

September 2015

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



Blind Veteran UK

On the cover: Blind veteran and former WAS(B) Constance Halford-Thompson, who laid the wreath at the Cenotaph to mark the 70th Anniversary of VJ Day.

Photo Mark Wheeler.

Back page: Blind veteran Peter Price shoots with Blind Veterans UK Bowmen as his wife Linda acts as his spotter. Photo Derek Sizeland.

www.dereksizeland.photography/



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Contact: Review Editor, Catherine Goodier 020 7616 8367

Email: revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

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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 someone who could be eligible to join Blind Veterans UK they can phone our Membership Department on Freephone: 0800 389 7979.

From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

This year we have celebrated our charity's centenary in many ways and to mark our Centenary Buckingham Palace Garden Party there is a 100 page special edition with this month's copy of the Review for you to enjoy. It includes some very interesting articles, including an interview with Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC amongst others.

In this month's edition of the Review, as in past editions, we 'chronicle the actual happenings at St Dunstan's' (a quote from the editor in the first edition of the Review in July 1915 that is included in the 100 page special edition). In so doing we mark the achievement of the Review in recording history as it has unfolded for many blind veterans since the early years of World War I as St Dunstan's, and now as Blind Veterans UK.

I'd also like to recognise the current editorial team; Catherine Goodier and Colin Williamson, who have been recently joined by Paul Jacobs GM; a blind veteran and former Rifleman from 2nd Battalion, the Rifles. Catherine for more years than I can remember has done an outstanding job, not just recording the events of our great charity and those that it serves, but recording important history that is, and will be, enjoyed by many for future years.

Since sustaining and recovering from various injuries, including losing his sight in the Afghanistan conflict, Paul joins the team having already completed many very significant sporting endeavours, all to raise funds for Blind Veterans UK. An outstanding example and inspiration for others.

When I have attended Reunion lunches and made comment in this Review, I've often reflected on the examples of tremendous inspiration that I have witnessed by members, employees, volunteers and those who support the charity. The acts of individuals who selflessly carry out actions that benefit others, I find heart-warming and a source of great encouragement. So too are the examples of what I see blind veterans achieve in all walks of life.

Taking initiative, pushing the boundaries, and helping others, characterises what happens every day for our members and long will it continue I'm sure. It also serves as a valuable source of inspiration to their fellow blind veterans, particularly those who have been recently affected by vision impairment.

Blind Veterans UK Calendar

Activities from the Brighton centre.

September.

Golf Weekend 12th and 13th.

History Week 20th to 26th.

Writers' Forum 19th.

Fishing Week 20th to 26th.

October.

International Week 4th to 10th.

Golf Weekend 17th and 18th.

Writers' Forum 17th.

Bowling Club 18th to 31st.

November.

Spa Week 8th to 14th.

Amateur Radio Week 22nd to 28th.

Writers' Forum 21st.

December.

Turkey & Tinsel Week 6th to 12th.

Writers' Forum 19th.

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

Activities from the Llandudno centre.

September.

Cycling Week 6th to 12th.

October.

Walking Week 4th to 10th.

Photography Week 11th to 17th.

November.

Military Week 2nd to 9th.

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

Activities from the Sheffield centre.

September and October.

Culture Week 28th September to 2nd October.

December.

Christmas Week 14th to 18th.

Younger Group 21st to 24th.

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.

The Founder's Day Awards are a time for us to celebrate our charity. The categories for the 2016 Founder's Day Awards are shown below for you to nominate those whom you feel deserve one of these very special awards.

The 2016 Founder's Day Awards ceremony will be held on 26th March at our Brighton Centre. It is an important date in our history as it celebrates the date in 1915 when our first 16 war blinded ex-Service men entered the new training centre at St Dunstan's Lodge in London's Regent's Park.

This annual ceremony celebrates the special achievements of the members, staff and volunteers of Blind Veterans UK.

The recipients of the 2015 Founder's Day Awards were featured in the May Review. If you know of someone you think would be eligible for a Founder's Day Award in 2016, please do nominate them.

The categories are:

- i) **Community Award** for the best contribution to their local community or the family of Blind Veterans UK — by a member, spouse, widow or widower.
- ii) **Training Achievement Award** for the best novice on learning new skills — member only.
- iii) **Creative Art Award** will recognise endeavour in a creative activity and encompass art, handicrafts, sculpture and music. If practical, an example should be sent with the proposal form. If not practical, then please send a photograph — member only.
- iv) **Sports Person of the Year Award** will celebrate an exceptional sporting achievement during the award year — member only.
- v) **Outstanding Achievement Award** is made to a member who has achieved an outstanding level of independence via their participation in activities promoted or provided through and by Blind Veterans UK — member only.

vi) Innovator of the Year Award.

For a person or organisation who successfully introduces a beneficial idea or device to Blind Veterans UK.

vii) Chairman's Commendation Award for exceptional staff achievement. Nominated by line managers.

For guidelines and a proposal form, please contact Jane Keane, Blind Veterans UK, Queens Road, Llandudno, Conwy, LL30 1UT. Telephone: 01492 868707 email: jane.keane@blindveterans.org.uk

Nominations are treated in confidence and discussed by Selection Committees in January 2016. Nominees are not informed that they have been nominated until the Selection Committee have reached their decision.



Picture: The winners of the 2015 Founder's Day and Chairman's Commendation Awards at the Llandudno centre.

Review format changes.

If you would like to receive the Review in another format apart from print, it is also available in audio as an MP3CD or on a USB. Should you wish you can also receive the Review 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.

A Lofty Request.

Chris Kirk, Bookings & Transport Manager at the Brighton centre, wants you to search your lofts in the hope of finding forgotten film footage, audio or stills.

Explaining the background to his request Chris Kirk said: "I recently watched a film that was shot at our Brighton centre that starred Jacqueline Hill, the actress who played Barbara in the first series of Doctor Who that was made in 1963. Coupled with the fact that over the years the charity has been visited and supported by people like Jon Pertwee and Patrick Troughton, who both played Dr Who, it piqued my curiosity, as well as the curiosity of blind veterans who have seen it.

"There are several early episodes of Doctor Who missing and the BBC are always trying to find them. They even offer cash rewards to people that find missing episodes. They often turn up in people's lofts and are normally on film, although some people have stills or even audio recordings. The BBC archives moved building several time in the 1960s and early 1970s and many film prints ended up with private collectors or just friends of the Beeb. Episodes were shown on film in social clubs etc. As many of you would have been fresh out of military service by then and with our connections to several Doctor Who actors of that age, it may be a good possibility that you have something in your loft!"

If you do discover anything from your search please contact Chris Kirk on telephone: 01273 391490 or email: chris.kirk@blindveterans.org.uk



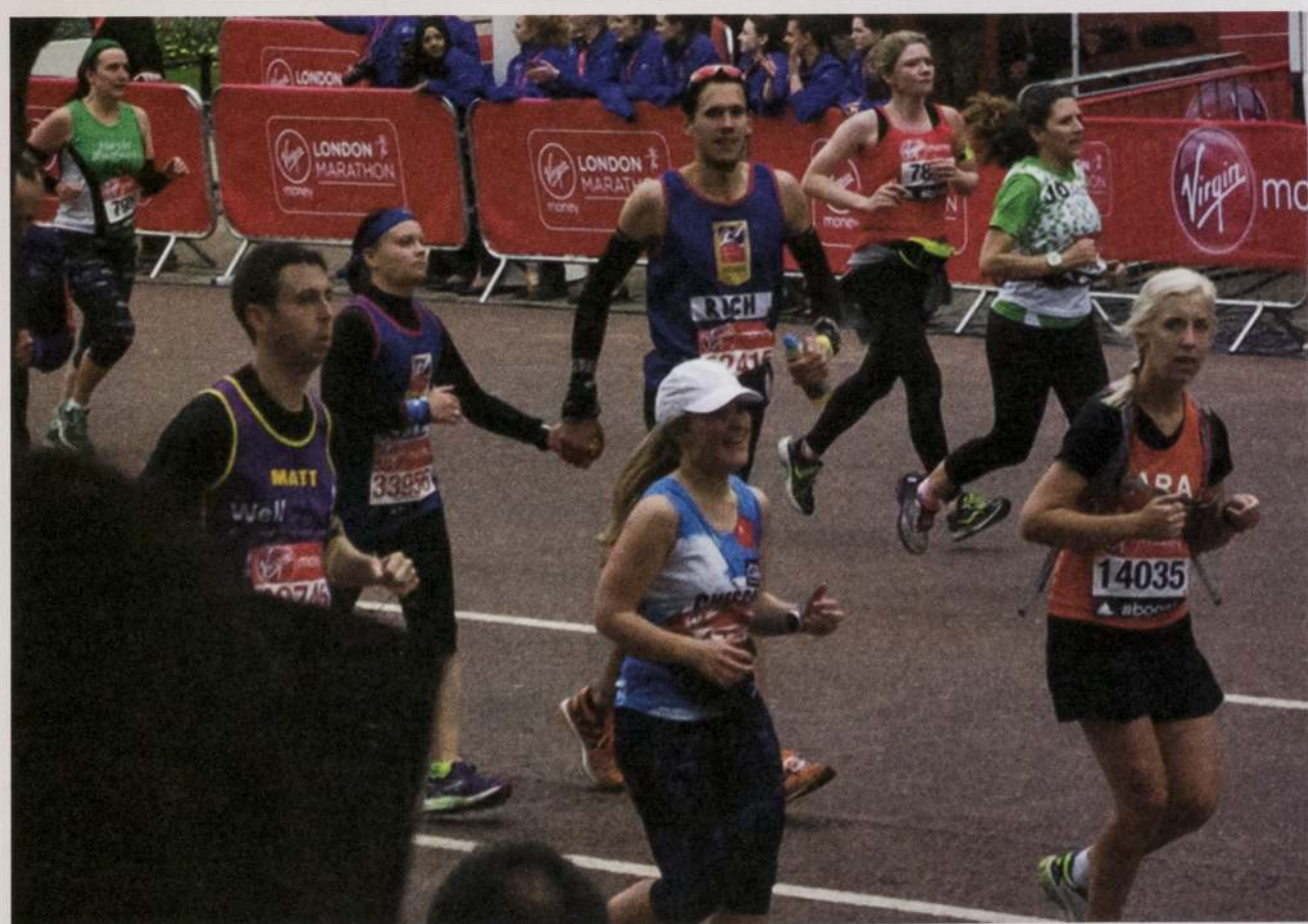
Picture: Former Doctor Who Jon Pertwee, who judged the Review's story writing competition in 1995, is shown with Fred Ripley the author of the second placed story.

