

May 2015

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



On the cover: At the 2015 Founder's Day Awards at the Llandudno centre, Dennis Sarginson, with Stanley, accepted the Founder's Day Award for Outstanding Achievement from Blind Veterans UK Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

Back page: Derek O'Rourke, one of the winners of the Founder's Day Award for Creative Art, shows his painting of the poppies at the Tower of London.

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From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

We have recently marked our Founder's Day with Awards being given as individuals are recognised both for significant achievement and also for great contributions to the organisation. Quite a few awards went to individuals who did both. These awards recognise what I believe is the pinnacle of what a very large, perhaps even a majority of members do and strive to do across the organisation; that being develop skills and capabilities which enables independence, and show leadership by example, and support to others to help them do the same.

These are very positive characteristics of the British Military and are fostered across all armed services as well as by Blind Veterans UK. In many respects I believe society can benefit from the development of these values, and I know we and many other military charities foster similar values, as they are at the core of helping individuals overcome the challenges they face.

Having recently chaired the Trustee Council which has approved the budgets and capital investments for the charity for this next financial year, I can tell you we are continuing to increase levels of investment and financial support for the growing operations of our organisation. This will ensure we have both the resources and bandwidth to help the growing numbers of members, and also extend the range of services, activities, training and equipment we provide to enable you, our members, to overcome the challenges you face to gain an improved quality of life.

Over the last three years our members have grown from approximately 3,200 to 4,000 and we've seen attendance at our centres, as well as the number of visits our welfare staff have made very significantly increase. Although it is good news that the organisation is able to help more people in many more ways, we must also be conscious that we can match this with a sustainable level of funding and that we improve and don't drop the positive impact we have and the benefit we provide to those we seek to help. Particularly our younger members who may have suffered injury from recent conflicts and will require support for many decades to come.

Together with our new Chief Executive, Nick Caplin and his team, the Trustees will carefully consider during this coming year how we wish to see the organisation evolve, and how we can ensure it's set up for success as it has been for the last 100 years.

I would be happy if any of you would like to write to me directly at Harcourt Street with your views and comments, as it is you we seek to serve and help. As our future direction takes shape and we develop our future plans next year and beyond, we will continue to update you to ensure you are always current with the latest opportunities and ways in which we can help and support you.

My very best wishes to you all and I look forward to meeting you again at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party, the Thanksgiving Service at Westminster Abbey, and the very many other events the organisation will be hosting or attending.

Blind Veterans UK Calendar

Activities from the Brighton centre in May.

Adrenaline Weekend 1st to 4th. Widows' Week 10th to 16th.
Writers' Forum 16th. Golf Weekend 16th and 17th.
Archery Club 24th May to 6th June.

June.

Writers' Forum 20th. Gardening Week 14th to 20th.
Ex POW Reunion 25th to 29th. Golf Weekend 27th and 28th.

July.

Writers Weekend 2nd, 3rd and 4th. Get Fit for Life Week 5th to 11th.
Golf Weekend 18th and 19th. Centenary Week 19th to 25th.

To book your place at the Brighton centre please telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500.

Activities from the Llandudno centre in May.

Potting & Plants Week 3rd to 9th. History Week 10th to 16th.
Wood Week 24th to 30th.

June.

Welsh Water Week 7th to 13th. Next Level Fishing Week 21st to 27th.

July.

Music Week 5th to 11th. Fishing Taster Week 19th to 25th.
Recreation Taster Week 26th to 1st August.

For further information or to book your place at the Llandudno centre call 01492 864580.

Activities from the Sheffield centre in May.

Younger Week 4th to 8th.

August.

Gardens Week 10th to 14th.
Photography Week 31st August to 4th September.

September and October.

Culture Week 28th September to 2nd October.

For further information please telephone the Sheffield centre on 0114 267 2550. Or to book your place please telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500.

Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.



Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity shows its support for Blind Veterans UK.

We are grateful to The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity who are proud to support the work we do for our Naval Service veterans, as we help them to adjust to their sight loss and lead more independent and fulfilling lives.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is the principal charity of the Royal Navy. Last year it gave approximately £8 million to people most in need: serving personnel, veterans and their families.

For those in uniform it boosts morale, improves facilities and eases the pressure that life in the Service can bring.

Through its grant giving to Blind Veterans UK and other military charities it provides crucial support for parents and children as well as veterans who are experiencing difficulty with ill health or old age.

For more information on The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, please call 023 9254 8128 or visit www.rnrmc.org.uk

Review format changes.

The Review is also available on MP3CD and USB, by email and in Braille. If you would like to change the format you receive the Review in please telephone Mrs Shernaz Kapadia on 020 7616 8368 or email: reviewformat@blindveterans.org.uk

Blind Veterans UK fundraising events in 2015 and 2016.

Throughout 2015 and 2016 there are a number of sports events that you can sign up to.

Prudential RideLondon to Surrey 100 — Sunday 2nd August 2015.

Celebrate the London 2012 cycling legacy and jump on your bike to cycle 100 miles through London and Surrey in the Prudential Ride London to Surrey 100 event. The cycle will start at the Olympic Park in Stratford and take you along London's closed roads and through the beautiful Surrey countryside to finish on the Mall outside Buckingham Palace. The registration fee is £49 and you will need to raise a minimum of £500 in sponsorship.

Red Devils Skydive Nottingham — Tuesday 1st September 2015.

Experience the adrenaline rush of tandem skydiving with the best in the business at Nottingham's Langar Airfield. The Red Devils are one of the world's most famous parachute display teams and the official parachute display team for both the Parachute Regiment and the British Army. The registration fee is £100 and you need to raise a minimum of £500 in sponsorship or you can pay £299 for the experience and raise as much as you can in sponsorship.

ArcelorMittal Orbit Abseil — Sunday 6th September 2015.

Join us for our thrilling new event when we give you the opportunity to abseil 80 metres down the UK's tallest sculpture in the world-famous Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park whilst taking in the breathtaking views of the London skyline of The Gherkin, St Paul's Cathedral and The Shard. To take part, we ask that you pay a registration fee of £25 and raise a minimum sponsorship of £250.

Great North Run — Sunday 13th September 2015.

Join us for the UK's most popular half marathon which has been described as the greatest in the world! The route takes in the iconic Tyne Bridge and goes through Gateshead passing the famous international athletics stadium to finish in the coastal town of South Shields. The registration fee is £30 and you will need to raise a minimum of £300 in sponsorship.

Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon — Sunday 11th October 2015.

You will run the 13.1 miles through four of London's Royal Parks — Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, St James' Park and Green Park in their autumnal splendour. The registration fee is £30 and you need to raise a minimum of £300 in sponsorship.

Brighton Half Marathon — February 2016.

The course starts and ends on Madeira Drive, on the seafront between Brighton Pier and Brighton Marina. Runners briefly head north past the Brighton Pavilion before turning back to the coast. The route then turns east until runners are sent westward towards Hove. At the Hove Lagoon runners make their last turn and head east to the finish line on Madeira Drive. The registration fee is £25 and you will need to raise a minimum of £250 in sponsorship.

Virgin Money London Marathon — April 2016

Every year, approximately 30,000 people run the 26.2 mile (42.2km) marathon through the streets of London. The route runs along the south of the Thames and then the north side after crossing the river on Tower Bridge. From Greenwich and Blackheath to Buckingham Palace, runners pass some of the capital's famous landmarks that include the London Eye and the Tower of London. We have guaranteed places for a £45 registration fee and £2,000 minimum sponsorship so please get in touch if you would like to join our team.

London to Brighton 100k Walk — July 2016.

Entries are now open for the 2016 event. The event is a tough personal challenge for anyone who wants to take part; experienced walkers, recreational strollers, or beginners who want to do something great for themselves and for charity. You can take part as an individual and tackle the whole 100k course, or you could take part as a team relay. A team of four can each complete 25k or a team of two can complete 50k each. If you would like to take part the early bird registration fee is £50 for the 100k or £35 for the 50k distance for an individual or £100 per relay team (£25 each). Individuals need to raise £300 for the 100k and £200 for the 50k and relay teams need to raise £500. For further information or to sign up go to: www.blindveterans.org.uk/100k/

If you have any questions about any of the events or you would like to find out how to apply for a place, please email fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk or telephone Jennie Chmura on 020 7616 7959.

Join our tea and cake events as we celebrate Carers Week.

Once again the No One Alone campaign team is involved with Carers Week, which will take place from 8th to 14th June to celebrate the wonderful work that is done by the spouses, family members and friends who care for our blind veterans. Carers Week is a national awareness campaign organised by the charity Carers UK to celebrate those people across the UK who care for a loved one, and to make sure carers know of the support that is available to help them.

During the week, the team will host two tea and cake celebration events that are especially for the carers of our blind veterans. An event will take place at the Brighton centre on Tuesday 9th June from 2.30pm to 4.30pm and another at the Sheffield centre on Thursday 11th June from 2pm to 4pm.

The two events are a great opportunity for our carers to come together and find out more about the support that Blind Veterans UK provides to carers, as well as enjoying a relaxing afternoon of tea and cakes and other activities.

We'd like to invite the carers of our veterans to come along and join us for the afternoon. As there are a limited number of places available if you would like to join us for tea and cake in Brighton or Sheffield please do let the No One Alone team know. You can contact us by telephone on 020 7616 7999 or email noonealone@blindveterans.org.uk



Picture: Blind veteran Mark Pile with his wife Trudy.

Paul James. Founder of PBK Catering retires after 51 years. By Blind Veterans UK President Ray Hazan OBE.

I arrived at West House, Abbey Road, Brighton in early November 1973 to commence my training as a newly blinded St Dunstaner. I was served at table by a slim, cheery 28-year-old softly spoken Geordie, who was already in his tenth year with the charity. He was Paul James, the founder of PBK. I had problems identifying the various items on my plate. Paul solved the problem by using a compartmentalised dish. His willingness to help, coupled with a long experience, has made Paul a most popular member of the Ovingdean community.

His talents are not only in the field of catering. In the late 1990's, the ski party was short of guides. Paul, never falling short of a challenge, joined the group. Catering is an important feature of our stay at our centres. It is also vital for good health. It is impressive how the kitchen copes with the many special diets, likes and dislikes of the dining-room. Under Paul's guidance, nothing was too much trouble.

Paul retired in March after over 51 years' service to the charity. But we shall not lose the wide experience he has amassed, as well as the many friends he has made. Paul will return as a volunteer.

I am sure I express the feelings of us all when I say a big 'thank you' to Paul. We wish you a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Paul James responded: "I would like to say goodbye to my friends and colleagues and all the members that I have know over the years. I've loved the last 51 years, it's been a big part of my life and I've met so many wonderful people. I've skied all over Europe and escorted members all over the country and I've had a great time. But I will be back as a volunteer at the Brighton centre. I'll also be at Church Stretton as I've been there since the start of the 50 year badge holders reunion and this year I'm looking forward to catching up with Alan Wortley when he is presented with his 50 year badge. Alan trained as a physiotherapist and I have been lucky to ski with him in Europe.

