

August 2016

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



On the cover: To represent those who were killed on the first day of The Battle of The Somme the National Theatre's volunteers walk past The Shard in London dressed as First World War soldiers. In total 1,500 volunteers took part across the UK.

Photo by Ellie Kurtz.

Back page: National Theatre volunteers hand out the name and details of the soldier they represented who died on the first day of The Battle of The Somme.

Photo by Ellie Kurtz.

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Patron: Her Majesty the Queen.

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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 for the Brighton and Sheffield centres: To book accommodation at the Brighton and Sheffield centres telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500. If you have care needs please first contact your Welfare Officer.

The Booking Office for the Llandudno centre: To book accommodation at the Llandudno centre please telephone 01492 868700 and ask for the Booking Office. If you have care needs please first contact your Welfare Officer.

ROVI IT Helpline: If you need to speak with the ROVI IT Helpdesk please telephone: 01273 391447 for ROVI and IT enquiries.

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.

Blind Veterans UK Calendar

Activities from the Brighton centre.

August.

Archery Club 14th to 20th.

August/September.

Fishing Week 28th August to 3rd September.

September.

Activities Week (away) 4th to 10th.

History Week 18th to 24th.

Activities from the Llandudno centre.

August.

Driving Week 8th to 12th and 22nd to 26th.

September.

Sea Fishing Week 5th to 9th.

Cycling Week 19th to 23rd.

October.

Walking Week 10th to 14th.

Photography Week 24th to 28th.

Activities from the Sheffield centre.

August.

Gardens Week 8th to 12th.

August/September.

Younger Week 30th August to 2nd September.

December.

Christmas Week 12th to 16th.

To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Brighton and Sheffield centres.

For further information and to book your place telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500. If you have care needs please first speak with your Welfare Officer.

To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Llandudno centre.

For further information or to book your place please telephone: 01492 868741 or 01492 868740. If you have care needs please first speak with your Welfare Officer.

From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

I'm sure you will have noticed how the back pages of the Review have grown, as each month we welcome more blind veterans into our family. At the present time we support 4,300 blind veterans, with that number estimated to increase to 8,000. It is great news and in keeping with the vision of Victory over Blindness that was laid down by our founder Sir Arthur Pearson Bt GBE. He decided that no one who has served our country should battle blindness alone, and in 1915 began the life-changing work that Blind Veterans UK continues to this very day.

Of course the demographic of our membership was very different then as the first blind veterans were young men who were blinded in the First World War. Today one of the challenges we face is to ensure we provide the correct support to you, today's blind veterans, most of whom are now in your 80s or 90s, having Served our country during the Second World War or completed National Service.

In line with this Blind Veterans UK's Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB has worked with the Senior Leadership Team to develop a new operating model and I am pleased to inform you that at the recent Council meeting the Trustees endorsed the preferred way forward.

You will each have received a letter from Nick that outlines the proposed changes to the way we deliver our services to ensure that we continue to provide the best level of support to you and to future blind veterans. This was issued with a set of answers to any anticipated questions that you may have. For ease we have reproduced both on the following pages, and if you have not already done so, I would ask you to take the time to read them.

Should you have further questions with regard to the proposed changes contact details are given for Ann-Mari Freebairn, Director of Engagement, but I would also welcome your call, as would Nick. You can telephone us at Harcourt Street on 020 7616 7913. Alternatively should you attend Reunions or Lunch Clubs where myself, Trustees and Nick are present you may wish to speak with us in person.

In this edition of Review we continue to commemorate the centenary of the Battle of The Somme and read of the First World War blinded veterans who fought there, losing their sight.

The editor went through past editions of Review from 1916 to find reference to The Battle of The Somme. As the publication did not dwell on the battles, but rather on the successes of those at Regent's Park, and of the old boys once they left to pursue their new lives and careers, the tone was cheerful — as shown below.

From St Dunstan's Gossip, Review November 1916.

At St Mark's Hospital we hear that there are over forty five men preparing to come along to St Dunstan's. They are all of them from The Big Push, and from what we have seen of those who have come up on Thursday afternoons they are both promising and excellent fellows. The sooner they come the better we shall be pleased.