Sign up for the 2016 London Marathon.

If you would like to take part in the 2016 London Marathon please contact Russell Scullion, Sports & Recreation Instructor at the Brighton centre, as he has five places for members of Blind Veterans UK.

As completing a marathon requires training and dedication to cover the 26.2 mile route, Russell and the team at the Brighton centre will work with you to ensure that you are at the zenith of your fitness on the day of the 2016 London Marathon.

To this end the five successful applicants can take part in a training week at the Brighton centre when Russell and his fellow instructors will provide specific running and general fitness training. They will also advise on nutrition and the best clothing and footwear. Should you need a running partner they can also arrange for one. As there are only five places available please put your application in as soon as possible by phoning or emailing Russell Scullion on telephone: 01273 391481 or email: russell.scullion@blindveterans.org.uk



Picture: In the 2015 London Marathon Kelly Ganfield (née Hart) achieved a personal best of 4 hours 21 minutes running with Richard Wilkins.

Brighton and Llandudno centres Christmas and New Year accommodation.

Christmas bookings follow a different process from regular bookings. Bookings for the Christmas and New Year period can only be taken and accepted via your Welfare Officer. Bookings for individuals are assessed on a level of social and care needs.

If you wish to be considered for a stay at Christmas or New Year, please apply to your Welfare Officer as soon as possible. Applications will close on 2nd October but it is important that you get your request in well before this date. Bookings will be confirmed by the middle of November to allow for alternative arrangements to be made for those who are unsuccessful.

Both the Brighton and Llandudno centres are open for Christmas and New Year bookings. Members who apply for accommodation during the festive season can choose to stay for either Christmas week or New Year week, depending upon availability. Arrivals for Christmas will take place from 20th to 22nd December. Christmas departures and arrivals for New Year will take place from 27th to 29th December. Departures after New Year will take place from 3rd to 5th January. These dates are approximations and are subject to slight change as per transport schedules.

As in previous years, a surcharge of £40 will be applied to those who come to Brighton and Llandudno over the festive period, which reflects the significant cost of the extra food, drink and activities which we provide.

We look forward to seeing many of you for Christmas and New Year.

From the August Review.

It was stated in the August Review that Arthur Michael Flint had died, when in fact it was Roy Flint who had died. The Review apologises for this inaccuracy.

Fight for Sight.

Blind Veterans UK's No One Alone campaign team has recently been in conversation with Fight for Sight, the leading charity in the UK supporting research into eye health, about how our organisations can work together.

Since 1965, Fight for Sight has raised funds to support medical research into a wide range of eye health and sight loss conditions. Current research into the causes and treatment of conditions such as age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma, as well as research into the effects of eye trauma are just some of Fight for Sight's most recent work.

Through Fight for Sight's Speaker Network, representatives from Fight for Sight are speaking at events around the country, raising awareness of sight loss conditions and the research they're currently working on, and we would like to offer you the opportunity to hear a representative speak.

If you'd be interested in finding out more about Fight for Sight's current research and would be interested in attending a talk from Fight for Sight, please contact the No One Alone team on 020 7616 7999.

Recited not read.

Glifford Gower, a resident at the Brighton centre, has asked the Review to write that he didn't read the official Tribute to mark the 70th Anniversary of VE Day, but that he spent many weeks learning it so that he could recite it on the night.



Picture: Brighton centre resident Clifford Gower who recited the official Tribute to mark the 70th Anniversary of VE Day.

Blind Veterans UK Christmas cards, baubles and gifts.

Christmas is coming and the goose is getting fat, so please put a penny in Blind Veterans UK hat.

A catalogue of the 2015 gift selection range from Blind Veterans UK is included with this edition of the Review. Inside its pages you will find traditional Christmas cards, alongside the original Christmas card that was sent in 1919 by our founder Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE to the early First World War blind veterans.

This year we have expanded our gift selection to include gifts for children, toiletries and Christmas crackers, napkins and baubles.

Please do feel free to share the catalogue with your family and friends, and should you require further catalogues, please telephone Mrs Shernaz Kapadia in the Fundraising and Communications department on 020 7616 8368.

To place your order simply fill in the order form at the back of the enclosed catalogue and return it in the freepost envelope provided.

Or you may prefer to call 0300 111 0440 or shop online at www.shop.blindveterans.org.uk



Picture: This Union Flag Christmas tree bauble is just part of the range of Blind Veterans UK Christmas merchandise that is in the brochure with this edition of the Review.

Letters to the Editor

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

Dear Editor,

The Garden Party at Buckingham Palace was a splendid event, most enjoyable and quite an experience. I am writing on behalf of my wife and myself to ask you to please convey our thanks and appreciation for the tremendous amount of work and effort by all those involved.

The event embodied the spirit of Blind Veterans UK — their help, co-operation and comradeship was there if needed and it was especially good to see so many Blind Veterans UK ties and badges being worn.

As our young Army wheelchair helper said: "We aim to make this the best day possible for all of you." And that is exactly what they did.

Yours faithfully,

C. H. Nicholas.



Picture: Just some of those who helped at our 4th June Centenary Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, and to whom we are immeasurably grateful. **Photo:** Keith Harness.

The Gulf War of 1991. By Colin Williamson, Contributing Editor.

It has recently been announced that Saudi Arabia is to reopen its Embassy in Iraq 25 years after severing relations with its former enemy at the onset of The Gulf War.

During those turbulent 25 years, the region has been subject to a potpourri of failed democracies, wars, political turmoil, civil unrest, religious extremism, armed militias, sectarianism and a massive upsurge in terrorist activity that has been exported around the globe.

This article doesn't set out to understand the whys and wherefores of The Gulf War. It is simply a tribute to those British service men and women who took part in that campaign.

In order to fully understand the origins behind The Gulf War of 1991, fought between Iraq and the U.S. led coalition forces, you first have to delve into the murky waters of the Arab states' frequent and often violent territorial disputes around the Persian Gulf region. These disputes are mainly over the delineation of borders between the states, the ownership of oil fields which saturate the area and access to the strategic ports and waterways. Tribal animosities also play a part which often results in sudden and very violent conflicts.

On the 22nd September 1980 Iraq launched an air and ground offensive against its neighbour and bitter enemy Iran which followed a long history of border disputes between the two countries. Iraqis were also extremely concerned that the Iranian Revolution of 1979 would be the catalyst for an upsurge of sectarian violence by its long suppressed Shia majority.

Despite Iraq attacking without warning, thus giving the Iranian Army very little time to organise its defences, the Iraqi army failed to capitalise on its rapid advances. The Iranians were a very formidable fighting force and by June 1982 they had regained most of their previously enemy held territory. For the next six years until the end of the war in 1988 Iran was the dominant force, inflicting heavy casualties on the Iraqis until eventually a United Nations brokered ceasefire ended the dispute.

Despite the huge cost in military and civilian deaths (it is estimated that over one million people lost their lives) the conflict never really achieved Iraq's key objectives which were to take control of the Shatt Al-Arab waterway (therefore redrawing the border) taking control of Iran's oilfields and fulfilling their long time ambition to be the one dominant Arabian Gulf state.

The Invasion of Kuwait.

At the onset of the Iran-Iraq war, Kuwait had remained neutral. This was to change in 1982 after Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini attempted to export his brand of Islamic Revolution and the civil disobedience that accompanied it, to neighbouring Kuwait, resulting in the decision by the Kuwaitis to start sending quite significant amounts of financial aid to the Iraqis. Kuwait also acted as Iraq's major port after Basra was declared 'off limits' due to the heavy fighting around it.

At the end of the Iran-Iraq war Iraq owed Kuwait some fourteen billion U.S. dollars that it had borrowed in order to help pay towards the cost of the conflict. Iraq was in no position to pay back the loan and asked for it to be written off, which Kuwait refused. Despite repeated attempts to resolve the situation both Iraq and Kuwait refused to budge over the issue.

By the end of the 1980s Iraq was desperate to reduce its international debt which had risen to over sixty billion U.S. dollars and requested that the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) should increase the price of crude oil and decrease crude oil production in order to help the country increase its revenue and pay off its debts. Meanwhile, Kuwait had been producing oil way above its OPEC quota and steadfastly refused Iraq's request to limit production. In Iraq's corridors of power this was seen as a blatant act of aggression which could not, and would not, go ignored. Another issue causing concern was the disputed Rumaila oilfields near the border between the two countries. Iraq was convinced that Kuwait was slant-drilling across the border and literally stealing its oil from under its nose. Iraq demanded compensation which Kuwait refused. Tensions between the two countries increased alarmingly until eventually, on 2nd August 1990 Iraq's patience finally snapped and Saddam Hussein made the fateful decision to invade Kuwait and begin what was about to become The Gulf War.