"Ray Hazan was the first person I met who was about the same age as me. Before I only knew the lovely older fellows who were the First World War veterans. The courage that Ray showed was phenomenal and we became friends over the years. It is like a family as you become close to people."

Centenary Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey.

As you now have all the information you need for our centenary Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 4th June we want to tell you of another highlight as we continue to celebrate our centenary throughout 2015.

We will hold a Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey on 6th October when we look forward to marking this very special occasion with a congregation of 1,800 people formed of members, staff, supporters and friends. We will bring you a full programme in due course.

We have an important link with Westminster Abbey as a memorial to Ian Fraser, Baron Fraser of Lonsdale CH CBE, our Chairman for 53 years, was unveiled in Westminster Abbey in 1976.

The memorial to Lord Fraser is shown in the photograph below, when it was unveiled by Lord Fraser's grandson Neil McDonald with Tommy Gaygan a World War Two veteran and his daughter Mary standing to the side of the memorial.



Picture: Neil McDonald (right) unveils the memorial to his grandfather Ian Fraser at Westminster Abbey with Tommy Gaygan and his daughter Mary.

Blind Veterans UK centenary merchandise.

To celebrate our centenary and 100 years of proud service the Blind Veterans UK centenary logo is featured on a range of new merchandise that includes a commemorative medal, ties and tie and lapel badges, blazer badges, paperweights, umbrellas, clothing and passport holders. We have included some of our centenary merchandise below and you can also visit our online shop at <https://shop.blindveterans.org.uk> Or telephone 0300 111 0440 for credit or debit card orders. There is a £4.95 charge for postage and packaging.



Picture: On 29th January 2015 we began our centenary celebrations to mark 100 years of proud service. To commemorate this unforgettable and auspicious date in our history we commissioned a medal from the Tower Mint. The front of the medal features the Blind Veterans UK centenary logo while the St Dunstan's Torch, our former logo, sits on the reverse of this prestigious collectable medal. **Price:** £17. **SKU:** CH15009.

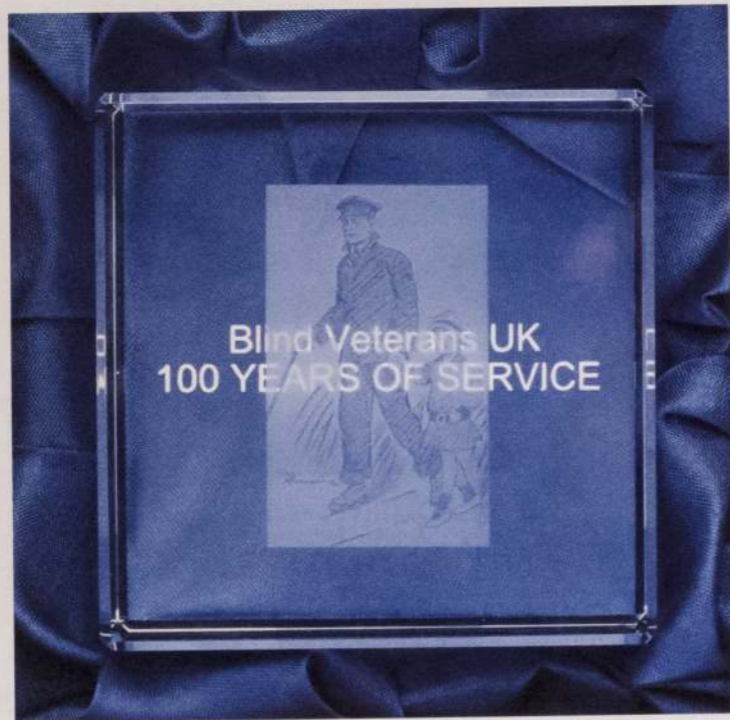


Picture: Cufflinks, lapel badge and tie pin with the Blind Veterans UK wavy flag logo.

Price: £14.

SKU: CM15034.

Picture: Our crystal paperweight features the image of Little Ruby, who was the three year old daughter of William Smith, the head gardener at St Dunstan's Lodge. She is shown holding the hand of a young blinded soldier as they walk between workshops in the grounds. The reverse of the cube is engraved: Blind Veterans UK 100 YEARS OF SERVICE. It is presented in a bespoke gift box with gold printed logo and royal blue silk lining. The crystal block cube dimensions are 60 x 60 x 60mm. **SKU:** CG15008. **Price:** £35.



Picture: Blind Veterans UK centenary tie. Celebrate our centenary in style by wearing this silk, non crease striped Blind Veterans UK 100th Anniversary tie with gold detailing. It would be the perfect tie to wear to our centenary Buckingham Palace Garden Party. It is also a great way to raise awareness of Blind Veterans UK as you travel around town from the Palace, drawing attention to the tie and perhaps answering questions about Blind Veterans UK. **Price:** £20. **SKU:** CM15027.



Picture: Blind Veterans UK 100 Years of Service blazer badge.

Wear your badge with pride, a colourful and impressive piece of embroidered red, blue, white and gold with black lettering. 100% full stitch count cut to chevron shape. Size 58 x 100mm.

Price: £10. **SKU:** CM15030.



Picture: The Blind Veterans UK centenary fibrestorm auto umbrella features a black handle and double logo print that opens at the touch of a button. Colour: White, scarlet and navy panels and two panels are printed with the full colour centenary logo. It will keep you dry should it rain at our centenary Garden Party. **Price:** £35. **SKU:** CG15006.



Note: When you place your order for any of the merchandise that you have seen in the Review please quote reference: Review.

President Ray Hazan OBE unveils a centenary plaque at West House in Brighton.

As we continue to celebrate our centenary and our glorious history, the second in a series of centenary plaques was unveiled. This time by our President Ray Hazan OBE on 20th March at West House, Abbey Road in the Kemp Town area of Brighton, a property that we occupied from 1917 to 1995 when it was our main care and training centre.

Speaking of the significance of the occasion, President Ray Hazan OBE, said: "It was an honour to have been asked to unveil the plaque on behalf of my fellow blind veterans. As I stood there fond memories came back as I thought of my time at West House and the training staff who taught me. I arrived at West House in early November 1973 to commence my training as a newly blinded St Dunstaner. There was Carol Locke, our typing instructor; Mark Kingsnorth, a blind veteran himself who taught Braille and Jock Carnochan, our mobility instructor. They were so caring, patient and serene and made learning a pleasure."

Writing of West House in his Notes by the Chief, in the January 1917 edition of the Review, our founder Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE wrote: 'An interesting acquisition has just been made by the National Institute for the Blind, for the benefit of past, present and future members of St Dunstan's. It is a large house and garden at Brighton, facing the sea, and within 100 yards of it. It is situated about one third of a mile on the east side of the Palace Pier. The house will accommodate about 40 men. There will be two or three large rooms beside the dining room, and also a very large place in which Braille, typing, netting and light basket making will be taught, for I think that many fellows who stayed at Brighton in the past have found time hang rather heavy on hand.

'West House, as it is called, will take the place of 104 Queens Road, so far as those fellows who are pretty well are concerned, and Queen's Road will be used solely for those fellows who are really under the weather and want a completely quiet time. Miss Pearson and Miss Fox will transfer themselves to West House, and will at the same time maintain a general supervision over 104 Queen's Road. In days to come West House will be used as a holiday home for men who have been at St Dunstan's, and if they are married, for their wives as well. There will also be another holiday home consisting of a large mansion and beautiful estate situated near Chester, but this will not become available until after the War.'



Picture: Blind Veterans UK President Ray Hazan OBE unveils the centenary plaque at our former West House centre in Kemp Town, Brighton.



Picture: Former VAD Jill Dunn, a member of the Voluntary Aid Detachment who was at West House attended with President Ray Hazan OBE. Jill met her husband, the late blind veteran Dennis Dunn at West House. **Photos:** Philip Meech.

Founder's Day 2015 from the Llandudno centre.

Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE was an exceptional man and 100 years after he founded our charity we each still feel the effect of his vision. Throughout 2015 we celebrate our centenary and this year his enduring legacy added to the occasion of Founder's Day. Barry Porter, Director of Welfare Services, was once again MC, introducing each of the winners at this year's Founder's Day Awards, which were held at the Llandudno centre. In his introduction Barry said:

"I think that it is important to reflect on what makes this event significant and distinctive, particularly in this our centenary year. When Sir Arthur Pearson our founder established the first Blinded, Soldiers and Sailors Hostel in 1915, the forerunner of what was for almost 100 years St Dunstan's, he did so as a blind man. But he was a blind man who was independent, one who was completely committed to enabling others who did not have his personal resources to embrace the idea that blindness did not mean an end but a beginning of adapting and managing the future without vision.

"Sir Arthur was a very forward thinking entrepreneur and highly effective businessman. He left us with a vision, which as we've moved on to become Blind Veterans UK we've adapted to a statement that says 'No one who has served our country should have to battle blindness alone.' This event today is to honour Sir Arthur's memory and his commitment to a very simple idea that being an independent blind person is achievable and that as members of the Blind Veterans UK family you can all contribute to that goal. Every person who receives an award today does so not because they are extraordinary but because they embody a level of determination to find their way to that goal towards greater independence.

"Unfortunately our Chairman Tim Davis is not able to join us today. He has asked me to send you all his best wishes and to assure you that he will make it back to Llandudno before too long. He is particularly supportive of our range of awards for members, volunteers and staff. Our President Ray Hazan OBE will present the Chairman's Commendation Awards. This is also the very first Founder's Day when we have had the opportunity to welcome our Chief Executive Major General Nick Caplin CB who joined Blind Veterans UK in October last year. Major General Caplin will present the awards to our members along with the volunteer awards."

John Cantwell. Winner of the Community Award.

"The Community Award is given to a member who has made the best contribution to their local community or the family of Blind Veterans UK by a member, a spouse, a widow or widower. This year the award was made to John Cantwell who joined Blind Veterans UK in 2010.

"John continued to work until 2012, cycling to work each day despite his vision loss. He then became one of our volunteers, helping to run our Lunch Clubs in Oxfordshire. He's also very active in his local community with the Banbury visually impaired group. John is always on the lookout for new members for Blind Veterans UK and works tirelessly with existing members to make them feel welcome and reassured at the Lunch Clubs and on social occasions. He is also an active member of Blind Veterans UK GOAL Group."

His nominating Welfare Officer Christine Wise said: "John is enthusiastic and positive and uses his energy with great effect through selfless endeavour to make other members feel valued and included. He has made a real difference achieving personal goals and giving generously of his time. In summary he has made a considerable contribution to the family of Blind Veterans UK."



Picture: Founder's Day Community Award winner John Cantwell is presented with his certificate by Blind Veterans UK Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

Graham Ward. Winner of the Training Achievement Award.