Bringing us onto today's atrocities I would like to mention the recent tragic loss of life in France and Germany through the terror attack in Nice, the attacks in Germany that show they too are targets of IS, and now the killing of a Priest in France as he took morning Mass. I am sure like me, you too were sickened by these attacks, and that your thoughts are with the people who lost their lives, the many more who were wounded, and their families and friends.

As former Service personnel you have fought against extremism and have seen how people can be manipulated for evil. Today, in some cases, children are targeted from an early age in the communities where they live and in their schools. Last year blind veterans and staff from our Llandudno centre joined with St Vincent's School in Liverpool to visit the former battlefields of the First World War as part of the Government's Prevent strategy. As each of you reading this exemplifies honour, courage and the conviction to act for good, you are role models to ensure that extremism does not gain its evil grip on the young of today.

Message from Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, Chief Executive, Blind Veterans UK.

You will be aware that over the past 18 months we have undertaken a complete review of the charity. During this period we have consulted widely with you, our members, to ensure that your views have been considered as part of this process.

The purpose of the review has been two-fold:

1) Ensuring that the organisation can better support the future needs of our current members.

One of the key findings of the review is that in five years, more than 40% of our members will be aged over 90. The majority of this group will have complex needs as well as visual impairment issues. This means that we have to look at the way we deliver our services to ensure that we are able to provide our older members with the support they need, bearing in mind they are widely dispersed across the UK.

2) Enabling the charity to widen its support to many more blind veterans who are eligible for our support.

Another key finding of this review is that whilst there are almost 60,000 potential blind veterans currently living in the UK, the majority of these people are not benefitting from the charity's support. As a result of this, the Trustees have set an ambitious intent to double the number of blind veterans we support from 4,300 today to 8,000 by 2022.

In response to these findings, the Trustees have taken the decision to move to deliver more services in the community which will enable us to provide a greater number of members with better access to such existing services as rehabilitation and IT support, as well as making a greater range of services available in the community, supported by volunteers.

How this will be delivered is still to be determined and over the coming weeks we will work with members and staff to get your thoughts on what this would look like on the ground.

The Sheffield centre has served us well since 2005, providing excellent IT training in a close-knit and welcoming environment. However, our research has shown that there are particular challenges around delivering holidays, respite or day services for our current and future membership. We are therefore proposing to close the Sheffield centre, with a view to transitioning our services out into the community by the end of March 2017.

In the meantime, I want to assure you that the high quality support you receive today will remain our priority, and that our focus on retaining the strong family ethos of the charity is absolutely key to our thinking. The Trustees have agreed that any changes will be funded through income from increased fundraising activity, as well as investing some of our unrestricted reserves. This means that there will be more support available to more blind veterans, which has to be a good thing.

Another way that we can support blind veterans in the future is to help fund research into sight loss conditions — for example macular degeneration. Indeed, one of the aims of investing in this research would be to help prevent veterans from ever losing their sight in the first place.

We also have a small but important contingent of working age members who have different needs to their fellow comrades, that of employment support. We therefore need to do this better and the Life Works Programme is a great example of how we are starting to do this.

As I'm sure you'll appreciate, this will be a time of change and I am grateful for your continued support and understanding throughout this process. I know you will have a lot of questions about the proposed changes and how they will impact on you practically.

To help answer any questions you may have a list of Questions and Answers are on the following pages.

If you have any further questions not covered in this document, please contact Ann-Mari, our new Director of Engagement. Ann-Mari's contact details are:

Ann-Mari Freebairn, Director of Engagement, Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

Email: ann-mari.freebairn@blindveterans.org.uk

If you would like to telephone with your questions please call free phone number 0800 254 0410, leaving your name and phone number and we will get back to you very soon.

Thank you for working with us as we strive to enhance and improve the support we already provide and help even more blind veterans lead an independent and fulfilling life.

Questions and Answers for members of Blind Veterans UK.

Have members been consulted about the proposed changes?