'Operation Granby' was the name given to the British military operations during the Gulf War (American forces had two phases; phase one was 'Desert Shield' which was the build up to the actual war itself and 'Desert Storm' was to be the combat phase) and the British in-theatre Commander from October 1990 to March 1991 was Blind Veterans UK Vice Patron, General Sir Peter de la Billière KCB, KBE, DSO, MC, DL.

Over 53,000 British troops were deployed during the war and 47 Service men lost their lives in the conflict. That total includes nine British Servicemen who were killed in a so called 'friendly fire' incident when a U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt attacked two Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles. American deaths totalled 146 (three were female) and the biggest single coalition loss due to an accident was the 92 Senegalese soldiers who perished when their aircraft crashed on approach to Ras Mishab airport in Saudi Arabia.

Thirty four nations joined the coalition in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, including surprisingly one Latin American country, Argentina, which sent transport planes and ships in support of the coalition. Although not sending any troops, Japan donated fourteen billion U.S. dollars to the cause and military personnel from countries all around the globe, including New Zealand, Canada, Greece, South Korea, Poland, Belgium, Spain, Australia and Pakistan participated to some extent in the war. There were several Arab countries that joined the coalition including Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Syria.

Soon after the invasion, Saddam Hussein began making threatening overtones regarding invading oil rich Saudi Arabia. The U.N. Security Council were concerned that should the Iraqis carry out this threat then they would have access to, and therefore control, most of the world's oil reserves.

Meanwhile the build-up of coalition troops in the area continued relentlessly; Operation Desert Shield was taking shape. Saddam Hussein was given a date of the 15th January 1991 to withdraw from Kuwait or face the consequences. He chose to ignore the warning.

Operation Granby. Kuwait.

The Gulf War started with an aerial bombing campaign on 17th January. This was heralded as the start of the American 'Operation Desert Storm' phase of the war.

Initial targets for the bombing campaign were military bases, command and control facilities and mobile Scud missile launchers. These launchers, tracked by U.K. Special Forces, had been firing rockets into Israel in order to draw the Israelis into the war which the Iraqis hoped would persuade Arab states who were already part of the coalition to withdraw, rather than fight on the same side as the Israelis.

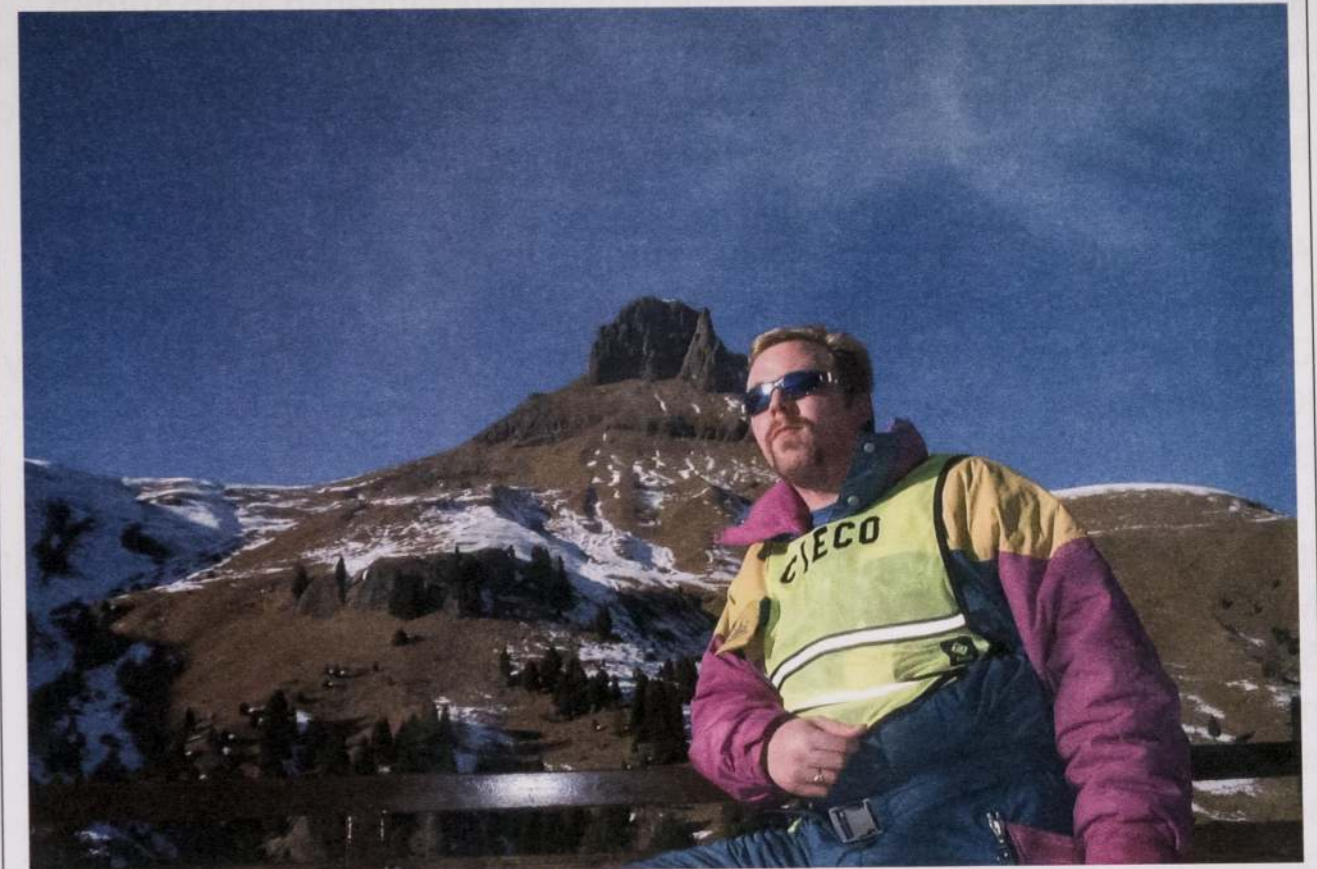
Over 88 Scud missiles were fired during the campaign and as a result 72 Israelis lost their lives as well as 27 U.S. Service men whose barracks in Saudi Arabia were targeted.

The ground phase began on 24th February when U.S. Marine units, supported by elements of the British seventh armoured brigade, crossed over the Kuwaiti border and advanced towards Kuwait City, preceded by an artillery and rocket barrage. Several tank battles took place but the Iraqi Army's soviet built T-62 and T-72 main battle tanks were no match against the superior American M1A1 Abrams and the British Challenger 1. Coalition forces rapidly advanced on the lightly defended positions held by the infamous Iraqi Republican Guard and soldiers from the Kuwaiti army were tasked with liberating their capital. Little resistance was put up by the Iraqis and the city was taken on 27th February, the same day as Saddam Hussein ordered the retreat from Kuwait.

It was during this phase of the war that Blind Veterans UK beneficiary, Gulf War veteran and former Army Commando Gary Lomas, was injured whilst dismantling booby traps, mines and left over ordnance in and around the British Embassy in Kuwait City. Gary was part of a Royal Engineer explosive ordnance disposal team from 3 Commando Brigade attached to 7th Armoured Brigade for the duration of the campaign. During a defensive position clearing operation a mine exploded close to where he was standing resulting in serious facial injuries which required an immediate casualty evacuation first to Riyadh in Saudi Arabia and then on to a specialist facial trauma hospital in the UK. Despite the best efforts of the eye trauma specialists Gary lost his left eye completely and suffered extensive damage to his remaining eye.

Operation Granby. Iraq.

The first British unit to actually enter Iraq were three patrols from B Squadron, 22 Special Air Service Regiment. These patrols were inserted behind Iraqi lines



Picture: Gary Lomas.

in order to pinpoint targets for coalition air strikes, mainly supply routes, Scud missile launchers and communication bunkers.

It wasn't long before U.S., British and French forces began pouring into Iraq during early to mid February and the Iraqi Army fled in disarray. Rather than push on to Baghdad, coalition forces were ordered to pull back to the border of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

On 28th February, exactly one hundred hours after the ground campaign started, President Bush ordered a ceasefire and told the world that Kuwait had been liberated.

Although the U.S. provided the largest contingent of troops (or 'boots on the ground') the U.K. committed the largest contingent of any European nation involved in the war.

Operation Safe Haven

Operation Safe Haven was the UK's contribution to Operation Provide Comfort,

a multi-national effort to provide protection and humanitarian aid to Kurdish refugees fleeing oppression by Saddam Hussein's forces during the aftermath of the Gulf War. Royal Marines from 40 and 45 Commando and other 3 Commando Brigade elements were involved in the operation.

After the conflict had ended, British troops, supported by members of the Netherlands Army and the Royal Netherland Marine Corps embarked on Operation Safe Haven in order to safeguard the people of Northern Iraq (mainly Kurds) from persecution from the defeated Iraqi Army and to provide aid to the thousands of refugees that had fled the fighting.

It was during this operation that Blind Veterans UK beneficiary and former Royal Marine Commando Steve Nixon was severely injured in a road traffic accident. Steve sustained life threatening head injuries after being knocked down by a military vehicle after stopping to refuel his Landrover. He was rushed to the nearest Turkish hospital for treatment but the conditions at the hospital were so unsanitary he was placed back in the ambulance until another, more sterile hospital could be found. Upon arriving at the 'clean' hospital Steve's fellow Commandos were gobsmacked to find that they were expected to hand over all of their cash to pay for his treatment!

After being stabilized by the doctors at the Turkish medical facility he was then casevacted by helicopter to Germany and after treatment flown by Hercules transport aircraft back to a specialist head trauma unit, Hunters Moor Rehabilitation Centre in Newcastle, in his native North East.

