in 1945.

Henry Evington of Saltburn by Sea, North Yorkshire died on 3rd April 2013, aged 92. He joined the Royal Navy in 1938 and qualified as a naval engineer. He served onboard the battleship HMS Duke of York and in 1945 returned to Keyham as an instructor. In 1947 he joined the destroyer HMS Venus and from 1949-51 worked in Gibraltar dockyard. He left the Royal Navy as a Lieutenant Commander in 1956.

Frederick Fieldhouse of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 19th February 2013, aged 93. He joined the Royal Navy in 1939. He served mainly with the Fleet Air Arm, serving on 804 Naval Air Squadron, light aircraft carriers HMS Argus and HMS Furious and shore bases. He was commissioned during WW2, retiring at the end, although he was called up for the Korean War. He resigned as a Temporary Lieutenant in 1955.

Reginald Gibson of Lowestoft, Suffolk died on 16th March 2013, aged 82. He joined the Green Jacket for National Service in 1949 and served in the UK. Discharged in 1951 he immediately joined the Queen Victoria Rifles (TA) and transferred to the Royal Artillery (TA) a month later, finally leaving in 1953.

Diana Golding of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire died on 5th April 2013, aged 87. Diana Golding joined The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (Princess Royal's Volunteer Corps) FANYS in 1943, training in London and Bletchley. She then worked closely with the Special Operations Executive in Cairo and Bari, Italy. She was discharged as a Corporal in 1945.

Joan Gurney of Brighton, East Sussex died on 9th March 2013, aged 94. She served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1939 to 1941 when she was discharged on grounds of compassion.

Ernest Harris of Sale, Cheshire died on 28th December 2012, aged 91. He joined the RAF in 1941 and trained as aircrew in Canada. He flew as a navigator and wireless operator in Mitchells and Liberators in the Bahamas and Egypt. Of the 28 on his navigator's course, only four survived the war. He was discharged as a Warrant Officer in 1946.

David Holland of Malvern, Worcestershire died on 17th March 2013, aged 89. He joined the Royal Signals in 1942 and served in North Africa with the 8th and 1st Armies. He fought through Italy and Austria and was discharged in 1947.

Albert Hunnisett of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan died on 9th March 2013, aged 95. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1939 and served as both an anti-aircraft gunner with the 230 Heavy Ack-Ack Unit and later as a despatch rider in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany before being discharged as a Gunner in 1946.

Cyril Jones of Fareham, Hampshire died on 6th March 2013, aged 80. He served in the Royal Navy for National Service from 1953 to 1955. On the cruiser HMS Superb he sailed to the USA and the West Indies prior to discharge as an Ordnance Artificer 4th Class (Petty Officer).

Thomas Jones of Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria died on 24th March 2013, aged 100. He joined the Home Guard at the outbreak of the war. He then served in the Royal Artillery from 1942. He was posted to India and joined the 8th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. He was later deployed to Burma and was wounded at Smith Bridge. He was repatriated to the UK in October 1946 when he was demobbed as a Sergeant.

Stanley Hall of Worthing, West Sussex died on 4th April 2013, aged 80. He joined the Royal Navy in 1951. He served on HMS Sheffield in the West Indies and was based in Bermuda for two years. After serving on a number of ships he sailed on HMS Albion, the aircraft carrier, to the Suez Crisis in 1956. He was demobbed in 1958.

Peter Gee-Heaton of Ascot, Berkshire died on 12th March 2013, aged 94. He joined the York and Lancaster Regiment in 1939 and transferred to the Loyal Regiment in 1940 as a Staff Sergeant attached to the Indian Army. He served in the UK and India before discharge in 1946 as a War Substantive Captain.

Arthur Hewitt of Northampton died on 15th March 2013, aged 91. He joined the Fleet Air Arm in 1943 and trained as an Air Fitter at RAF Hednesford. He served at various air stations and afloat in a heavy repair ship for his last six months before discharge in 1946.

John Hurcombe of Northumberland died on 4th April 2013, aged 91. He joined the RAF in 1941 and completed aircrew training in America. He later went to Canada where he completed Observer training. He then went to Scotland where he was moved from aircrew to ground crew on medical grounds. He was posted to RAF Weeton and became an MT Fitter, Serving with Balloon Command. He was discharged in 1946 as a Leading Aircraftman.