"The Training Achievement Award recognises outstanding achievement by a member during training provided by Blind Veterans UK. The award on this occasion, and there could be many, many winners, was made to Graham Ward from Lancashire who has been a member for just over two years.

"Proposed by Gaye Atkins, IT Instructor at the Sheffield centre and seconded by his Welfare Officer John Elson, Graham lost a significant amount of his vision at a time in life when he would expect to be still working. When he joined Blind Veterans UK he wanted to develop his IT skills with a view to future employment. But unlike many members who undertake complex tasks and study for IT qualifications Graham started essentially from scratch. He worked exceptionally hard at his IT training at our Sheffield centre and is now a competent computer user. He started by learning to touch type and has slowly but surely worked his way through the units that were required to achieve his ITQ Level 1 certificate. For this he had to learn Word, Excel and how to email and navigate the internet. He is a deserving winner of this Founder's Day award."



Picture: Founder's Day Training Achievement Award winner Graham Ward is presented with his certificate by Blind Veterans UK Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

Derek O'Rourke. Winner of the Creative Art Award.

Introducing the Creative Art Award Barry Porter said:

"As the Creative Art Award recognises endeavour by a Blind Veterans UK member in a creative activity it encompasses everything from art, handicrafts, culture and music. This year it was awarded to two members in recognition of the very, very strong field of nominations. The first to receive his award is Derek O'Rourke (pictured on the back page of the Review) who came to our charity in 2005.

"As with many of our members Derek started his interest through mosaic work which he undertook at home, later moving on to painting. He had almost no experience of art and craft and had never painted before he went to the Brighton centre. His determination and keenness to learn and develop his skills has been remarkable and he is now painting to a high level using advanced techniques. He has also learnt picture framing at our Brighton centre.

"Living in Scotland, moving into a cottage in the grounds of the Scottish War Blinded centre in Linburn in 2011, Derek became an enthusiastic user of their facilities, contributing significantly to the standard of work produced in the Scottish War Blinded Art Workshop. He also passes on techniques and knowledge to others to help them explore the skills they have and to develop new ones.

"His work reaches a much wider audience thanks to his website www.blindpainter.co.uk and I urge you to have a look. Not only is his art continually exploring the boundaries but Derek is an excellent example of how Blind Veterans UK and Scottish War Blinded can work together to the increased benefit of our members.

"Now before I ask Derek to come up I just want to draw your attention to his painting. First of all those of you who remember the remarkable events from the summer and the poppies at the Tower of London, Derek has produced this wonderful painting that shows the same scene. It is in glorious colour and it captures the extraordinary nature of that display. That is one of many, many paintings that Derek has done. At the Edinburgh reunion a few weeks ago there was a small art exhibition there and a number of Derek's paintings were on display and I can tell you they were all absolutely brilliant."

Peter King. Winner of the Creative Art Award.

"Peter came to Blind Veterans UK in 2011 after losing much of his sight in May that year. He undertook Art & Craft training at the Llandudno centre where he discovered a talent for mosaic work.

"Peter's mosaic work is not straight forward ordinary mosaic work as he approaches his mosaic projects in a scientific way thinking through each challenge that he sets himself through the research, planning, resourcing, scale and completion. Because of the size and detail of the work the commitment and input of time is considerable. He's pushed boundaries using an electrical tile cutter to bring a jigsaw approach to his work. With a home based studio workshop provided by Blind Veterans UK and inspired originally by a tattoo he has recently experimented with a 3D mosaic constructed of LED lighting of a butterfly with a rose beneath. I think that's quite impressive.

"Peter's mosaic work inspires our staff and visitors who see the quality his approach brings. He's a very worthy joint winner of our Creative Art Award."



Picture: Founder's Day Creative Art Award winner Peter King is presented with his certificate by Blind Veterans UK Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

Dennis Sarginson. Winner of the Outstanding Achievement Award.

"The Founder's Day Award for Outstanding Achievement is made to a member who has achieved an outstanding amount of independence in their participation of activities promoted or provided by Blind Veterans UK. It could be given to many of our members, but this year it was awarded to Dennis Sarginson.

"Dennis served in the Army Air Corps from 1979 to 1990, working as ground crew on Gazelle and Lynx Helicopters in postings that included the Falklands, Northern Ireland and Germany. Following sight loss he is the first to admit that his vision loss was a huge blow to his self esteem and confidence and he had many dark days as he struggled to come to terms with the consequences of poor vision. He joined Blind Veterans UK in 2010 and he began to re-explore how he might redevelop his IT skills as a possible route back into employment. What we did not know then was how far he would go with this. In fact Dennis' skill and knowledge development has been nothing short of remarkable.

"From the point of learning to access software with the help of the RNIB and ourselves, much of it at our Sheffield centre, he put himself through training and a demanding qualification route and he is now a fully qualified IT instructor. He is self employed and has worked both on projects in his local area of Scunthorpe and as a bank IT instructor at the Llandudno centre and in Sheffield and with our new Community Outreach Project in the South West and North East.

"All of this has required Dennis to be away from home for long periods, getting used to the new area with his guide dog Stanley, travelling to and from Scunthorpe and essentially getting on with it without much fuss because that is Dennis' way. His empathetic approach, his warmth, good humour, patience and teaching skills have motivated and supported many of our members.

"What is perhaps most interesting is that he never uses his own position as a member and most of the people he teaches are completely unaware that he is one. Rather he focuses on teaching IT and is seen by members of the staff as just another highly skilled IT instructor.

"Dennis has never wished to blow his own trumpet and he is an inspiration to members of staff and fully deserving of the Founder's Day Outstanding Achievement Award."

Frank Tinsley. Winner of the Ted Higgs Trophy.

"Another memorable award today is the Ted Higgs Trophy. Unfortunately the recipient, Frank Tinsley, is unable to attend.

"The Ted Higgs Trophy was donated by the Higgs family, by Ted's daughters Valerie Shannon Higgs and Pauline Edwards and his son Brian, in memory of their father the late Ted Higgs who was a member of our charity for 67 years after he lost his sight in action whilst serving as a gunner in the Royal Artillery in 1944.

"The winner of the trophy this year is Frank Tinsley who was born and grew up in Holloway North London and he remains a Londoner at heart. He will be 96 this year and like Ted himself, he served in the Royal Artillery in World War Two. He was a Bombardier. He'd been in the Territorial Army at the outbreak of war and served right through until his discharge. As a result of injury that led to detached retinas whilst serving he underwent operations to remove one eye in 1947, the second being removed in 1956.

"Frank moved into the Brighton centre as a permanent resident in 1997. Shortly after that Frank began to visit the Art & Craft workshop and at one point was attending every day of the week to make rocking horses. We think that he must have made around 200. Imagine Frank making his way to his seat every day where he would patiently sand the shapes to a perfect finish. So many had been made that when we refurbished the Brighton Art & Craft workshop last year the table where Frank sat was worn away, the groove in the shape of the rocking part of the horse, testament to his hard work and dedication. Over the past year Frank has retired from the workshop, but his rocking horses live on.

"What is particularly interesting was that not only did Ted Higgs, in whose memory this award has been made, also serve in the Royal Artillery but Ted made models and I have one of Ted's wooden fire engines and the symmetry between Frank's achievement and dedication to his work is clearly there and I'm sure you will agree he is a most worthy winner.

"As I said he's 96 and is living as a permanent resident at our Brighton centre on our residential wing and is now somewhat frail and didn't feel he was up to travelling all the way up to North Wales, but I hope that you will in his absence give him a round of applause." The audience applauded loudly!



Picture: Frank Tinsley in the inner garden at the Brighton centre with one of his rocking horses.



Picture: Barry Porter, Director of Welfare Services, holds the Ted Higgs Trophy as he describes it to the audience and beside him is one of hundreds of rocking horses that were lovingly made by Frank Tinsley.

"I now have two families." Alan Walker, Winner of the Sports Person of the Year Award.

"I've been lucky as my wife Shirley is my rock, Jo Gray my Welfare Officer has been brilliant, she's a Florence Nightingale, and Craig Brindley dishes out torture in the gym."

Those words about Craig Brindley were spoken in jest by Alan Walker on the morning of Founder's Day as Craig's particular brand of torture has meant that Alan has achieved a series of fitness goals that he didn't initially think possible. Working with Craig they went on to set series after series of fresh goals that Alan has completed over the last 18 months. It is a winning working partnership as Alan was presented with the Sports Person of the Year Award at the 2015 Founder's Day.

Alan humbly spoke of his successes: "I met Craig when I went for the gym induction at the Brighton centre in October 2013. I told him what I wanted to try and achieve and he put me on the cross trainer and I think that I lasted for two or three minutes before I was absolutely shattered. Now I do over an hour on the cross trainer, swim a mile in the pool and we're training to do the Great South Run in Portsmouth. We did it last year and I think the furthest we had run before the actual event was just six miles. When we completed six miles we high fived as we ran along and every subsequent mile we completed we did a high five as it was a new area for us. The hardest part was the last 800 metres. That was really painful, but we beat Peppa Pig, that was the main thing, and we've gone from strength to strength. I achieved something I wouldn't have believed possible a few years ago and raised just over £1,800 for Blind Veterans UK.

"I'm just about to start studying for a Level 2 Qualification in Fitness Instruction as the management at my local gym has offered me a job to train disabled and blind people. If it's possible I'd one day like to volunteer in the gym at the Brighton centre to cover Sports & Rec staff during their holidays. I'm willing to go down and spend a week in Brighton helping them as I want to give something back to thank Craig and Jo Gray and Blind Veterans UK. I've had a fantastic team behind me as Shirley, Jo and Craig have been absolutely brilliant.

"I was overwhelmed when I found out that I'd won the Founder's Day Sports Person of the Year Award as there are so many people within our charity who are worthy of it. Not just the people who do the marathons, but people in their

90s who come into the gym. This is a fantastic organisation and I'm privileged to be a member of it and a lot of it is down to Craig Brindley and Jo Gray who nominated me for this award."

A former chauffeur bodyguard Alan joined Blind Veterans UK 18 months ago after in his own words he experienced six months of misery as he tried to adjust to sight loss. He recalled how he would park in the bay at St Dunstan's when he worked in London and contacted the Membership department who enrolled him as a member.

As testament to Alan's success Craig Brindley said: "Back in October 2013 during Alan's induction we set realistic goals for where he was at that time and what he wanted to achieve. One thing led to another and we got him into the Great South Run in October 2014 and did some training runs together to build up to it. From a Blind Veterans UK point of view we gave Alan the tools to do it himself and from a motivation point of view as Alan wasn't with us for the majority of the time he did a lot of it himself. We just gave him that bit of a push to get started and were there whenever he needed us. I'm very proud that we did the Great South Run last year and that Alan has also increased his fitness levels and lost a phenomenal amount of weight and that he's going into the fitness game. It's onwards and upwards."