He was later presented with his Gulf War campaign medal at the Brighton Centre by Major General Andrew Keeling CB CBE RM who had been Steve's Brigade Commander in Northern Iraq in 1991.

It was Andy's first meeting with our charity and as you all know he was our Chairman from 2008 to 2013.



Picture: Marine Nixon with Major General Andy Keeling CB, CBE, RM at the Brighton centre in 1993. It was Andy's first introduction to our charity.

Blind Veterans UK Bowmen Centenary Shoot. By Jane Hume Poyner.

Blind Veterans UK Bowmen held their biggest shoot yet, a special Centenary Shoot to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the charity. The Sussex Archery Ground in Crawley saw 61 archers, plus friends and supporters brave the weather to shoot a Short Windsor round — that's 3 dozen arrows shot at 50 yards, another 3 dozen at 40 yards and then a final 3 dozen at 30 yards, with a maximum score possible of 972. The top four scores from each team, adjusted for their archery handicaps, were then added together to work out the winners! Graham Walker, one of our Bowmen, said: 'It's not very often we shoot at 50 yards but it was good to shoot it. I did quite well on all three sets and I did get into our team with a good score.'

And Bowman John Cunnington said: "The field was a sight to see (pardon the pun), 15 bosses at a distance of 50 yards. Few of us had ever shot that far before but we had a go; a great go. It was enormous fun. We met archers from all three armed services and many members of clubs who had visited us at the Brighton centre in the past."

The visiting teams comprised those who have supported the club over the years: Ditchling, Newhaven, Hellingly, Clickers Archery Shop (who travelled, as they do every year, all the way from Norwich) the Royal Navy, RAF, Army and Southampton University.

As our archer John Bower said: "What a turn out from all our guests, from private archery clubs, universities, private businesses, and those who have supported us — St Dunstan's Archery Club, now Blind Veterans UK Bowmen — over a good number of years, both with generous funding, and of course shooting with and against us."

Bowman Tom Roddy said: "Regarding the shoot I thoroughly enjoyed the day. Although it rained throughout the shoot it didn't dampen the archers' mood. Everyone I met and spoke to was in good spirits. I had Amanda, an Army archer on the target with me, and my spotter was Dave Long, from Clickers Archery shop. They were very helpful and good company. What else can I say? The Blind Veterans UK Archers were all in a happy and jovial mood. Good journey to and from the competition site! Wet but happy on our return to the Brighton centre!"

And Carol Davies, another of the Bowmen, said: "I have never seen so many targets set up for a shoot. The targets took a battering from the archers and the rain. The paper was sticking to the arrows as they were pulled from the target. There were so many arrows being pulled out of the sodden bosses at the same time they sounded like pigs squealing!"

Due to the magical handicapping system within archery where all archers, regardless of their impairment or ability, can shoot as equals the results were exciting. As Carol Davies said: "All the archers were very competitive which reflected in the final scores. They were all so close."

Awards were presented by Mrs Lesley Agutter, a long-time friend and supporter of the club and member of the Worshipful Company of Fletchers. The rankings were: **1st** Army. **2nd** Blind Veterans UK Bowmen: Carol Davies, Graham Walker, Carol Sharpe, Peter Price. **3rd** Hellingly

The Army were overjoyed with their result and it was summed up by Emma-Jane Coleman, of their team, who said she wanted to do it all again! Every archer, spotter and volunteer received a commemorative glass engraved with 1915 to 2015, and our former logo of St Dunstan's club etched on one side and the new Bowmen club logo on the other, along with a Blind Veterans UK Bowmen key ring.

Let's finish with John Bower: "Thanks must go to those who sought out the excellent sports ground at Crawley. I would also like to give thanks to all those organisers, helpers and spotters without whose help we VI archers could not do without, thank you all."



Picture: Carol Davies, Graham Walker, Lesley Agutter, Carole Sharpe and Peter Price.

Photo Derek Sizeland.
www.dereksizeland.photography/

Gun Club report. By Roger McMullan, Gun Club Volunteer.

The Gun Club went to Felixstowe from 6th to 9th July 2015, to shoot against the gun club section of the East Suffolk Association for the Blind. They were great hosts and we all had a great time.

On Wednesday 8th we had our competition with them, and for the first time in our competitions with them, we came home with the shield for the winning team, and tankards for individual winners.

Team Awards:

Blind Veterans UK:

Bill Godden 94. Brian Taylor 93. Connie Apletree 85. **Total: 272.**

East Sussex Association for the Blind Team Felixstowe:

Mark Maidman 92. Francis Ling 83. Jim Whyte 85. **Total: 260**

Individual Awards:

1st Bill Godden 94. 2nd Brian Taylor 93. 3rd Mark Maidman 92.

Prizes were presented by the Chairman of The East Suffolk Association for the Blind at a dinner at the Brook Hotel where we were entertained for the evening before our return to the Brighton centre on Thursday.

Our thanks go to everyone at Felixstowe and to Steve (the driver), Roger, Terry and their wives; and not forgetting Vi Taylor for a very enjoyable few days. Here's looking forward to the return match in October at the Brighton centre.



Picture: Proudly displaying their winning shield and tankards the victorious team are from left to right. Bill Godden, Connie Apletree and Brian Taylor of The Blind Veterans UK Gun Club Team.

Not Forgotten. Constance Halford-Thompson places Blind Veterans UK wreath to mark the 70th Anniversary of VJ Day.

The Women's Auxiliary Service of Burma, WAS(B)s, played an important part in the Burma campaign during the Second World War. Blind veteran Constance Halford-Thompson, who is shown on the cover of this edition of the Review, is proud to have served in the WAS(B)s when she 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 speaks of her service in Burma: "The WAS(B)s were formed by the wives and daughters who walked out of Burma when the Japanese invaded, and they were properly formed when the British Troops moved in to retake Burma. I was 17 when I joined, and I initially found it very difficult to get permission from my parents, but as my elder sister was already a WAS(B)s that made it easier. We were looked after extremely well and had Headquarters in Shillong, Assam where we went to learn about the stocktaking for our mobile canteens. We drove three tonners 15 hundred wght or jeeps, but usually had a driver, cook and Ghurkha guard. We went into Burma supplying the troops with food, or setting up static canteens with teas and lunches, or anything the troops might need from toothpaste to Brylcream."

The troops always recalled how these wonderful women, who would appear from nowhere in their trucks, brought with them a breath of home.

Constance continued: "We were a very small force of 80 girls at the start and it was all extremely exciting. We had a uniform and had ranks and like the FANYs we were Officers, which meant we carried papers stating that if we were taken prisoner we were to be treated as Officers. We set up canteens at airstrips on the lakes in Rangoon, or we went off with a Division but they did keep us slightly away to the back. The only horror I witnessed was when I was sent to Mandalay just a week after the battle and the Japanese dead were still lying around; I remember their gold teeth had been stolen. What I like to remember is taking off with the canteen and getting the Navy MLs to ferry us across the Irrawaddy allowing us to throw ourselves into the water and let the current carry us down. When I think about it I wouldn't be so cavalier today."

Fishing Taster Week from the Llandudno centre from 19th to 25th July 2015. By Dave Cole.

We all had a great time during the Fishing Taster Week from the Llandudno centre when members who took part were Terry Ottewell, Raymond Ashworth, Peter and Marilyn Costigan, John Enders, Gordon Timmins, Jack Hall, Billy Baxter and me — Dave Cole.

Sunday 19th July.

We arrived at the Llandudno centre in time for dinner and just relaxed as we chatted and got to know one another. At 7pm, Anna who works for TNS Catering at the centre, entertained us all by singing and playing the flute which I have to say was excellent. Well done Anna.

Monday 20th July.

On Monday morning we met Dewi Roberts and Lee Evans, Sports & Rec Instructors in the Activities Team, who were responsible for the week ahead. We were also greeted by Steve Boswell, Rehabilitation & Training Manager who came along to say hi and and make sure we were comfortable and happy in our new surroundings. Good on you Steve, top man.