Over the last 12 months we consulted widely with members, individually, at centres and Reunions, and also in small focus groups. We conducted a survey with 500 members and also looked at our biennial survey results. Our member Trustees have also been extremely helpful, scrutinising proposals and plans and providing feedback. Consultation with members will continue throughout the process.

Why do we need more members?

Our research has demonstrated that there is a total of nearly 60,000 potential blind veterans in the UK, 4,300 of whom are currently supported by our charity. In order to achieve our mission of Victory over Blindness we must expand our services to make sure that no one who has served our country has to battle blindness alone.

Will having more members make it more difficult for me to book on training or holidays in the centres?

We are very aware that our centres are operating at capacity and this is one of the reasons why these changes are necessary. We are therefore looking at investing in a new residential centre in the South West as well as piloting two new day centres, one in the North East and one in the Midlands, all of which will help to increase capacity. Providing more training and support in the community will also enable us to increase the number of spaces available for holidays, respite and training in the existing centres.

What do you mean by a 'multi-skilled community based' team?

We propose to put services closer to members in their homes and communities. This would mean building up a team of staff with a number of different skills who will be able to help members with a range of support, such as welfare needs, IT training and ROVI assistance, amongst other things.

What will happen to my Welfare Officer?

We don't yet know the exact structure of the community-based teams. That is the purpose of the discussions with staff which are currently underway. Whatever the outcome of these discussions, we will make sure you have strong relationships with a great team of skilled workers in your community, your region and in the centres. They will be able to provide exactly the support you need, when and where you need it.

Will this mean I have to deal with lots of different people all the time?

You will still have an allocated member of staff, although you may also be in contact with more people than you currently are. We are committed to significantly expanding our staff and volunteer teams, in order to provide better support to current members as well as offering services to more of those who qualify. Those teams, while being bigger, will still offer consistent, personalised support.

I normally receive training in the centres. Does this mean I'll be able to have it closer to home now?

That is our intention. By putting more resources into the communities we will be able to deliver more training closer to members' homes, while continuing to offer respite, social activities, holidays and other support at the centres themselves.

What if I still want to do my training at a centre?

Training and activities will still be available at the centres but the focus there will shift towards holidays and respite, in line with the majority of our members' needs.

Will we still be able to take part in sports clubs and activities?

The sports clubs and activities which are run by members for members will continue and we want to actively encourage you to take part in these activities and develop new clubs in the community.

How will I get there?

We know how important the transport we provide is to you and so we will continue to provide this service. One of the advantages of being able to deliver the training closer to your home is that it will minimise travelling time.

What is happening to provision for younger working age members?

We recognise that this group of members have particular needs especially around employment. Our Life Works initiative at the Llandudno centre demonstrates our commitment to this group and we will continue to develop our plans to support this going forward.

There have already been changes to the grants this year. Are they going to change again?

The Grants Policy is reviewed every three years, so the next review will not take place until 2018. These reviews allow us to make sure that the financial assistance we give to members complies with good practice and government legislation. We know how important the financial assistance we offer to you is, and this assistance will continue.

How will the Day Centres and Residential Centres and the increase in staff be paid for?

All of these changes will be funded partly by a growth in fundraising income and partly by investing some of our unrestricted reserves.

Questions about the Sheffield centre.

What is happening to the Sheffield centre?

We are proposing to close the Sheffield centre with a view to transitioning our services out into the community by the end of March 2017. This centre doesn't lend itself to delivering holidays, respite or day services for a growing and ageing membership. We will work closely with staff, volunteers and members who use the centre regularly to make sure that we have the right support in place in the community should the proposed closure go ahead.

Where will I get IT support from?

I use the helpline which is based in Sheffield?

You will still be able to get IT support for the equipment we've provided you with. We will make sure that you continue to receive support through the helpline. Should the closure of the Sheffield centre go ahead, the helpline will simply be based in a different location.

Questions for War Blinded members

How will these changes affect War Blinded members in particular?

We will continue to recognise the special place that War Blinded members hold within Blind Veterans UK by providing you with priority access to services, including financial assistance and accommodation at centres. The proposed changes will allow us to strengthen and expand the support we are able to provide you with, as well as others who have experienced sight loss outside of active service.

What is going to happen to the War Blinded Fund/reserves?