To support the charity that means so much to them Alan and Shirley have arranged with Lars, the manager of the Tattenham Corner pub and restaurant on Epsom Downs, for a stall in the grounds of the Tattenham Corner in June for two days during the Derby on Ladies' Day and Derby Day. The staff will wear Blind Veterans UK t-shirts to promote our work; there will be branded collection buckets, banners and a band. Lars will charge anyone who comes in from the Downs a £5 entry fee that will be given to Blind Veterans UK and he will also provide meals for Blind Veterans UK staff on Ladies' Day and Derby Day.

Shirley says: "It's good to have Alan back. I'm not going to say that we're completely over his sudden sight loss and everything that happened but we take it a day or a week at a time. You can sit around and mope or you can get on with it. Alan's a strong man and he doesn't let anything stand in his way. We say that he's achieved more in his life since sight loss than he would if he was still in Civvie Street working as a chauffeur bodyguard. He'd probably still be 23½ stone but now he's the lightest he's been in the 22 years that we've been together. He weighs what he did in 1984 when he served in the Falklands."

The last word has to go to Alan: "When Craig and I did the 10 mile Great South Run in Portsmouth last year Craig said 'Hang on there's a couple of black haired women, right nutters running down the middle of the road towards us. It was Shirley's sister and my niece at mile eight! The whole family has been really supportive and they were all with Shirley when Craig and I did the Great South Run. I've got two families now. I've got Shirley's and I've got Blind Veterans UK."



Picture: Half the man he used to be. Alan Walker displays the shorts he wore before his athletic success and very significant weight loss. From left to right: Jo Gray, Alan's Welfare Officer who proposed him for the Sports Person of the Year Award, Alan's wife Shirley who Alan describes as his rock and Craig Brindley, Sports & Rec Instructor.



Picture: The winners of the Founder's Day and Chairman's Commendation Awards.

Speeches were made by our Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, President Ray Hazan OBE and Head of Volunteering Victoria Dickinson. We will bring you their speeches in the June edition when we report on Graham Reed, Pam Bar, Marion Rees and Dawn Wafer, the winners of the Founder's Day Volunteers Awards. Winners of the Chairman's Commendations Award went to Welfare Support Officer Anne Radford, Regional Fundraising Officer Llandudno Viccie Beech, Technical Support Manager (acting) Mike Crawford and Art & Craft Instructor Brighton Kathryn Jones-Romain and Ed Rees was the winner of Innovator of the Year Award.

When all the awards had been presented Barry Porter finished: "For many years now, since the first Founder's Day five years ago I've had Barbara Sweeney by my side. Barbara worked with me as a PA to Welfare Services. Last year Barbara decided that she was going to move to Italy and she did! Today she sent a message to wish us well with today's event. Barbara's role has been taken over by somebody else who took charge of Barbara's large file, unpicked it all, put it all back together again and pulled everything together for today. She's done all the solid work. The room looks like it does because of her, but more importantly she's done all of the communication, all the liaison with all of the winners making sure that all arrangements were in place and that everything was working like clockwork and that we ran to schedule. So I want you to give a big round of applause for Jane Keane, Llandudno Centre Administrator."

70th Anniversary of VE Day. By Catherine Goodier, Review Editor.

On 8th May 1945 battlefields across Europe fell silent as peace was declared and celebration rang out. At 3pm on Friday 8th May 2015 the nation will fall silent for two minutes as we mark the 70th Anniversary of VE Day and blind veterans, their family and staff join the great silence at our three centres and Harcourt Street. Events will take place across the UK during three days of celebrations.

In the pages of this edition of the Review today's blind veterans speak of their memories of VE Day, but we begin with a message from our Chairman at the time. In the May 1945 Review Sir Ian Fraser wrote to St Dunstaners in the Homeland:

'This is a day for remembrance and rejoicing. The whole family of St Dunstan's shares the grief of its members whose serving sons and daughters will not come back, but I think we may all rejoice that the European war and the threat to our Homeland is over. St Dunstaners themselves, and members of their families, have rendered valuable and gallant service, and we are as entitled as any to share in the Victory. We must now look to the future with confidence and hope.'



Picture: Copyright Imperial War Museum. HM King George VI and Queen Elizabeth with Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret and Prime Minister, Winston Churchill on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, London on VE Day.

At Church Stretton, our Second World War home in Shropshire, the news was marked with joy as Church Bells sounded and St Dunstaners and staff crammed around the radio. But there was also sorrow for those whose family members would not return. The Review asked five of today's blind veterans of their memories of VE Day.

Joan Probart, who joined Blind Veterans UK in 2012, recalled how as a young WREN she celebrated the news of Victory In Europe. "I recall that we took the train from Winchester to London and headed to Buckingham Palace, walking through the crowds who were milling around The Mall, before we got in place to wait for the Royal Family to appear on the balcony. We were amongst the cheering crowds and it felt very exciting as people climbed onto the Albert Memorial to get a better view and everyone was happy and dancing, and as far as I recall it was a sunny day. I saw the Royal Family and Winston Churchill when they came onto the balcony and of course everyone was delighted and a great roar erupted as we all cheered them. It was an unforgettable, exciting and happy day."

On 10th April this year, as blind veteran John Wigmore celebrated his 100th birthday with his family he recalled VE Day 1945, as he said: "I remember the great sense of relief that it was all over, but there was no time to celebrate, as at the time I was a Sergeant in the Pioneer Corps in charge of guard duty of German Prisoners of War at Lille Hospital. But that memory of the sense of relief stays with me to this day."

Jack Pentelow, a Lance Sergeant in the Northamptonshire Yeomanry, who served in France, Holland and Germany recalled how he was welcomed into the home of a Dutch family when news of Victory in Europe was declared.

He said: "We had moved to Holland with amphibious vehicles to make an attack from Zuiderzee. Fortunately for us VE Day came along as we were waiting for the infantry to come and support us. On VE Day a couple of us were invited by a Dutch family into their home to wash and have dinner. We sat down at a table that was laid with a lovely white cloth and tea plates and knives at either end. The man came in with a meat dish that he held above his head in a ceremonial way, and when he lowered it so that we may see what was on it; the dish was full of eels that were about nine inches long. We sat there without any idea what to do and I thought that I didn't want to eat the head so I cut it off. The Dutch family watched but didn't try to help. I then cut an inch off the eel and put it into my mouth and that time they said 'no, no, no!' "They then preceded

to show us the correct way to eat eel, which is to take hold of the tail and swing the eel to catch the head with the other hand and then suck the meat off the eel. We did that and it was actually quite tasty. It was one of those passing moments and quite an experience in an amazing atmosphere after everyone had been through so much.

"I have since been back with the Regiment on a pilgrimage to Zoller when we were made welcome by the Dutch people who were brilliant."

If you take part in any VE Day events, or you would like to share your memories and photographs of VE Day 1945 please do contact Catherine Goodier of the Review on telephone 020 7616 8367 or email: revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

Constance Halford-Thompson, a talented artist whose paintings have been collected worldwide joined Blind Veterans UK in 2001 as she served with the Women's Auxiliary Service of Burma WAS(B)s during World War II when she manned a mobile canteen, usually with three other girls attached to a division who were retaking Burma. Constance was part of a group of women who moved through Burma with the British Fourteenth Army, often living in dangerous and difficult conditions.

Many of the WAS(B)s were mentioned in dispatches and General Slim, who later became 1st Viscount Slim, Commander of the 14th Army known as the 'Forgotten Army' said of them: "They showed the highest standard of devotion and courage."

Constance joined the WAS(B)s at just 17 years of age, leaving her home in India. Her elder sister was already with the WAS(B)s and that helped to convince her parents to let her go. "I was sent to Rangoon and from there we went off to Therawaddi, up the Irrawaddi where a girlfriend joined me. Taking off with the canteen getting the Navy MLs to ferry us across the Irrawaddy we would throw ourselves into the water and let the current carry us down. We set up canteens at airstrips on the lakes in Rangoon, or we went off with a Division but they did keep us slightly to the back.

"We happened to be in the jungle for VE Day in 1945 and I have some lovely photographs of us standing on the saluting base in the Jungle Henzada. After that I went back to Rangoon and finally when everything packed up a few of the girls, including my sister, went onto Japan but my parents wouldn't let me go as they said that I was too young."



Picture: Constance Halford-Thompson at the Saluting base in Henzada, Irrawaddy River in Ayeyarwady Region, Burma, on 8th May 1945 VE Day.

Three days of events to mark the 70th anniversary of VE Day.

Beacons.

On Friday 8th May beacons will be lit throughout the United Kingdom. At the going down of the sun the first beacon will be lit (at a location still to be announced at the time of going to press) followed by a chain of over 100 beacons across the UK. A beacon will be lit at the Brighton centre.

Service of Remembrance.

A Service of Remembrance will be attended by the leaders of the main political parties, the Chief of the Defence Staff, members of the Armed Forces, and representatives of Second World War veteran groups, together with Armed Forces charities. The area immediately surrounding the Cenotaph will be cordoned off for the Service of Remembrance to take place. However, Whitehall will be open. All members of the public, wherever they are, are asked to participate in the two minute silence at 3pm.

Saturday 9th May.

Cathedrals and churches across the country will ring their bells.

Sunday 10th May Service of Thanksgiving.

The Service of Thanksgiving will be led by the Dean of Westminster and will include thanksgiving for reconciliation and unity, and prayers for peace. The

Archbishop of Canterbury will give the address at the service. There will also be an Act of Recommitment towards the end of the service. Short services of thanksgiving were held every hour in Westminster Abbey on VE Day in 1945 from 9am to 10pm and attended by approximately 25,000 people. A service was also held on the following Sunday, 13th May, when the standards of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were laid on the High Altar to symbolise the loyalty of the whole empire during the war.

A parade of over 2,000 people will take place following the service, from Westminster Abbey to Horse Guards Parade via Parliament Square, Parliament Street and Whitehall. It will pass the balcony where Winston Churchill appeared before the crowds on VE Day after his famous speech to mark Victory in Europe.



Picture: Copyright Imperial War Museum. Winston Churchill waves to crowds in Whitehall on the day he broadcast to the nation that the war with Germany had been won, 8th May 1945 VE Day.

Over 100 organisations and associations will be represented to honour the contributions of civilians and Service personnel who fought in the Second World War in Europe. Alongside organisations connected to military service, there will also be representation from those who served in a civilian capacity and the generation who lived through the conflict.

A tri-service contingent of serving personnel will lead the veterans in the parade along Whitehall.

The parade route will be open for members of the public to line the streets and show their support to all those taking part.

Flypast

Over the course of the afternoon there will be a flypast of current and historic aircraft from the Royal Air Force to conclude the celebrations. Aircraft including the famous Battle of Britain Memorial Flight will soar over London, flying directly over Whitehall and St James's Park.

Your memories and photographs of VE Day — past and present.