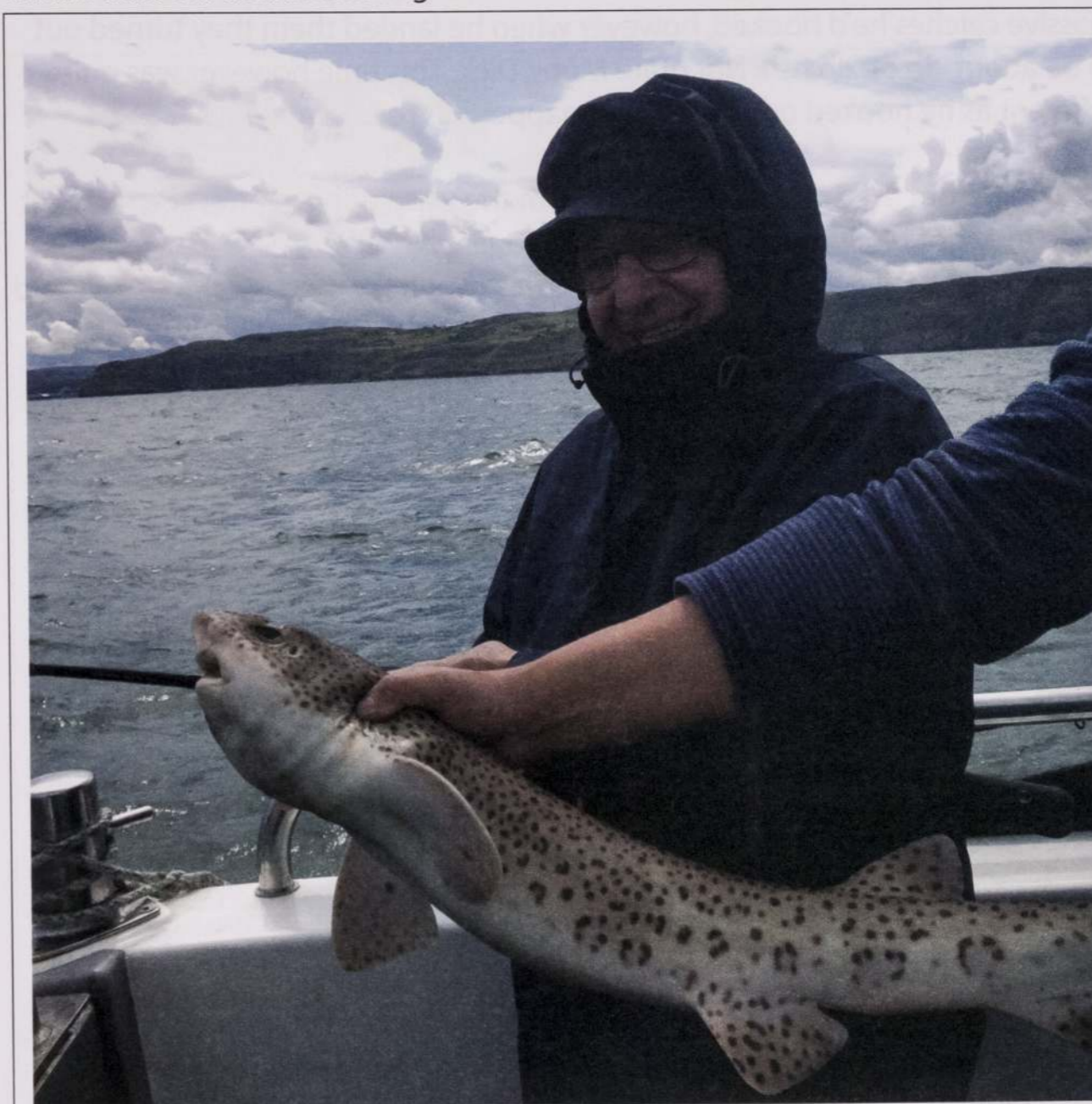
We were then given a kit familiarisation in preparation for the afternoon's activity of fishing off Llandudno's Pier. Unfortunately the fish decided they'd prefer to be elsewhere and we didn't catch a thing. However that didn't dampen our spirits!

Tuesday 21st July.

Today's activity was carp fishing at Conwy Water Gardens when we were helped by Forces Carp who helped us to set us and get us under way. We all sat about for a couple of hours throwing bait and watching the carp eating, but sadly not one decided to take the bait attached to our hooks. Terry Ottewell decided to try a new tactic, which was either serenading or scaring the fish, we're not quite sure which, with his harmonica. After his efforts he was given a round of applause by every fisherman around the lake and then there came an almighty shout 'Fish on!' And on Terry's rod was a nice carp that weighed around 7lbs.

Wednesday 22nd July.

Another day and another set of hopes. Today's activity was boat fishing and a welcome to our fellow blind veteran, who joined us for the day. Being hopeful and competitive we all decided to have a little flutter and each bet 50p on who would catch the first fish and who would catch the biggest fish. First cast and Dennis hooked two mackerel. Typical of all the people on the week the newbie won! Well done though Dennis. On a better note I can say we all caught something and the catch included lots of dog fish, rock salmon, whiting and mackerel. Not forgetting Stevie the starfish. At least we could walk into the centre with our heads held high.



Picture: The one that didn't get away.

Thursday 23rd July.

Woke up ready and raring to go on Thursday with another four hours of boat fishing ahead of us. This time the skipper and first mate decided we would try further out to hopefully land bigger fish. Well we still had the pot (£5) for the biggest fish so we were all up for this! Unfortunately Terry was a little too eager and spent most of the four hours being rather ill, as unlike the day before, the sea was rough and the swells were most impressive.

I'm pleased to report that everyone caught something. That is except me — Dave Cole. Ah hmm. During the week we heard from Billy Baxter about the massive catches he'd hooked, however when he landed them they turned out to be about 1lb or 2lb fish. Not quite Moby Dick. This time however was quite different as he hooked one that big it snapped his rod.

With help from the Sports & Rec team from the Llandudno centre, and the First mate, they got his line back onboard and attached to it was a 9-10lb whopping bull huss. Well Billy won the Fiver and he was over the moon with his catch, and his broken fishing rod was a distant memory and he could put his winnings towards a new rod.

It was a good day as we caught dog fish, whiting, mackerel, bull huss and gurnard. Later, back at the Llandudno centre, we enjoyed some entertainment from singer Big John and an accompanying keyboard player.

Friday 24th July.

Friday was something a bit different again with beach casting at the Menai Bridge. Again I can say we all caught a fish each, however the sort we got came with chips and either mushy peas or curry sauce, which was very welcomed by all of the members. But that was the only fish to report, as rain decided to play its part and we decided to pack up early and back to the centre we went.

Saturday 25th July.

Unfortunately, as all good things must come to an end, it was home time but what a fantastic week we had all enjoyed. We had each caught fish and all the blind veterans were in good spirits.

The friendly and caring staff at the Llandudno centre had done us proud. They looked after us and the food and entertainment there had been great and the driver were super. If you haven't been to the Llandudno centre it's well worth a visit.

The only thing left to do is to say thanks to Dewi and Lee and all the helpers who made the week possible. We all loved it and look forward to a repeat performance. Don't leave it too long guys!

No fish were hurt in the course of the week as they were returned to the sea or lake!



Picture: Happy at the end of a fantastic Fishing Taster Week from the Llandudno centre.

Armoured Trials and Development Unit visit. By Colin Williamson, Contributing Editor.

Bovington has been associated with the Royal Armoured Corps since the First World War. The camp, set amongst the rolling hills and farmlands of rural Dorset, is the home of the Armoured Trials and Development Unit and in July a group of beneficiaries paid a visit to find out what the unit is all about.

The group, consisting of beneficiaries Billy Black, Dave Blagg, Paul West, John Findley, Steve Sparkes and Darren Blanks, plus staff members Tom Williams and Kevin Alderton were invited along to the unit by WO2 Jim Nowell. Jim's brother Chris is a member of Blind Veterans UK who served alongside Jim in Afghanistan before he was injured in a rocket attack on his base.

This specialist unit is tasked with trialling all of the armoured vehicles that the army has in operational use worldwide. Its role is also to test, modify and develop new equipment such as personal body armour, personal clothing which includes boots, protective eyewear and helmets, vehicle armour, communication systems and even fuel and food. In fact, anything that the armoured soldier needs to function effectively, with the emphasis on weapons systems and platforms.

We were invited to inspect (and clamber over in most cases) the latest armoured fighting and reconnaissance vehicles such as the Warthog, Jackal, Husky, the Foxhound, Panther and Coyote and the very impressive Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank. Army personnel with an extensive range of knowledge on each of these vehicles explained the various roles that these vehicles undertake.

"The tank environment", as one of the King's Royal Hussars corporals explained, "especially in warfare, is a very hot, cramped, claustrophobic and sometimes very scary place to be." I could imagine that to be very true; I'm six foot tall and I found moving around the interior of the Challenger 2 very difficult indeed. And the vehicle I was in was static!

The group were given a presentation by the unit's Regimental Sergeant Major on the various weapons systems that each of these vehicles had at their disposal and we were invited to try on some of the personal protective clothing that the soldiers in the field have to wear. When you factor in the amount of kit

that they have to carry around on their backs, plus their personal weapon and belt kit, they really have to be at the peak of their physical fitness to be able to operate successfully. That's why this unit is currently looking at reducing the amount of kit that the combat soldier has to carry, plus reducing the weight of the protective clothing, but not impacting on its effectiveness to stop a bullet or a piece of shrapnel. A very interesting tour it was.

The next stop was the Gunnery School at nearby Lulworth Camp where we were given a presentation on the Gunnery course that the phase two recruits had to pass before being posted to their regiments. We were given a practical demonstration on how to engage a target and fire the Challenge 2 weapon system and then it was off to the simulators to put our newly acquired skills to the test. As we each have a vision impairment it was difficult to actually see the target through the periscope so unfortunately a lot of 'collateral damage' occurred. I fired a high explosive anti-tank round into a farmhouse which really spoilt the farmer's day and Darren took out a milk tanker, much to the driver's annoyance. It was toast for breakfast instead of cereal! All in all, a great afternoon and really good fun.



The photo on the previous page was, from left to right: On tank Paul West, Kevin Alderton, Billy Black, Dave Blagg, Darren Blanks and Steve Sparkes, Colin Williamson and John Finlay at the front.

I asked a few of the members who attended the event why they had put their names down.

Darren Blanks, a former member of the King's Royal Hussars, completed two tours of Iraq. He did his phase two training at Allenby Barracks at the Armour Centre in Bovington Garrison and completed the Gunnery course at nearby Lulworth Camp.

"As soon as this event came up in the calendar I put my name down. Armoured vehicles, especially tanks, are why I joined the army and to come back and be around them again is fantastic. It brought back some great memories for me. It has also been a great opportunity to meet up with some of the guys who I served with and to catch up on what has been going on within the Regiment since I left back in 2008. Obviously, some of the equipment has been updated and some replaced, but the tanks are the same ones that I served in back in the day and the smell, sound and feel never leave you".

Another member who attended was former Royal Air Force air mechanic Paul West who served at RAF Cranwell and RAF Finningley before he was discharged due to his failing eyesight. Paul, who lives just a few miles away from Bovington Garrison at Blandford Forum, was keen to come along to this his first younger group event.