Terence King of Rushden, Northamptonshire died on 4th April 2013, aged 85. He joined the RAF in 1944 and trained as a cook. He was posted to India on the Burma border before returning to the UK in 1947. He was posted to Bletchley Park, then Lincolnshire before Korea with the Gloucester Regiment. He was discharged in 1955 as a Corporal.

Eric Lines of King's Lynn, Norfolk died on 1st February 2013, aged 95. He joined the TA in 1935 attached to the Royal Norfolk Regiment and joined the Royal Military Police full time in 1940. Initially posted around the UK he spent 18 months in the Faroe Islands. He transferred to the Royal Pioneer Corps in 1944 and was discharged in 1945 as a Corporal.

Gerald Lloyd of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 20th March 2013, aged 91. He Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946 at home, leaving as an Leading Aircraftman.

William 'Colwyn' Lloyd of Brighton, East Sussex died on 8th March 2013, aged 74. He was diagnosed with bilateral retrobulbar neuritis in 1950 which was attributed to his Service in the Royal Air Force. A Leading Aircraftman, deterioration of his vision started whilst on a troopship to Cyprus. With training from Blind Veterans UK he went on to work as a telephonist and had a successful career. He was a member of Blind Veterans UK bowling club for many years and following the death of the bowling club Chairman, Bob Osborne, Colwyn took over. However, he never referred to himself as Chairman, preferring the title of Vice Chairman, as he felt Bob would always be the Chairman. As Colwyn and Bob were both originally from Wales, Bob's widow Joan gave the Welsh flag that was placed over Bob's coffin to be placed on Colwyn's at his funeral in the St Dunstan's chapel.

Robert Matthews of Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire died on 18th March 2013, aged 91. Having lost the sight in his left eye aged five, he was unable to join the Infantry and enrolled in the Pay Corps in 1941. In 1943 he was posted to Durban, South Africa. He was demobilised in 1946 as a Private.

Arthur 'Mick' Middleton of Hunstanton, Norfolk died on 8th April 2013, aged 87. A farm worker, which was a reserved occupation, he joined the Home Guard in 1942, Serving throughout the war in Sedgeford. After the Home Guard was disbanded in 1945 he returned to the farm for the rest of his working life.

Walter Moorhouse of Potters Bar, Hertfordshire died on 14th March 2013, aged 99. He joined the RASC in 1940 and transferred to the RAOC in 1941. He then transferred to the REME in 1942. He Served in North Africa, the Italian campaigns and spent the last 18 months of his Service in the Army newspaper service. He was discharged in 1946 as a Corporal.

Alec Palmer of Guildford, Surrey died on 6th March 2013, aged 97. He joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and qualified as a Shipwright. He Served onboard HMS Hood for seven months. He was subsequently drafted to HMS Repulse followed by HMS Winchester before medical discharge in 1942.

Anne Parker of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 8th March 2013, aged 94. In 1942 she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service and was commissioned in 1944. After the war she was in Germany during the period of military government and was discharged in 1946 as a Staff Captain.

Denis Peel of Brighton, East Sussex died on 20th March 2013, aged 91. He joined the Royal Navy in 1938, specialising in torpedoes and submarine electrics. He Served in HM Submarines Taku and Unbroken; his submarine was involved in action against the German pocket battleship Graf Spee. He was medically discharged in 1946 as a Petty Officer.

Leslie Phillips of New Malden, Surrey died on 10th April 2013, aged 87. He Served in the RAF from 1944, training at RAF St Athan, specialising as a Flight Engineer. He flew on Halifax and Lancaster bombers prior to discharge in 1947.

Royston 'Les' Randle of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 12th March 2013, aged 90. He joined the Royal Navy in 1941 and after training Served in HMS King George V in the North Sea and Mediterranean and HMS Vienna. He also Served in HMS Ringdove (a minesweeping trawler), LST 3516 and HMS Truelove before discharge as a Leading Stoker in 1948.

William 'Ron' Roberts of Conwy, Gwynedd died on 12th March 2013, aged 81. He Served with the Royal Naval Reserve from 1950 to 1960. After training in Chatham and HMS Vernon at Portsmouth he Served in various small ships.