If you take part in any of the celebrations to mark the 70th Anniversary of VE Day please do contact Catherine Goodier, Review Editor on 020 7616 8367.

If you would like to send your photos that show you celebrating VE Day in 1945 or VE Day 2015 please post them to Catherine Goodier, Review Editor, 12 - 14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. All photographs will be returned.

Winifred Marrable.

We finish with Winifred Marrable's recollection of VE Day 1945: "I was 18 and celebrated VE Day in Bristol at a very happy street party with my dad who was working there. I can remember that there were fireworks and wonderful goodies to eat and merry making later on in the local hall where we gathered with friends and family as we danced and sang through the night. There was a wonderful feeling of happiness in the air. It's lovely to recall that day."

Carl Adamson speaks about working life and archery at the Llandudno centre. By Catherine Goodier.

"When I was first injured I hid myself away as I was frightened and I wouldn't come out for anyone. Now I go around as bold as you like as I've got my confidence back. This charity [Blind Veterans UK] has given me the confidence to go back out into the big wide world and accept what happened to me and move on with life.

"If you embrace everything that the charity has to offer then you have a great chance of making it. If you don't then you'll always be up and down. I moved to Llandudno last year and before I made the move I was concerned that people wouldn't help me, but I couldn't have been more wrong as they can't do enough for me. I've made a great home for myself and I now work in the gym at the centre and run an archery club with Mark Hollis and Andy Gillam. The archery club meet on a Wednesday evening twice a month and Mark and Andy give up their time to make it possible for Dave Greenwood, Trefor Selway and John Moore to learn and now improve our archery skills. That's the commitment shown by the staff here.

"After I was injured I didn't think that one day I would work in one of the Blind Veterans UK centres. I love the routine working here has given me as I have something to get up for. They've given me a purpose as they said 'Here are your tools Carl. Now you work with them.' When I work in the gym they leave me to get on with it as I'm just another qualified member of staff as the charity sponsored me to study at Hereford College where I gained a Level 3 Qualification in Fitness Instruction. They recently sponsored me to train as an archery instructor and I do archery with the new members who are here on their Intro Week. They've given me a platform to express myself and its brilliant."

Those words were spoken by Carl Adamson, an inspirational younger member of our charity who joined Blind Veterans UK after a horrific accident in Northern Ireland when he was just 24 years old. I caught up with a very busy Carl on Founder's Day [26th March] at the Llandudno centre.

Carl describes the accident that ended his career in the Cheshire Regiment just a week before he was due to return from a two year tour of Northern Ireland.

"I joined the Cheshire Regiment in 1995 and served in Germany and Belize. I was

involved in a road accident on patrol in Northern Ireland when a Land Rover overturned onto me just a week before I was due to return from a two year tour. I was part of the QRF (Quick Reaction Force). We were in the middle of the Irish Hills where we'd put a road block onto a car to stop it crossing the border. The accident happened as there were five of us but the Land Rover was only fitted with four seats. I had to sit on the plastic partition between the seats so when the Land Rover went over everyone else was wearing their seat belts, but as I didn't have one I was flung off the plastic partition and through the top of the Land Rover and into the ditch. I looked up and watched as the Land Rover rolled down and on top of me and a wire cutter dug into my face.

"It didn't just damage my eyes it broke every single bone in my face, not just broke them, but shattered them into little pieces. I lost all the muscle and fat out of the back of my eyes and my eyes sank into my brain as there was nothing to control my eyes. My face just disintegrated as it dropped to my neck.

"I could see little blue lights in the distance and that must have been the ambulance coming. Next thing I collapsed on the paramedics and when I woke up I had tubes coming from every orifice. I put my hand on top of my head and felt that my head had been shaved and I could feel inside my head where it had been stitched up. I was terrified and as I was pumped full of drugs thought that I'd been kidnapped. I asked where I was. I was injured in County Tyrone and I was 250 miles away in hospital in Belfast and my parents were there. Doctors were shining the blue torch into my eyes to find out if I could see. I could see the light but not very well and I was a complete mess.

"The accident happened on 27th March 1997 and we're on the 26th March today so it's 18 years ago tomorrow. I remember it like it was yesterday. It seems like it was yesterday not 18 years ago."

Over the next few years Carl underwent a gruelling series of operations and recovery.

How did you become the person you are today?

"I don't know I think that it's inside you. I didn't want to be injured. When it first happened people would stare at me and I'd feel insecure but now I don't really care. I think it was about a year or two after the accident that I came to St Dunstan's as it was then, as it had taken that long to get my eyes stabilised. I can't remember who introduced me but I still wasn't ready as I wanted to run away and hide.

"Thankfully Ian Hebburn who was a ROVI at the Brighton centre wouldn't give up on me and he convinced me to go down there and bit by bit over the years I became more and more confident and now I'm at the stage that I feel like part of the family, the Blind Veterans UK family.

"I go to Brighton tomorrow for a Younger Group weekend and that means taking a train by myself from Llandudno to Brighton. When I first joined I was really edgy about doing anything like that but now I'm really relaxed, it's like popping out to the shop, I don't give it much thought.

"Working at the centre and with the younger group I meet people who are in the same position that I was in all of those years ago so I understand how they're feeling and I can try to help them.

"The great thing about all of our centres and the staff is that they are so friendly and that gives you the confidence to move forward with your life as you feel that you are part of something. If the staff weren't as good as they are it wouldn't work, but they all pull in the same direction to help you. Mark Lovatt, Steve Boswell, Mark Hollis and my colleagues in the Sports & Rec Dept are a pleasure to work with. In fact everyone at the centre is!

"Colin Williamson has included me in Project Gemini so I'm looking forward to meeting everyone when they come to England in June and going to America in August."

What would your message be to people who are coming in and aren't ready for Blind Veterans UK or they're scared?

"I'd say to them that they've got to give it time and they've got to understand that the staff and their fellow members are trying to help. There's no negativity, everyone is trying to do the right thing for you and if you go in the direction they want you to things can be achieved. In fact you will achieve things that you didn't think possible. The first thing is to accept what's happened to you and then move on from that. There are three stages, acceptance and then the determination to succeed as you adapt to a new way of life. This organisation will pull you in all kinds of directions but you have to trust what they do as they know what will work and it does. Just trust and work with them as you'll get to where you need to be. Then you're in the third and final stage — achievement.

"I still have my moments but through working with staff here I'm better qualified to understand that even though there may be dark days there's always

hope and I have a future and if it wasn't for Blind Veterans UK I wouldn't have one. I'm in a very privileged position and I try and tell everyone how great the charity is and how special each of our centres are as they are all different. I think it's the best organisation in the world. I want to thank Sharon Gradwell my Welfare Officer as she never gave up on me ever."

What's next on your list to achieve?

"I want to encourage other younger members to get up here and get involved, especially the ones who may be struggling to come along and embrace the centres and get involved. We're going to try and expand the archery we do here and enter competitions against other teams in Wales so that will be interesting. And I'm getting very good at it now! When I started the arrows didn't even hit the target and it was Mark Hollis and Andy Gillam who took the time to teach me and it meant last night I got five arrows in the centre one after the other. I won last night's tournament and it was the first time ever that I came first at something so I can't wait to do it again!"

An interview with Mark Hollis, Activity Team Leader at the Llandudno centre, features in the Talking Review.



Picture: From left to right: Mark Hollis Activities Team Leader Llandudno, Trefor Selway, Dave Greenwood, Carl Adamson, John Moore and Andy Gillam Activity Team Instructor Llandudno.

The invasion and occupation of the Chanel Islands during World War Two. By Colin Williamson, Contributing Editor.

The Chanel Islands were the only British territories to be occupied by the Nazi forces in World War Two. Adolf Hitler thought that the islands could be a key staging post for the invasion of France but Winston Churchill thought otherwise and decided that they played no strategic importance for Britain and consequently chose to leave the islands undefended. His decision to demilitarise was to have very significant repercussions for the sixty thousand islanders who remained throughout the war.

On the 28th of June 1940 the Luftwaffe dropped bombs on Jersey and the neighbouring island of Guernsey, killing 44 people. Two days later members of the German air force took control of Guernsey airfield swiftly followed one day later by a detachment of soldiers from the Wehrmacht who raised the German flag over the island. Jersey officially surrendered on July 1st.

Life under German occupation was hard for those who remained. Food was severely rationed; farmers were forced to hand over their crops to the German authorities and fishermen, their catches. To be caught listening to the wireless meant imprisonment; as did trying to escape to England. Nearly all of the British born islanders were deported to Germany. Jewish families living on the island were sent to concentration camps either in Poland or in Germany but some of the luckier ones made it to the only concentration camps to be established on British territory, on nearby Alderney.

The beginning of the end of occupation started in June 1944 with Operation Overlord, the invasion of north-west Europe by the allies. This ultimately led to the end of the war in Europe and by 7th May 1945 the German army had surrendered. On May 9th, the German forces occupying Jersey laid down their arms to the islands liberators, the advance party of Task Force 135 who had sailed into St Helier onboard HMS Beagle to reclaim the island. The Task Force included many Chanel Islanders who were forced to flee back in 1940 and one of them, Captain Hugh le Brocq, was given the honour of raising the Union Flag over Fort Regent. This act came only hours after Captain le Brocq had learned of the death of his wife three weeks before liberation.

Blind Veterans UK beneficiary Alan Banton was born on Guernsey in 1925 and

subsequently evacuated to Weymouth in Dorset on the 20th June 1940, a date that sticks in his mind as it was his mother's birthday. The family stayed at an aunt's house in Southampton for a short spell and eventually moved to Hereford.

Alan went on to join the Royal Navy in 1943 and Served on Motor Torpedo Boats, Minesweepers in the Mediterranean and eventually the North Atlantic convoys onboard a Corvette. He eventually returned to Guernsey in 1954 and has attended the Liberation Day Parade held every year on the 9th May many times in the past.

"Although it's a day of celebration I think it's very important that we never forget those Islanders who lost their lives during the occupation and I often think of those and raise a glass to their memory".

Another Islander who remembers the occupation is Guernsey born former Royal Navy diver George Chandler. George served on Frigates, an Aircraft Carrier and onboard Minesweepers in the Mediterranean, Far East and the Persian Gulf. These are his memories of German occupation from the age of four to nine years old.

"We lived in a house very close to the local telephone exchange which had a very large garden. One day German soldiers came and built an underground entrance to the exchange via metal lid on the top. This was guarded night and day by mainly Georgian soldiers. Towards the end of the occupation food was becoming very scarce indeed and all of the soldiers were starving. One day one of the guards disappeared and after a search his body was found apparently after having eaten daffodil bulbs, mistaking them for onions. He was buried in the German cemetery on the island. Toward the latter part of the war, whilst the Germans were starving, Islanders were receiving Red Cross parcels to supplement the meagre rations and one day I was at school in the town of St Peter Port and from the playground I could see the ship SS Vega coming into the harbour carrying the food parcels for the locals. Islanders with gardens also grew vegetables and one family fattened a pig all year round to be eaten at Christmas and they also salted some of the meat so that nothing was wasted. I remember some folk making blancmange out of seaweed collected from the beaches; surprisingly it was pink! All of the locals supported one another, that's how we survived I guess.