"I've an interest in anything mechanical, especially aircraft but military vehicles are also up there so when I heard about this event I thought I'd give it a go. I've attended a few activity weeks at the Brighton centre, which I thoroughly enjoyed but fancied meeting up with some of the younger guys and this was the perfect opportunity. I especially enjoyed the banter, it is part and parcel of service life and I missed it when I came out. I'm pleased to say it has never changed and I've had a great time!"

John Finlay, from Dalkeith in Scotland, is a former Royal Navy radio operator and likes nothing better than to spend some time with his fellow blind veterans.

"I like the company of ex-Service men and find the younger groups banter to be

just the ticket. I attend as many of these events as I can and I'd recommend the group to anyone who enjoys a laugh and good company. I'm hoping that this visit is repeated again next year as I'd love to come along again. The ATDU staff have been fantastic and it's been a very interesting experience."

Many thanks to WO2 Jim Nowell for arranging this visit and to all of the guys at the Armoured Trials and Development Unit for their hospitality. Thanks also to Tom Williams and Kevin Alderton for their contribution.

A very successful London Triathlon.

Congratulations to Alan Lock, David Powell, Mark Threadgold, Steve Parnell and David Cranson who completed the London Triathlon with Sports & Rec Instructors from the Brighton centre, Russell Scullion, Steve Mills and Theresa Farley. For blind veteran David Cranson it was his sixth London Triathlon with, and for, Blind Veterans UK. His latest medal has taken pride of place alongside the 16 medals from the marathons, half marathons and triathlons that David has previously completed.



Picture: The inspirational David Cranson proudly displays his latest medal from this year's London Triathlon.

Joseph Storey. Young Ambassador.

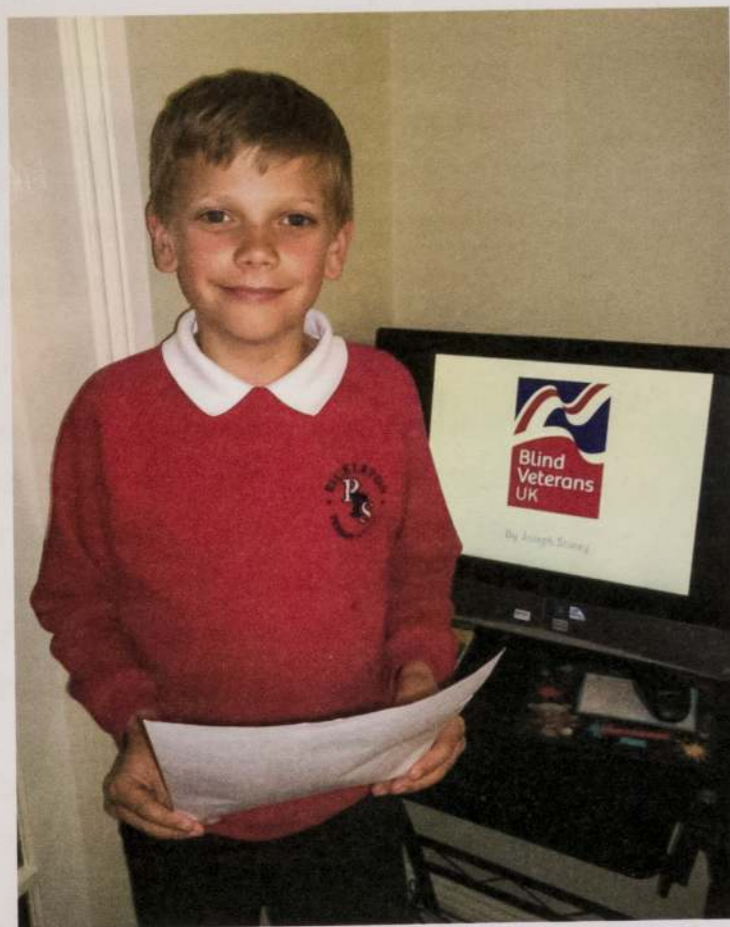
Joseph Storey, the grandson of Win Jordan who works on reception at the Brighton centre, and blind veteran Chris Jordan, recently spoke about Blind Veterans UK for his Year 6 presentation.

He explained that the charity was important to his family as they care for his grandfather Chris. He showed initiative with his talk, as realising the importance of our centenary year, he spoke of our founder Sir Arthur Pearson and the work that he did for the early blind veterans of the First World War. Joseph also spoke of today's members and the skills they obtain to help them live independent lives and of younger members, in particular Shaun Stocker, and he even discussed the importance of our No One Alone campaign.

Joseph has known the charity all his life as he first visited his Grandfather Chris at the Brighton centre when he was a baby. When asked by his classmates why he had chosen to talk about Blind Veterans UK Joseph said:

"I didn't think anyone would know about it and it is personal to me."

Well done Joseph as you are a formidable young Ambassador.



Picture: Joseph Storey, the grandson of Win and Chris Jordan, prepares for the talk he gave about Blind Veterans UK for his Year 6 presentation.

Family News.

Congratulations to:

Birthdays:

Stefan Ciesla who celebrated his 103rd birthday on 18th August.

Ronald Brendell who celebrated his 101st birthday on 22nd August.

Edgar Waller who celebrated his 101st birthday on 29th August.

Walter Sharp who celebrated his 101st birthday on 7th August.

John Newins who celebrated his 101st birthday on 1st August.

George Tompsett who celebrated his 100th birthday on 8th August.

Births:

John and Audrey Woodham on the birth of their first great granddaughter, Isla Arnold, who was born on 4th June 2015 to their granddaughter Melanie and her partner Paul.

Anniversaries:

Platinum (70th):

John & Mary Painter of Chichester, West Sussex on 1st August.

Robert & Violet Wood of Uxbridge, Middlesex on 2nd August.

William & Ada Corns of Prestwick, Ayrshire on 29th August.

George & Freda Brooksbank of Gloucester, Gloucestershire on 25th August.

Blue Sapphire (65th):

Stephen & Josephine Hanlon of Sunderland, Tyne and Wear on 7th August.

Peter & Pamela Homewood of Peacehaven, East Sussex on 12th August.

Brian & Iris Hallums of Saltdean, Brighton on 12th August.

Bill & Lilian Burke of Truro, Cornwall on 19th August.

Peter & Connie Dabell of Sheffield, South Yorkshire on 26th August.

Cliff & Brenda Tweats of Stockport, Cheshire on 26th August.

Diamond (60th):

Ronald & Irene Hay of Darlington, County Durham on 5th August.

Phil & Dorothy Doughty of Poulton Le Fylde, Lancashire on 6th August.

Terry & Sheila McDermott of Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire on 18th August.

Kenneth & Ethel White of Guildford, Surrey on 27th August.
Bernard & Barbara Morrell of Haslington, Crewe on 27th August.

Golden Anniversary (50th):

Danny & Diana Daniels of Swaffham, Norfolk on 6th August.
Roy & Jeanette Ramsay of Harrow Weald, Middlesex on 14th August.
Alan & Barbara Manning of North West London on 17th August.
Bill & Fiona Cooper of Glasgow on 19th August.

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.

Grace Beck who died on 26th April 2015. She was the widow of the late Eric Beck.

Betty Busby who died on 5th July 2015. She was the widow of the late Dennis Busby.

Audrey Crump who died on 3rd August 2015. She was the wife of Kenneth Crump.

Kathleen 'Cath' Franklin who died on 19th July 2015. She was the widow of the late Wilfred Franklin.

Mary Hartnell who died on 2nd July 2015. She was the widow of the late Arthur Hartnell.

Suzannah Robertson who died on 3rd December 2014. She was the wife of Derek Robertson.

Cynthia Martin who died on 10th July 2015. She was the wife of James Martin.

Brenda Nolan who died on 11th December 2014. She was the wife of Kenneth Nolan.

Margaret Oliver who died on 1st May 2015. She was the wife of William Oliver.

Ruth 'Gwen' Powell who died in 2015. She was the wife of Harvey Powell.

Eileen Slater who died on 15th July 2015. She was the widow of the late Stanley Slater.

Dorothy Thomas who died on 18th June 2015. She was the widow of the late Aneurin Thomas.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

Brian Abel of Bath served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1951.

Raymond Allard of Stratford Upon Avon served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1954.

James Anderson of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1945 to 1970.

Frank Bloss of Cranleigh, Surrey served in the Royal Navy from 1956 to 1958.

William Bremer of Bethnal Green, London served in the King's Royal Rifle Corps from 1942 to 1945.

David Butler of Oxford served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1943 to 1945.

Lawrence Christie of Edinburgh served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949.

Kenneth Christensen of North Shields, Tyne and Wear served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1947 to 1949.

Frederick Clarkson of Liverpool served in the King's Regiment in 1952.

Dennis Coates of Weymouth, Dorset served in the Army Catering Corps from 1949 to 1959.

Leslie Cooper of Letchworth Garden City served in the Royal Berkshire Regiment from 1945 to 1957.

David Cook of Leeds served in the Royal Engineers from 1962 to 1968.

Edward Culshaw of Walton, Liverpool served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1958.

Elizabeth Diacon of Warminster, Wiltshire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

Malcolm Dilnot of Leeds served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1957.

Peter Dixon of Warminster, Wiltshire served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1947.

Richard Downs of Gravesend, Kent served in the Royal Engineers from 1957 to 1962.

Michael Eggar of Weston Super Mare, Somerset served in the Royal Navy from 1952 to 1965.

Robert Feltham of Stanley, County Durham served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Charles Ford of Seaford, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Brian Foster of Darlington, County Durham served in the Royal Artillery from 1955 to 1957.