Harry Robinson of Garstang, Preston died on 1st March 2013, aged 92. He joined the RAF in 1941, qualifying as a mechanical transport driver and maintainer. He was posted to the Middle East and later to Sicily and Italy, ending the war in Austria. He was demobbed as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

Michael Ruff of Brighton, East Sussex died on 4th March 2013, aged 88. He joined the RAF in 1942 and transferred to the Fleet Air Arm in 1945. He flew Corsairs and was discharged as a Sub Lieutenant (Air) in 1946.

Alfred 'Percy' Scarth of Scarborough, North Yorkshire died on 6th February 2013, aged 96. He joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1939 and was attached to HQ 51st Lowland Heavy Regiment Artillery and was deployed to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. Successfully evacuated back through Dunkirk, he transferred to the Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers in 1942. He deployed to North Africa via South Africa, spent two years in the desert and later moved to Palestine. He was demobilised as a Warrant Officer 1st Class in 1946.

James Smith of Liverpool died on 18th March 2013, aged 102. He joined the General Service Corps in 1943, transferring to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. He fought from Normandy through to Germany and although released to the reserve in 1946, he joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1951. He was discharged in 1955.

Antony 'Tony' Speller of Exeter, Devon died on 15th February 2013, aged 83. He joined the Devonshire Regiment for National Service in 1950 and was involved with the Lynmouth floods in 1951. Commissioned in February 1951 he left the Regular Army in 1953 but remained in the TA, leaving as a Major in 1965.

Frederick Steers of Brighton, East Sussex died on 4th April 2013, aged 93. He entered the RAF in 1940 as an electrician and worked on Wellingtons and Spitfires. He later Served in North Africa and overseas for four years before demobilisation in 1946 as a Corporal.

Mathilda 'Terry' Stuart of Torquay died on 20th March 2013, aged 93. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1940. She specialised as a PTI at Bicester and was subsequently posted to the telephone exchange there and then to Worcester. She was discharged as a Corporal in 1944.

Robert Tait of Camberley, Surrey died on 10th March 2013, aged 91. He Served in the RAF from 1941 to 1946. He trained as a Flight Mechanic, working on fighters and bomber aircraft at various UK air stations prior to his discharge as a

Leading Aircraftman.

Ronald 'Ron' Ward of Walton on the Naze, Essex died on 27th March 2013, aged 82. He carried out his National Service with the Royal Army Service Corps from 1948 to 1950. He Served in the UK and Germany prior to discharge as a Private.