"At the rear of our house was a builders yard and the Germans used the sheds as stables for the horses pulled the covered wagons. I spent a lot of time with the horses. Once a German soldier told me to jump up on the cart and we went out with supplies to some gun batteries out on the cliffs about five miles away.

"Later in the war we had British air raids and I vividly remember my mother pulling me into the house just as a Spitfire flew past firing its cannons. Us kids would rush out after the air raids and pick up the empty shell cases and any other kit that was left lying around. One day, after an air raid, some of the horses broke free and went charging down the street pursued by the soldiers, which made us laugh!

"The island was very heavily fortified and I remember some very heavy anti aircraft guns sited in a nearby field which made the house shake every time they fired. I also remember seeing German soldiers conducting exercises in and around the lanes and they always left behind lots of shell casings which we would collect.

"We were always finding live ammunition lying around and that's something that still happens to this day. As you can imagine, a lot of bombs were dropped near the beaches and the cliffs to try and take out the many bunkers that were dotted around. These bunkers still stand around the island; they were very sturdy constructions, made out of reinforced concrete.

"Many families were evacuated to England along with children and teachers from the island's schools.

"I remember quite clearly Liberation Day, going down to the town and seeing HMS Bulldog and the landing crafts in the harbour and British soldiers coming ashore with what seemed like the entire population of the island welcoming them. I also remember Brigadier A.E. Snow, the senior officer commanding the liberation, announcing from the balcony of a hotel that 'the Germans had surrendered without a shot being fired'."

The island of Sark was liberated on the 10th of May and the German garrison on Alderney finally surrendered on the 16th.

570 islanders were sent to serve prison sentences in continental jails and concentration camps for crimes committed during the occupation. The majority of these for resistance activities. Twenty two inhabitants of Jersey and nine from Guernsey never returned. Quite a large number of islanders escaped from the islands of Jersey and Guernsey during Nazi rule, 150 and 75 respectively.

One Englishman to make the headlines after the war was serial burglar and former Coldstream Guardsman Eddie Chapman, who was serving a prison sentence in Jersey for burglary when the Germans invaded. He eventually ended up in Germany, via France, where he was enrolled in the German army, subsequently being awarded the Iron Cross, Germany's highest military honour. Eddie Chapman was in fact a double agent and a documentary about his wartime exploits, named Agent Zigzag, was broadcast in 2011.

Liberation Day is a special celebration for the islanders, celebrating the anniversary of the liberation of the islands from the German forces in World War Two. It is considered to be Jersey's National Day and this year some members of Blind Veterans UK will be there to celebrate this special occasion.



Picture: Standard Bearers at a parade to celebrate Liberation Day.

Family News.

Congratulations to:

Jessie Jay, the widow of the late Kenneth Jay, who is celebrating the birth of her 14th great grandchild, Sophia, who was born on 6th April 2015. Jessie has 10 great grandsons and four great granddaughters who are aged from 24 to just a few days old, and she is proud of each one of them.

Birthdays:

Dick Tetlow who celebrated his 103rd birthday on 20th April.

James Edwards who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 13th April.

Trevor Wigmore who celebrated his 100th birthday on 10th April

Alfred Morley who celebrated his 100th birthday on 16th April.

Wedding anniversaries:

Platinum (70th):

Jack & Joan Pentelow of Wellingborough, Northamptonshire on 7th April.

Ron & Cynthia Murray of Saltburn by the Sea, Cleveland on 23rd April.

Blue Sapphire (65th):

Ron & Elsie Parsons of Eastbourne, East Sussex on 1st April.

Christopher & Jean Christoff of Eastbourne, East Sussex on 10th April.

Peter & Betty Warlow of Norwich, Norfolk on 10th April.

Joan & Raymond Probart of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire on 11th April.

Winifred & Roy Marrable of Rotherham, South Yorkshire on 15th April.

Gerald & Marguerite Mellish of Westcliff On Sea, Essex on 15th April.

Gordon & Margaret King of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire on 15th April.

Peter & Ivy Brooke of Ipswich, Suffolk on 22nd April.

Diamond (60th):

Gordon & Hazel Eaton of Solihull, West Midlands on 2nd April.

Ronald & Mary Benton of Rhyl, Clwyd on 2nd April.

Anthony & Agnes Salmon of Stoneycroft, Liverpool on 4th April.

John & Joyce Hayman of Wigston, Leicestershire on 9th April.

Bill & Margaret Skinner of Hull, North Humberside on 9th April.

Gil & Mary Price of Redcar, Yorkshire on 11th April.

John & Eileen Glynn of Swindon, Wiltshire on 16th April.

Gerald & Shirley Bower of Sheffield on 12th March.

Golden (50th):

Wally & Stella Poole of Yate, Bristol on 17th April.

Pearl (30th):

Robert & Barbara Kempster of Watford, Hertfordshire on 6th April.

Terry & Maggie Price of Weston Super Mare, Avon on 22nd April.

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

Helena 'Helen' Bleach who died on 24th March 2015. She was the wife of Albert Bleach.

Margaret Catchpole who died on 6th March 2015. She was the wife of Cyril Catchpole.

Sheila Chappell who died on 6th March 2015. She was the wife of Montague Chappell.

Gladys Jubb who died on 2nd April 2015. She was the widow of the late Brian Jubb.

Joan Mead who died on 12th April 2015. She was the wife of Herbert Mead.

Hilary Patterson who died on 1st March 2014. She was the widow of the late Ernest Patterson.

Morag Phipps who died on 22nd March 2015. She was the wife of Jeffrey Phipps.

Elizabeth 'Betty' Smith who died on 18th December 2014. She was the widow of the late Charles Smith.

Joan Walker who died on 26th February 2015. She was the widow of the late Percy Walker.

Edith Warnock who died on 23rd March 2015. She was the wife of John Warnock.

Hazel Webb who died on 1st March 2014. She was the wife of Ronald Webb.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

Dennis Armstrong of Guernsey Served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1951 to 1957.

Philip Baguley of Altrincham, Cheshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1951.

Eric Bee of Loanhead, Midlothian Served in the 1st Battalion London Scottish from 1959 to 1964.

Alistair Bernard of Gorebridge, Midlothian Served in the Royal Scots Regiment from 1952 to 1954.

Penelope Blake (nee Chandler) of Wells, Somerset Served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1950 to 1953.

Anthony Blakeborough of Darlington, County Durham Served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1952.

John Blundell of Brecon, Powys Served in the Royal Air Force from 1967 to 1989.

Neville Bowen of Ammanford, Dyfed Served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Joan Bower of Colchester, Essex Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1946.

Dr Michael Bracey of Boscombe, Bournemouth Served in the Royal Signals from 1949 to 1951.

Joseph Bradshaw of Crewe Served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1955.

Allan Brook of Scarborough, North Yorkshire Served in the Royal Marines from 1942 to 1946.

Evelyn Brooks of Horsham, West Sussex Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1945.

Jack Carter of Chesterfield, Derbyshire Served in the Royal Marines from 1954 to 1961.

James 'Jim' Carter of Bognor Regis, West Sussex Served in the Royal Navy from 1956 to 1958.

Ross Chisholm of Haslemere, Surrey Served in the Royal Canadian Navy from 1942 to 1945.

Arthur Clark of Hockley, Essex Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1946 to 1948.

Stanley Clarke of Camborne, Cornwall Served in the Army Catering Corps from 1947 to 1955.

John 'Cledwyn' Hughes of Cranleigh, Surrey Served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Dennis Clements of Wigan, Lancashire Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1943 to 1948.

William 'Bill' Corless of Wolverhampton Served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1950.

Ronald Coulson of Clacton-On-Sea, Essex Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1950 to 1953.

Edward 'Ted' Cruse of Basildon, Essex Served in the Royal Artillery from 1954 to 1960.

Peter Crust of Winslow, Buckingham Served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1951.

Peter Darwell-Taylor of Epsom, Surrey Served in the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1955.

John Dixon of Carlisle Served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

Richard Eastley of Paignton, Devon Served in the Royal Signals from 1964 to 1973.

John Elliott of Bonnyrigg, Midlothian Served in the Royal Highland Fusiliers from 1965 to 1974.

James Farrell of Sheffield Served in the Fleet Air Arm from 1941 to 1946.

Leslie Fox of Swindon, Wiltshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1946.

Edward France of Cambridge Served in the Royal Signals from 1942 to 1947.

Richard Goss of Bournemouth Served in the Royal Engineers from 1964 to 1969.

Keith Gotts of Hampstead, London Served in the Royal Pioneer Corps from 1949 to 1955.

Jack Hall of Huddersfield Served in the General Service Corps, Royal Engineers and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1947 to 1963.

Derek Hansford of Weymouth, Dorset Served in the Royal Engineers from 1954 to 1957.

Gareth Harmon of Treorchy, Mid Glamorgan Served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1965 to 1985.

Edward Hickman of Bilston, West Midlands Served in the Royal Artillery from 1941 to 1948.

Joseph Hinge of Bexhill-On-Sea, East Sussex Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Joan Holmes (nee Rigby) of Worsley, Manchester Served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1947 to 1955.

James Hosking of Truro, Cornwall Served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1954.

Nancy Hulton (nee Parinson) of Oxford Served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps from 1941 to 1945.

Norman Humphrey of Eastleigh, Hampshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1938 to 1950.

Cyril Jones of Redditch, Worcestershire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Colonel Martin Jones of Etchingam, East Sussex Served in the Royal Artillery, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, Parachute Regiment and the Gloucestershire Regiment from 1947 to 1992.

David Kearle of Port Talbot, West Glamorgan Served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1956.

Richard Kennedy of Bootle, Merseyside Served in the Merchant Navy from 1937 to 1947.

Leslie Laity of Tuffley, Gloucester Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1957 to 1959.

Alan Lithgow of Bishop Auckland, County Durham Served in the Army Catering Corps from 1959 to 1964.

Thomas Lutwyche of Walsall, West Midlands Served in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1954 to 1967.

Donald Maclean of South Queensferry, West Lothian Served in the Royal Artillery from 1954 to 1960.

Bernard Marsden of Bury, Lancashire Served in the Royal Artillery from 1947 to 1952.

Schera Masters of Ilford, Essex Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1939 to 1946.

Delma Matkin (nee Bamford) of Nottingham Served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1944 to 1945.

Alexander Mcrae of Wirral, Merseyside Served in the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy from 1953 to 1957.

Alfred Meadows of Dover, Kent Served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

George Metaxas of West London Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1954 to 1962.