Norman Fox of Ipswich served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

John Gadd of Wolverhampton served in the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1952.

Edmund Garbutt of Middlesbrough, Cleveland served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1968.

Gerald Gibson of Colchester served in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Signals from 1944 to 1948.

John Glover of Littlehampton, West Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946.

Alfred Goodier of Sidmouth, Devon served in the Army Catering Corps and the Royal Military Police from 1944 to 1948.

Arthur 'Ron' Griffiths of Llanelli, Dyfed served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1954 to 1956.

George Haines of Didcot, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Marsden Hewings of Cwmbran, Gwent served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1950 to 1952.

George Higginson of Newcastle, Staffordshire served in the Royal Navy from 1966 to 1976.

Walter Hogg of Isleworth, Middlesex served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Harry Hutchison of Peacehaven, East Sussex served in the Royal West African Frontier Force from 1939 to 1945.

Peter Kilshaw of Liverpool served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1946 to 1948.

Allen I'Anson of Ferryhill, County Durham served in the Royal Navy from 1946 to 1948.

Joan Laing of Bath served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1944.

Jack Lomax of Llangollen, Clwyd served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

Sydney McCluskey of Cleadon, Sunderland served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1955.

Doris McCreight (nee Hall) of Leatherhead, Surrey served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1945.

Ronald Minett of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm from 1943 to 1946.

Stanley Moate of Caerphilly, Mid Glamorgan served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1946.

Nicolas Murray of Romford, Essex served in the Queen's Division and the Royal Anglian Regiment from 1984 to 1985.

Roland Noble of Telford, Shropshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

Colin Nott of Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1957.

William Nutman of Bridport, Dorset served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

James Orford of St Helens, Merseyside served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1954.

John 'Ste' Orme of St Helens, Merseyside served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1952.

William 'Bill' Parker of Wirral, Merseyside served in the Cheshire Regiment and the Royal Signals from 1939 to 1946.

David Philpot of Luton, Bedfordshire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1956 to 1959.

James Pirrie of Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire served in the Royal Signals from 1958 to 1959.

Robert Pollington of Thetford, Norfolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

Walter 'Graham' Redman of Bracknell, Berkshire served in the Royal Signals in 1953.

Michael Roberts of Northallerton, North Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1967 to 1985.

George Robinson of Brighton, East Sussex served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1946 to 1948.

John Sharp of Bristol served in the Royal Navy from 1949 to 1959.

David Scott of Tunbridge Wells, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1938 to 1958.

John Scott of Hexham, Northumberland served in the Wessex Brigade and the Parachute Regiment from 1950 to 1954.

Reginald Sealey of Bristol served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

Leslie Stainer of Winchester, Hampshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1955.

Clive Stott of Sudbury, Suffolk served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Dragoon Guards from 1954 to 1957.

David Thompson of East Boldon, Tyne and Wear served in the Royal Engineers

from 1960 to 1969.

Phillip Thompson of Stonehouse, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1957.

Marcel Vidot of Eastwood, Nottingham served in the Royal Fusiliers from 1961 to 1967.

Alan Walker of Brighton, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Leslie Ward of Poulton Le Fylde served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1947.

William Watkins of Longlevens, Gloucester served in the Gloucestershire Regiment and the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1958.

Donald 'Danny' Williams of Harwich, Essex served in the Army Catering Corps from 1962 to 1974.

Victor 'Ron' Wraight of Bromley, Kent served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1947 to 1964.

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.

Eric Beck of Clacton On Sea, Essex died on 25th April 2015, aged 94. In a reserved occupation during the Second World War he joined the Royal Air Force in 1946 as an Aircraft Mechanic working on Spitfires and Hurricanes. He was based at airfields all over the UK during this time, including Brize Norton. He was discharged in 1948 as an Aircraftman First Class.

William 'Ralph' Beecher of Epsom, Surrey died on 23rd June 2015, aged 91. He was called up in 1944 and joined the General Service Corps, transferring to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1944. Posted to India he served in Bombay and Madras, later posted to Burma he trained as a draughtsman. He was discharged in 1948 as a Craftsman.

David Bell of Nelson, Lancashire died on 4th July 2015, aged 91. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and qualified as a pilot. He flew various fighter planes during the war and served in the UK, South Africa, Egypt and Italy. He was discharged as a Warrant Officer in 1946.

John Bell of Wigton, Cumbria died on 23rd July 2015, aged 75. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1962 and served in various UK stations. He was in Cyprus and later Singapore before leaving the services in 1970 as a Sergeant.

Kenneth Bishop of Newton, Swansea died on 25th July 2015, aged 90. He enlisted in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1945. He was stationed in the UK and was a Sergeant at the time of discharge in 1947.

John 'Jack' Biss of Bath died on 2nd July 2015, aged 94. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941, training at RAF Penarth and RAF Bridgnorth as a driver. On D+12 he moved to France and supported the RAF Salvage Unit across Europe into Germany. By the end of the war he was in Hamburg and was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

Stuart Bottomley of Buxton, Derbyshire died on 22nd July 2015, aged 84. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1950 for National Service. After service in the Middle East he was discharged as a Sapper in 1952.

Alec Carter of Battle, East Sussex died on 1st December 2014, aged 89. He enlisted in the Royal Army Service Corps in 1943. He went to France in August 1944, attached to an Artillery company, and fought through to Germany. He was in Potsdam when the European war ended and remained in Germany until his discharge in 1947 as a Sergeant.

Ernest 'Bill' Chadwick of Coventry died on 20th July 2015, aged 95. He joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1943 and qualified as a driver of Matadors and Jeeps. He served with 32 Vehicle Reserve Depot in Egleton Park, Irvine, Scotland and was discharged in 1947 as a Private.

George Clarke of Hayes, Middlesex died on 30th July 2015, aged 86. He joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1947 and served in Belfast, Liverpool, Yorkshire and Devon. He was discharged as a Craftsman in August 1949.

Bertram 'Bert' Crooks of Conwy, Gwynedd died on 5th August 2015, aged 88. He joined the Merchant Navy in 1944 and he served mostly with the Star Line and was discharged in early 1945 as a Writer. He then joined the Royal Navy in April 1945 and qualified as a Writer, serving in Ceylon before his discharge in 1947. He then rejoined the Merchant Navy, finally moving ashore in March 1948.

William Finnemore of Hampton, Middlesex died on 4th February 2015, aged 91. He joined the Royal Navy in 1942 and trained at HMS Royal Arthur, Skegness. He sailed to Gibraltar and Egypt, and was briefly shore based on the River Nile. He was discharged as a Stoker in 1946. Returning to the Services he joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1948 as a recovery mechanic. Serving for 21 years he was discharged as a Corporal in 1969.

Roy Flint of Brentwood, Essex died on 28th June 2015, aged 81. He enlisted with the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1955 and worked on instrumentation for Technical Training Command, serving at RAF Debden, Saffron Walden. He was discharged as a Senior Aircraftman in 1957.

James 'Jim' Grant of Currock, Carlisle died on 15th July 2015, aged 82. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1954 and served at RAF Wittering as a mess steward until discharge as a Corporal in 1957.

Phyllis Hayes of Preston, Lancashire died on 1st August 2015, aged 82. She joined the Women's Royal Army Corps in 1950. She served in UK units, including Gresford in North Wales, Guildford and Stanmore, Middlesex and was discharged in 1951.

John Hockley of Frinton On Sea, Essex died on 28th June 2015, aged 89. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1943. He served as a Navigator on Lancasters in 149 Sqn and was discharged as a Sergeant in 1947.

George Holden of Manchester died on 11th May 2015, aged 87. He was conscripted into the Royal Air Force in 1946, training at RAF Padgate and Liverpool as a general duties Airman. He was discharged as an Aircraftman Second Class in 1948.

Kathleen 'Kay' Hope of Manchester died on 5th August 2015, aged 89. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1944 serving with the 61 Mobilisation Unit in Hanforth, Cheshire before being discharged in 1946.

Michael Hulse of Solihull, West Midlands died in 24th July 2015, aged 82. He began his National Service in 1950 with the Royal Signals and was posted to Basra attached to the RAF to help maintain the airport. He was discharged in 1952 as a Signaller but signed up for a further four years.

Kenneth 'Ken' Humphries of Diss, Norfolk died on 10th July 2015, aged 92. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1942. He was placed on squadron duties in Lincolnshire followed by a fitters course in Herefordshire. He then joined 820 Squadron followed by 617 Squadron at RAF Lakenheath. He later transferred to 70 Squadron and sent to Egypt. He was discharged in 1947 as a Leading Aircraftman.

Robert 'Bob' Jones of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 17th July 2015, aged 95. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1940 and was posted to the Construction Centre in Clacton. In March that year he joined 296 Army Field Company and fought in the North African and Italian campaigns. He was reported missing in June 1942 after being taken prisoner in Italy and was released and repatriated in May 1945. He was discharged in 1946.

John Lambert of Putney, London died on 6th July 2015, aged 94. He was called up in 1941, carried out his training at Sandhurst and served in Tunisia, North Africa, Italy and Austria. He was discharged from the Grenadier Guards as a Captain in 1945.

Morris Lashbrook of Weston Super Mare, Avon died on 13th July 2015, aged 99. He joined the Army in 1933 and trained at Butler Barracks, Aldershot, becoming a driver in the Royal Army Service Corps. He survived the bombing and sinking of the Lancastria Troop Ship in 1940. In 1942 he joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers upon its formation and served in Malta, Egypt with the 8th Army, Lebanon, Northern Italy, Austria and Germany before being discharged as a Warrant Officer 2nd Class in 1958.