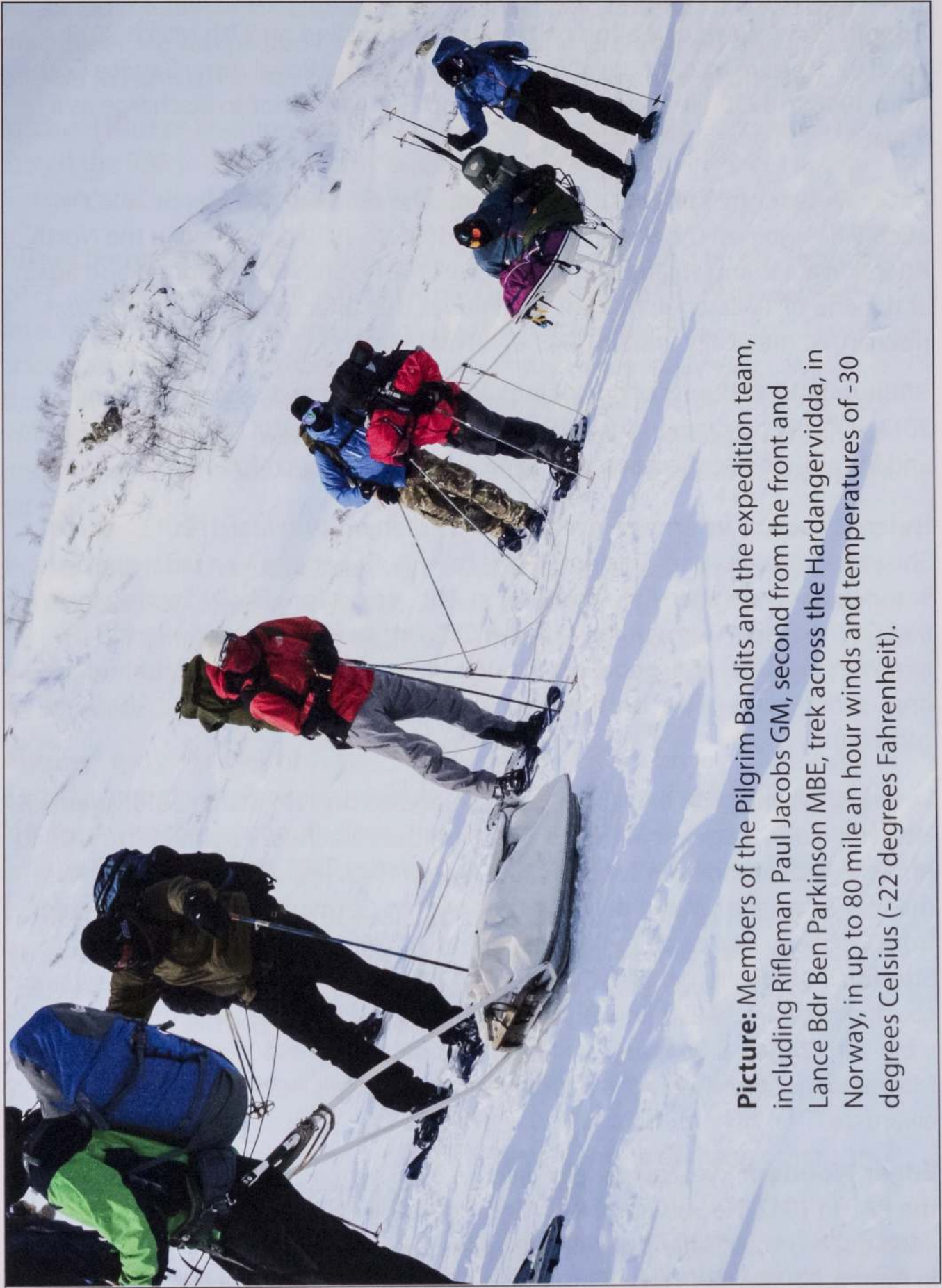
Peter Webster of Poulton Le Fylde, Lancashire died on 17th March 2013, aged 94. He joined the Merchant Navy in 1935. In 1939 he Served in the North Atlantic on a tramp steamer with grain. In 1942 his ship was bombed and again at the end of 1942 when he received injuries that affected his nerves. He was discharged medically unfit in 1943 as a Third Mate.

William 'Bill' Williams of Port Talbot, West Glamorgan died on 21st March 2013, aged 90. He joined the RAF in 1941, trained in the UK and Served in India and Burma. He was discharged in 1946 as a Leading Aircraftman.

Helen Wilson of Inverness, Inverness-Shire died on 19th March 2013, aged 91. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1942, Serving as a radar specialist in the London Defence Area and later in Antwerp before finally Serving in Bad Oeynhausen, Germany as a Cipher Officer. She was discharged in 1948 as a Warrant Officer Second Class. During the war she went AWOL to find the final resting place of her brother who was killed in action in France. She was successful.

Leonard Withington of Billinge, Lancashire died on 11th March 2013, aged 95. He Served as a Sergeant in the 1st Battalion the Parachute Regiment from 1940 until he was wounded in Tunis on 28th March 1943, losing both eyes. He was made a Prisoner of War in Italy and then sent to Germany. He was repatriated from Germany and came to Blind Veterans UK's war time home in Church Stretton, Shropshire, on 24th October 1943. Before the war he worked as a coach painter. In 1945 following training at Church Stretton he commenced work with Wigan & Sons as a switchboard operator. In 1960 he and his wife Marion were presented with 'best respected and well liked couple' in the firm's awards.

Edgar Woods of Rye, East Sussex died on 29th March 2013, aged 88. He joined the RAF in 1942. He Served at RAF Binbrook, servicing Lancaster bombers with 460 Squadron, and later saw Service in the Far East on various air staging posts in Burma. He was discharged in 1947 as an Aircraftman First Class.



Picture: Members of the Pilgrim Bandits and the expedition team, including Rifleman Paul Jacobs GM, second from the front and Lance Bdr Ben Parkinson MBE, trek across the Hardangervidda, in Norway, in up to 80 mile an hour winds and temperatures of -30 degrees Celsius (-22 degrees Fahrenheit).