Baden 'Hiram' Middleton of Burgess Hill, West Sussex Served in the Fleet Air Arm from 1946 to 1948.

John Miles of Colchester, Essex Served in the Royal Artillery from 1953 to 1957.

Gordon Norris of Epsom, Surrey Served in the Royal Engineers from 1947 to 1949.

John Northway of Brighton, East Sussex Served in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and the Royal Artillery from 1943 to 1952.

Charles Oates of Stockport, Cheshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1945.

Andrew Oliphant of Glasgow Served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

William Oliver of Bridgnorth, Shropshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

William Palin of Northwich, Cheshire Served in the Royal Artillery from 1941 to 1959.

Anne Parker (nee Bunyan) of Leyland, Lancashire Served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1946.

David Pendry of Attleborough, Norfolk Served in the Queen's Division and the Queen's Regiment from 1983 to 1984.

Frank Pennington of St. Helens, Merseyside Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1943 to 1947.

Gerard Phillips of Wallasey, Merseyside Served in the Cheshire Regiment and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1949 to 1955.

Brian Ramshaw of Swindon, Wiltshire Served in the Royal Engineers from 1964 to 1970.

Constance Rea of Hereford Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Stanley Reay of Newcastle Upon Tyne Served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Kenneth Richardson of Mold, Clwyd Served in the Royal Signals from 1942 to 1947.

Alice Robinson (nee Hughes) of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1943 to 1945.

Roy Roper of Nottingham Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

Thomas 'Tom' Rogers of Aldershot, Hampshire Served in the East Surrey Regiment from 1955 to 1957.

Peter Seaman of Bradley Stoke, Bristol Served in the Royal Air Force from 1957 to 1959.

Victor Seaman of Chelmsford Served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1947.

Ernest Sampson of Harlow, Essex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1957.

Frederick Shiach of Glasgow Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1953 to 1959.

William Shields-Appleton of Frinton-On-Sea, Essex Served in the Grenadier Guards from 1945 to 1953.

Kenneth Sinclair of Ashington, Northumberland Served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1956.

Charles 'Sam' Smith of Mold, Clwyd Served in the Royal Marines from 1943 to 1946.

Winifred 'Joan' Smith (nee Benns) Served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 to 1945.

Arthur Stamp of Colchester, Essex Served in the Royal Engineers from 1942 to 1947.

Edward Swan-Wilkins of Torquay Served in the Army Catering Corps from 1946 to 1949.

Edward Taylor of London Served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

Gordon Timperley of Thornton-Cleveleys Served in the Royal Navy from 1951 to 1958.

John Tripp of Stowmarket, Suffolk Served in the Buffs, Queen's Royal Regiment and the Essex Regiment from 1940 to 1946.

Peter Upward of Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire Served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1946.

Virginia Vincent of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1966 to 1969.

Maria Walbrin (nee Eves) of Hastings, East Sussex Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

Bryan Wardell of Eastleigh, Hampshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1948.

John Watkins of Tring, Hertfordshire Served in the Royal Army Educational Corps and the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1950 to 1952.

David Wheeler of Darlington, County Durham Served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

Leonard Widdowson of Sheffield Served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Albert Wilkinson of Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1956 to 1961.

Aubrey Williamson of Downham Market, Norfolk Served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1943 to 1946.

Contact telephone numbers.

The Brighton centre 01273 307811.

The Llandudno centre 01492 868700.

The Sheffield centre 0114 2672550.

The Booking Office: To book accommodation please contact the Booking Office on 01273 391500. If you have care needs please first contact your Welfare Officer.

ROVI on Duty: If you need to speak with the ROVI on Duty please telephone: 01273 391447.

IT Training Support: If you need to speak with the IT Instructor on support please telephone: 01273 391432.

New members: If you know a veteran with sight loss who could be eligible to join Blind Veterans UK they can phone our Membership Department on Freephone: 0800 389 7979.

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, families and friends.

Sidney Ainsworth of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire died on 25th February 2015, aged 92. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force as an electrical fitter in 1941, serving in Italy and the Middle East. When discharged in 1946 he was a Leading Aircraftman.

William Backhouse of Chester, Cheshire died on 29th December 2014, aged 96. He joined the Royal Armoured Corps (Hussars) in 1939 and fought in North Africa with the Middle East Forces. Injured in service he was discharged in 1943 following amputation of his left leg below the knee.

Stella Barton of Haslemere, Surrey died on 22nd March 2015, aged 96. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1939 and served as a plotter during the Battle of Britain. She was commissioned and became a Codes and Cyphers officer. She was demobilised as a Section Officer in 1942 following marriage.

John Beane of Milton Keynes died on 30th March 2015, aged 92. He served with the Royal Engineers (TA) in 1938 until 1943. He transferred to the Army Air Corps and qualified as a parachutist in 1949. He was attached to the Parachute Regiment until discharge as a Sergeant in 1955.

John 'Bill' Bennett of Oadby, Leicester died on 1st January 2015, aged 92. He volunteered to join the Royal Air Force RAF in 1940, becoming employed as a Fitter 2. He served in a variety of locations around the UK, lastly at RAF Henlow where he was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

Raymond 'Ray' Bentley of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire died on 31st March 2015, aged 81. He joined the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1954 and served with 336 Support Unit in Partington before discharge in 1956.

Leonard 'Len' Betts of Wellingborough, Northamptonshire died on 28th March 2015, aged 81. He joined the Royal Armoured Corps 10th Royal Hussars in 1951 and served in Catterick, Germany and Tidworth. He was discharged as a Trooper in 1953.

Ellen 'Helen' Black of Dorchester, Dorset died on 28th March 2015, aged 96. Stationed at Sidmouth and Danby Beacon she served as a Radar Operator in the UK in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1947, leaving as a Leading Aircraftwoman (Temporary Corporal).

Thomas Blackmore of Colchester, Essex died on 13th March 2015, aged 103. He served in the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry in 1931 and 1932. During WW2 he worked for Woods, a company making war equipment which was a reserved occupation.

Maurice Bourne of Wimborne, Dorset died on 20th March 2015, aged 95. Posted to 44 Royal Tank Regiment in 1940 he was deployed to the Western Desert. Serving in Egypt and Libya he was involved in the invasion of Sicily and Italy before being posted back to the UK in time for D-Day but was injured and medically discharged as a Corporal in 1945.

Frederick 'Alan' Brindle of Preston, Lancashire died on 20th February 2015, aged 84. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps for National Service in 1950. He trained at Aldershot and spent his Service in the UK at Fulwood Barracks and completed his National Service in 1952 as a Private.

Nelson 'Neil' Brown of Ebbw Vale, Gwent died on 1st April 2015, aged 94. From January 1943 he served in the General Service Corps for Army training and in April that year he was selected for the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He landed in Normandy just after D-Day and fought through to Germany. He was discharged as a Craftsman in 1947.

Francis Burrow of Ruislip, Middlesex died on 1st March 2015, aged 100. He joined the Rifle Brigade, which later became the Reconnaissance Corps, in 1940 and was deployed with HQ staff in India and then North Africa. Following the landing at Anzio he was mentioned in Despatches and was one of the first to enter Rome. He was subsequently posted to Palestine and travelled from North Africa to Marseilles and through to Germany and the Polish border where his war ended. He was discharged as a Sergeant in 1946.

Maurice 'Stan' Bush of Preston, Lancashire died on 3rd March 2015, aged 88. In May 1944 he joined the General Service Corps, training in Ballykinler, Northern Ireland. He transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps as a driver and served in Carlisle, Putney and Italy prior to discharge in 1946 as a Lance Corporal.

Fred Cammidge of York, North Yorkshire died on 1st March 2015, aged 82. He joined the West Yorkshire Regiment for National Service in 1951, serving in Austria and Egypt. He was discharged in 1953.

Stanley Chantler of Leigh On Sea, Essex died on 25th February 2015, aged 91. In 1942 he joined the Royal Navy and served in auxiliary craft, mainly armed trawlers. He served ashore in Africa and Ceylon and was discharged as an Able Seaman in 1945.

Joyce Charlton of Hove, East Sussex died on 12th March 2015, aged 83. She served in the Women's Royal Army Corps in Preston from 1950 to 1952.

Rev. Canon Roy Cochrane of Sheffield died on 18th March 2015, aged 89. Canon Cochrane joined the Royal Air Force in 1942. He served in the UK, the Middle East and finally in India. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946. He was the officiating Chaplain at RAF North Coates from 1964 to 1969.

Bernard Coker of North Walsham, Norfolk died on 28th March 2015, aged 90. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1943 and was in Bomber Command in Italy and the Middle East until discharge as a Flight Sergeant in 1947.

Harold Cooper of Smethwick, West Midlands died on 18th February 2015, aged 89. He joined the Welsh Guards in 1943 and served in France, Belgium and Germany and was injured in Service and medically discharged in 1947, leaving as a Guardsman.

Emily Cousins of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 19th March 2015, aged 97. She was commissioned in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in 1940 and served in India. She was discharged in 1946 in the rank of Lieutenant.

Kenneth 'Ken' Dobson of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 14th March 2015, aged 77. In 1956 he joined the Essex Regiment for National Service, serving in Brentwood and Germany as the CO's bugler. Discharged as a Drummer in 1958, he remained on part-time National Service until 1962.

Walter 'Wally' Freer of Farnborough, Hampshire died on 14th March 2015, aged 91. He joined the Royal Navy in 1941, training at HMS Ganges, Ipswich. He served in the Mediterranean on board HMS Ajax and later HMS Dido specialising as a gunloader. He also spent some time supporting the troops in North Africa and was bombed in Bone Harbour on New Year's Day 1943. Discharged in 1946.

Douglas Fursland of Neath, West Glamorgan died on 10th March 2015, aged 91. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1942, took part in the D-Day invasion and fought across Northern Europe. He transferred to the Royal Engineers in 1946 and was discharged in 1947 as a Private.

Bernard 'Ben' Gascoigne of Brighton, East Sussex died on 29th March 2015, aged 99. He joined the Leicestershire Regiment in 1940. He was briefly in Norway before Allied troops were evacuated to England. He was drafted with the 7th Leicester Regiment to India and was later deployed with the Chindits in Burma. He was demobilised in 1946.

James Greenall of Armley, Leeds died on 29th March 2015, aged 84. He joined the Royal Armoured Corps, serving in Egypt and Libya, he was a Trooper by the time of discharge in 1951.

Donald Greenwood of Halifax, West Yorkshire died on 22nd March 2015, aged 89. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1943 and qualified as a flight engineer on Halifax Bombers. He was posted to India in late 1945, replacing airmen who were due for demobilisation. He was discharged as a Flight Sergeant in 1947.

Derrick Gregson of Warminster, Wiltshire died on 24th March 2015, aged 84. He joined the Green Howards in September 1948 and transferred to the REME in November of the same year, serving at home. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1953.