Joseph Lord of Fleetwood, Lancashire died on 19th July 2015, aged 92. He joined the Royal Marines in 1941. He served in HMS Malaya in the Mediterranean, then went to the Far East in the battleship HMS Valiant and was discharged as a Marine in 1946.

Peter Maher of Clitheroe, Lancashire died in 2015, aged 92. He joined the Lancashire Fusiliers in 1939, transferring to the Royal Artillery in 1940. He trained as a Battle Training Instructor and operated Ack-Ack guns in Liverpool during the Blitz. He served in North Africa, Italy and later Austria. He transferred back to the Lancashire Fusiliers in 1944. He was discharged in 1948 as a Colour Sergeant.

Henry Marchant of Polegate, East Sussex died on 16th July 2015, aged 94. He joined the Royal Navy in 1940 and served onboard a cruiser in the Indian Ocean and in Ceylon until discharge as a Petty Officer Writer in 1946.

Arnold 'Arnie' Marshall of Scunthorpe, South Humberside died on 25th July 2015, aged 90. He volunteered for the Royal Navy in 1943. He served in HMS Hilary, an HQ ship for landing craft and covered the Sicily Landings, Salerno and Anzio. He returned for the D-Day Landings and served onboard the destroyer HMS Havelock in the Atlantic. He was discharged in 1946 as an Able Seaman.

Ronald Morley of Woodhouse, Sheffield died on 11th June 2015, aged 87. He joined the General Service Corps in 1946 for initial training and transferred to the Corps of Military Police a month later. He served in Tripoli, North Africa and Aldershot until discharge in 1948.

Vincent Murphy of Tamworth, Staffordshire died in 2015, aged 87. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1945 and trained at RAF Padgate. He was posted to Egypt and served in Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo. He was later sent to Palestine where he completed his service. He was discharged as an Aircraftman Second Class in 1947.

Peter Murray of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 22nd July 2015, aged 86. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1946 and trained in boat building. He then trained as a carpenter specialising in aircraft repairs. He was posted abroad to Egypt briefly, then to an air station in Iraq before joining a mobile repair unit in the Gulf region, including Bahrain. He retired from the RAF in 1956 as a Corporal.

Patricia Nichols of Barrow In Furness, Cumbria died on 3rd July 2015, aged 93. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941. She trained as a Radar Operator and served in coastal stations around the UK before finishing in Barrow where she was demobilised in 1945 as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Herbert 'Ralph' Nicholls of Exeter, Devon died on 28th July 2015, aged 91. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1942 and was posted to India and Singapore. He was discharged as an Aircraftman First Class in 1947.

Enid Page of Peacehaven, East Sussex died on 28th June 2015, aged 93. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1943 and served ashore at HMS Squid in Southampton as a Wren (Cook) until discharged in 1945.

Raymond Partridge of Birmingham died on 22nd June 2015, aged 93. He joined the Royal Navy in 1941 and served in the Atlantic, Italy, the Mediterranean and Africa, including the coastal forces. He was discharged as a Sick Berth Attendant in 1946.

Kenneth Quine of Basingstoke, Hampshire died on 17th July 2015, aged 90. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941. He served in the UK, India, Sudan and Germany before discharge as a Chief Technician in 1969.

Eric Rainbird of Bedford, Bedfordshire died on 4th August 2015, aged 98. He joined the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment in February 1940, transferring to the Durham Light Infantry five months later. He then transferred to the Royal Signals in July 1942 and served in East Africa and Burma until discharged as a Sergeant in 1946.

William Raison of Bexley, Kent died on 6th July 2015, aged 92. He enlisted into the engineering branch of the Royal Navy in 1941. Trained initially at HMS Royal Arthur he served worldwide in destroyers and was both torpedoed and mined. He was discharged as a Leading Stoker Mechanic in 1952.

Charles Robinson of Worthing, West Sussex died on 8th August 2015, aged 95. He joined the Royal Artillery (TA) in 1939 and was mobilised in September when he was posted to Haydock Park, Lancashire. He returned to the South Coast during the defence of the UK on Ramsgate Pier. He was posted to North Africa, then to Sicily, later to Italy and then to Austria. From there he was repatriated and in May 1945 he transferred to the Royal West Kent Regiment. He was discharged in 1946 as a Corporal.

Ida 'Jean' Robinson of Southport, Merseyside died on 16th July 2015, aged 98. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1942. She carried out her training at Mill Hill in London and was posted to Hartlepool where she became a Writer at a Minesweeping base. She later moved to the Fleet Air Arm base at Arbroath in Scotland. She was then posted to East Haven near Carnoustie where she remained until her demobilisation in 1946, leaving as a Wren.

Richard Rolfs of Bingley, West Yorkshire died on 1st July 2015, aged 93. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1939 serving in the UK, India, Germany, Burma and France. He was discharged as a Flying Officer in 1947.

Alfred Rudd of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on 11th July 2015, aged 94. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1939 at Chatham. Posted to Egypt and Syria in late 1939 he remained there until 1942. Moving to India and Burma, he returned home in late 1944 to join the staff at Chatham before discharge in 1946.

Francis 'George' Sandham of Old Hunstanton, Norfolk died on 7th August 2015, aged 96. He joined the Royal Air Force in May 1944 and three months later transferred to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He fought in Burma and in 1945 transferred to the Royal Welch Fusiliers. He was discharged in 1946 as a Sergeant.

Alan Saunders of Crawley, West Sussex died on 3rd August 2015, aged 92. He joined the Royal Marines in 1940. Posted to St Margaret's Village with the RM Siege Regiment in Kent he volunteered to join the RM Commandos. He took part in the Dieppe Raid in August 1942 and was later involved in the Sicily landings when he sustained multiple gunshot wounds. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1945.

Eileen Scott of Leatherhead, Surrey died on 8th August 2015, aged 95. In 1942, she joined the Women's Royal Naval Service and served as a radar operator at Swanage. She was discharged as Wren HSR in 1945.

Joseph 'Joe Simpson of Winchester, Hampshire died on 28th June 2015, aged 93. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1942. Based in the Isle of Man, he was a navigator/bomb aimer, flew in Ansons with Flying Training Command and was discharged as a Temporary Flight Sergeant in 1946.

Thomas Teague of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 1st December 2014, aged 92. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 and qualified as a flight engineer and was aircrew in Halifax and Liberator aircraft during the war. He served in the UK, Canada, USA, the Bahamas and South Africa before discharge as a Warrant Officer in 1946.

Ronald 'Les' Tiley of King's Lynn, Norfolk died on 10th July 2015, aged 94. He was commissioned in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1943. Posted initially to the south coast of England defending against V1 flying bombs he subsequently moved to Belgium and was later posted to Nairobi and Cairo before discharge as a Captain in 1947.

Brenda Tyzack of Harpenden, Hertfordshire died on 20th July 2015, aged 91. She served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 leaving as a Leading Aircraftwoman in 1946.

Victor Walford of Brighton, East Sussex died on 17th August 2015, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and served in HMS Argonaut in the Mediterranean, at the Normandy landings and then in the Far East. He was discharged as an Acting Seaman in 1947.

John Warnock of Beccles, Suffolk died on 12th July 2015, aged 85. He was called up for National Service in the Royal Air Force in 1948 and he later signed on for five years. He served in the UK, Singapore, Kai Tah and Hong Kong. He was discharged an Acting Corporal in 1954 and in 1964 joined the Royal Rhodesian Air Force, transferring to the Zambian Air Force in 1964.

Sydney Warren of Andover, Hampshire died on 29th July 2015, aged 99. He joined the Sherwood Foresters in March 1940, transferred to the Royal Pioneer Corps in October 1941 and was posted in the UK with the Army Fire Service. He was discharged as a Warrant Officer 2nd Class in 1946.

Keith Watson of Kendal, Cumbria died on 17th July 2015, aged 81. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1954 for National Service. He trained as an Airplane Mechanic, served in the aircraft repair section at RAF Sutton Bridge and was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1956.

John Wilson of Ilford, Essex died on 27th June 2015, aged 80. He started National Service in 1953 joining the RAF Regiment and training as a driver. He was posted to Egypt in the anti-terrorist group countering the Muslim Brotherhood. He was discharged in 1955 as a Leading Aircraftman.

James Whymark of Ipswich, Suffolk died on 5th January 2015, aged 95. He served in the 4th Suffolk Regiment from 1939 to 1946. He was in Singapore when Lieutenant General Arthur Percival surrendered in 1942. Fighting bravely he was captured and taken prisoner and taken to Changi Gaol when he was used as forced labour on the Burma-Siam Railway and the Bridge over the River Kwai. During those years he contracted Beri Beri, Malaria and Diptheria. Severely malnourished he developed retrobulbar neuritis that affected his eyesight.

After liberation in 1945 he spent a year in hospital in Singapore before he was able to return to the UK. On his return he was too unwell to work because of his condition. However, he did not give up and tried to seek work in his home town and also in other parts of the country to no avail. His eyesight and hearing deteriorated considerably and he had other health problems due to the treatment when a FEPOW.

He met his wife Shirley in 1952 and they became engaged three years later and married in 1956. Their daughter Sharon was born in 1964 bringing them great joy. James found work with the local blind society until his health deteriorated to the point that it was no longer possible for him to continue. In 1985 he joined St Dunstan's, training at the Brighton centre. A man of great strength to have survived his time as a FEPOW and never to have given up on life he is greatly missed.

Robert Wood of Uxbridge, Middlesex died on 1st August 2015, aged 98. He enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1940 and was posted to North Africa. He spent time in Cairo on ambulance trains before moving to the field ambulance in Syria and then on to Tobruk in Libya. He spent some time in Italy before returning to the UK after 4½ years abroad. He was demobilised in Germany as a Lance Corporal in 1946.