Donald 'Don' Hansen of Stockton On Tees, Cleveland died on 26th March 2015, aged 93. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1943 where he served as a Flight Engineer, flying on Halifax aircraft when he completed 18 operations. He was discharged as a Flight Sergeant in 1947.

Clive Hawkins of Colchester, Essex died on 16th February 2015, aged 88. He joined the General Service Corps in 1944. He then served with the Essex Regiment and the Buffs in India, Singapore, Java and a variety of locations in the Far East. He discharged as a Private in 1948.

Alain Henry of Upminster, Essex died on 14th March 2015, aged 62. He joined the Royal Artillery (TA) in 1972 and in 1975 transferred to the Royal Green Jackets. He worked in vehicle maintenance, based at the Mile End and West Ham TA Barracks. He was discharged as a Rifleman in 2000.

Eric Hodgkinson of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire died on 16th March 2015, aged 96. He joined the Royal Armoured Corps (Sherwood Rangers) in 1937 and served in the Middle East and Greece. He was taken prisoner in Greece and was a Prisoner of War in Germany for four years. He was discharged as a Sergeant in 1946.

Edward Howell of Heathfield, East Sussex died on 27th February 2015, aged 96. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1938. He trained at Blandford but was medically discharged in 1939.

George Hutchinson of Goole, North Humberside died on 1st March 2015, aged 89. He joined the RAF Police in 1946 and served in the UK and Germany until discharge as an Aircraftman First Class in 1948.

James 'Jim' Ingram of Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire died on 18th March 2015, aged 82. He was called up to do National Service and joined the Gordon Highlanders in 1952. He trained at the Bridge of Don and Fort George. He was posted to Malaya and was involved in combat against the Communist terrorists throughout his tour of duty. He was discharged in 1954.

John Johnson of Liverpool died in March 2015, aged 82. He joined the Kings' Own Royal Regiment (TA) in 1973 at Thetford, Norfolk and served as a driver. He was posted in the UK and to Vogelsang, Germany. Discharged in 1977.

Robert 'Bob' Kinch of Lostwithiel, Cornwall died on 2nd April 2015, aged 91. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and went onto air crew training before going solo in Northamptonshire. He subsequently went to Canada where he flew the Stearman trainer before completing Flying Instructors training at Trenton. He later served in Egypt, India, Ceylon, Burma and Singapore, returning to the UK for discharge as a WO Pilot in 1946.

John Lainchbury of Ross On Wye, Herefordshire died on 12th March 2015, aged 98. He volunteered for the Royal Air Force in 1939 and trained at Cardington as an Instrument Repairer. Posted to India, he worked on Blenheim's and Beaufighter's, returning to the UK in 1944. At RAF Aston Down he fitted out Lancaster bombers delivered from Canada. He was discharged in 1946.

Thomas Lavell of Dorking, Surrey died on 22nd February 2015, aged 88. He joined the Army Air Corps in 1944 before transferring to the Royal Fusiliers. He subsequently transferred to the Gordon Highlanders in 1946 with whom he served in Northern Ireland, Germany, Korea, Hong Kong, Malaya and Scotland. He was discharged as a Private at the end of Colour Service in 1952.

Douglas 'Doug' Mason of Cardiff, South Glamorgan died on 5th March 2015, aged 92. He joined the Fleet Air Arm in 1942 and qualified as an Electrical Air Fitter. He served mainly at naval air stations in the UK and South Africa from where he came back home in HMS Trouncer, an aircraft carrier, at the end of the war. He was discharged in 1946.

Michael Molloy of Cwmbran, Gwent died on 10th January 2015, aged 91. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1941 and after training joined 18 Field Squadron and being a good gymnast briefly joined the PT department. He then joined 3 Commando and served in the Middle East and Italy, ending the war in Austria and Germany. He was discharged as a WOII in 1947.

Joseph Mooney of St Helens, Merseyside died on 1st March 2014, aged 91. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and qualified as a signaller. He was torpedoed in the English Channel on D-Day while on loan to a Norwegian destroyer and was picked up with other survivors by HMS Swift. He served in various other destroyers, mainly in the Mediterranean and was discharged in 1946.

Eric Morley of Barnsley, South Yorkshire died on 7th January 2015, aged 92. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and trained as an Engine Technician in Blackpool. He spent most of his time with Bomber Command working on Merlin engines at a variety of stations in the UK. He was discharged in 1946 as a Leading Aircraftman.

John 'Jack' Myerscough of Clitheroe, Lancashire died on 24th March 2015, aged 86. He joined the Royal Navy for National Service in 1947. Having served in HMS Roebuck in the Home Fleet on fishery protection. He was discharged in 1949.

Thomas Netherwood of Caernarfon, Gwynedd died on 17th March 2015, aged 98. He joined the Royal Armoured Corp, 4/7 Dragoon Guards in 1935 and served in the UK, Palestine and North Africa until discharge as a Squadron Quarter Master Sergeant in 1947.

Jean Payne of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 10th July 2014, aged 91. In 1942 she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service and served in Northampton, North Wales and Portsmouth before being discharged in 1946 as a Private.

William Peck of Diss, Norfolk died on 21st March 2015, aged 99. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps at Romford in 1940 and trained as a fitter, working in field workshops. He was evacuated from Dunkirk, went to North Africa and

invaded Sicily. He returned to England for the Normandy invasion and landed on D+4. Driving tank transporters he fought his way through to Germany. He was posted to Italy after the war and then Egypt before discharge as a Sgt Major in 1946.

William 'Bill' Penfold of Linton, Cambridge died on 19th March 2015, aged 80. He joined the Royal Hampshire Regiment in 1954 and served in the UK and Malaya until discharge as a Lance Corporal in 1956.

William Pick of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 1st August 2014, aged 93. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1941 and transferred to the Warwickshire Regiment in 1945. A talented musician he used to entertain the soldiers with his saxophone at concerts. He moved to the 2nd Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment in 1946 and became a Bandsman before demobilisation that year.

Thomas Pike of Caterham, Surrey died on 3rd November 2014, aged 94. He joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1941 and in 1943 he transferred to the newly created Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and served in the Middle East. He was discharged in 1946.

Donald Pimperton of Ruddington, Nottingham died on 1st April 2015, aged 85. He joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1947 and having trained as an engineer he repaired tractors at ATS training camps until discharge in 1949.

Leslie Pollitt of Lytham St Annes, Lancashire died on 1st March 2015, aged 93. He joined the South Lancashire Regiment in 1941 and was commissioned into the Cameron Highlanders in 1942. He served in India, Malaya and Japan until discharge as a Captain in 1948.

Joan Poole of Stone, Staffordshire died on 20th March 2015, aged 90. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1942 and trained as a Predictor Operator, working alongside the Royal Artillery Anti-Aircraft Battery. She was stationed in London at Dulwich, Abbey Wood and Woolwich. She was discharged in 1945.

Dorothy 'Dot' Pullman of Exeter died on 1st April 2015, aged 91. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1941, training at Aldermaston. She specialised as a cook, served in Surrey and Lancashire and cooked for a variety of units until she was discharged as a Corporal in 1946.

Walter Richardson of Yarm, Cleveland died on 21st March 2015, aged 86. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1947 and served on bases in Wiltshire and Dorset as a driver until discharge as a Lance Corporal in 1949.

Horace Rogers of Walsall, West Midlands died on 22nd January 2015, aged 94. He joined the Army straight from school and then transferred to the Royal Air Force in 1939. He worked in radar and served in the UK, North Africa and the Middle East. He was commissioned as a Flying Officer in 1953, 10 years before he was discharged.

Robert 'Bob' Savage of Nelson, Lancashire died on 4th March 2015, aged 93. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 and served in the UK and Canada. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1945.

Enid Scillitoe of Longford, Gloucester died on 28th February 2015, aged 92. She first worked for the Bristol Aeroplane Company before joining the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1943. She served as a wireless operator at RAF Innsworth, RAF Harrowbeer, Weston Zoyland, Gosport and Blackpool. She was discharged in 1946 as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

William Seeley of Bungay, Suffolk died on 26th March 2015, aged 82. He served in the Royal Army Pay Corps for National Service from 1950 to 1952 and afterwards signed up for part-time National Service, being finally discharged in 1956.

Geoffrey Seward of Bridport, Dorset died on 25th March 2015, aged 94. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 and trained as a wireless operator serving in Italy, Sicily and Yugoslavia. In 1944 he transferred to the RAF Air Sea Rescue Service and was discharged as a Corporal in 1946.

Jordan Silver of Lichfield, Staffordshire died on 10th April 2015, aged 103. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946 and qualified as a flight mechanic. He was posted to a variety of locations in the UK, notably 147 (Pathfinder) Squadron where he maintained the Mosquito aircraft. He was transferred in 1945 to the Fleet Air Arm and demobilised in 1946.

Frederick 'Arthur' Smith of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire died on 11th March 2015, aged 96. He enlisted into the Royal Artillery in 1939, serving in the UK and India. He discharged in 1946 as a Captain.

Kenneth Smith of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire died on 16th March 2015, aged 91. After joining the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in 1942 he was posted to India as part of 322 Maintenance Unit with South East Asia Command before discharge as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

Christopher Spellacy of West Kingsdown, Kent died on 12th March 2015, aged 91. He joined the Royal Navy in 1942 and carried out his training at HMS Raleigh in Davenport and was later posted to HMS Pembroke at Chatham. He served all around the UK and then moved into Coastal Forces. He was involved with operations to disrupt and shoot down the V1 bombs from Europe. He was discharged in 1946 as an Able Seaman.

Brian Taylor of York, North Yorkshire died on 30th January 2015, aged 77. Called up for National Service he joined the Royal Artillery in 1956. He trained in Oswestry and Wales, became a light Ack-Ack gunner and was posted to Cyprus during the EOKA campaign. He was discharged as a Gunner in 1958 although he later joined the TA and served with the Royal Signals from 1959 to 1963.

Charles Westley of Northampton, Northamptonshire died on 21st March 2015, aged 83. He joined the King's Royal Hussars in 1949 for National Service serving in the UK and Germany. Discharged in 1951 he then did part-time National Service in the Northamptonshire Yeomanry, finally being released in 1955.

James Whiting of Accrington, Lancashire died on 3rd April 2015, aged 95. He joined the Royal Navy in 1936 and served on Atlantic Convoys, the North Sea, the Mediterranean and the Far East. He was discharged as an Electrical Mechanic 1st Class in 1949.

Trevor Wildman of Prenton, Merseyside died on 7th March 2015, aged 77. He joined the Royal Signals in 1956 for National Service. After training at Catterick he served in Germany, extended his service and was discharged as a Private in 1963.

Edna Wilkinson of Brighton, East Sussex died on 22nd March 2015, aged 91. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1943 and qualified as a writer. She served in HMS Pembroke in Chatham throughout the war and has fond memories of her service. She was discharged in 1945 as a Leading Wren.