We are committed to ensuring that we have sufficient funds in the reserves restricted for War Blinded members to meet your needs. We review the reserve funds regularly so that we can continue to support you now and in the future.

Will you still look after my spouse if I die?

We recognise that this is of real concern for you. We can assure you that we will continue to support spouses to the very best of our ability in the future.

Further questions

If you have any further questions which are not answered by this document, please contact Ann-Mari Freebairn, our new Director of Engagement. Her contact details are:

Post: Ann-Mari Freebairn, Director of Engagement, Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

Email: ann-mari.freebairn@blindveterans.org.uk

If you prefer to telephone, please call our free phone number 0800 254 0410. Please leave your name, your number and your question and we will call you back as soon as possible.

Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

Sign up to run the 2016 Royal Parks Half Marathon and the 2017 London Marathon with the Sports & Rec team at the Brighton centre.

The Sports & Recreation department at the Brighton centre has guaranteed places for runners in the 2016 Royal Parks Half Marathon that will take place on Sunday 9th October 2016 and in the 2017 London Marathon that will take place in April next year.

The Royal Park Half Marathon is one of the most popular events in the UK as you run through London's Hyde Park, Green Park, St James' Park and Kensington Gardens and past some of London's most iconic land-marks that include the Houses of Parliament and the Royal Albert Hall.

They also have highly sought after places for the 2017 London Marathon to complete the 26.2 mile course that starts in Greenwich, next to the Greenwich Observatory, and finishes on The Mall.

Sports & Rec Instructors at the Brighton centre will work with you to prepare a training schedule to ensure that you are half marathon and marathon ready.

If you would like to sign up please contact Russell Scullion on telephone: 01273 391481 or email: russell.scullion@blindveterans.org.uk

If you don't have a guide Russell and his colleagues will try to match you with a sighted running guide.

Did you serve at Bletchley Park?

If you served at Bletchley Park please contact lesley.styche@blindveterans.org.uk or katherine.bradley@blindveterans.org.uk or telephone: 01273 391464. They would love to hear from you.

An exciting opportunity for painters that is open to blind veterans, volunteers and staff.

Beginners, hobby painters, experts and have a go painters all welcome!

You are invited to participate in a fundraising exhibition on the theme of Landscape, Seascape or Cityscape that will be held at the Brighton centre from Monday 17th October for two weeks.

Members, volunteers and staff may enter one painting into the exhibition which must have been painted especially for the exhibition and will be offered for sale to benefit the charity.

Paintings may be dropped off with Dave Bryant at the Brighton centre, Nadia Wazera at the Llandudno centre, or Chris Clark at the Sheffield centre, or; sent to Dave Bryant at the Brighton centre.

The deadline for entries is September and once again entries must have been painted especially for the exhibition and be accompanied by an entry form.

If you would like to take part please request the terms and conditions, and an entry form from Dave Bryant, Art & Craft Instructor at the Brighton Art & Craft Workshop in person, by e-mail, phone or post.

Email: david.bryant@blindveterans.org.uk

Telephone: 01273 391466.

By post: Art & Craft Workshop, Blind Veterans UK, Greenways, Ovingdean, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 7BS.

We're here because we're here. The National Theatre commemorates The Battle of The Somme.

Fifteen hundred volunteers led by the National Theatre were part of a UK wide event that took place on 1st July 2016, as a modern memorial to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme. Commissioned by 14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the First World War Centenary, the work was conceived and created by Turner Prize winning artist Jeremy Deller in collaboration with Rufus Norris, Director of the National Theatre.

The 1,500 participants who walked the streets on 1st July 2016 were a reminder of the 19,240 men who were killed on 1st July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Each participant represented an individual soldier who was killed that day. The work is partly inspired by tales of sightings during and after the First World War by people who believed they had seen a dead loved one.

The participants wore historically accurate uniforms, representing 15 of the Regiments that suffered losses in the first day of the Battle. The soldiers did not speak, but at points throughout the day would sing the song 'we're here because we're here', to the tune of Auld Lang Syne, which was sung in the trenches during the First World War. They handed out cards to members of the public with the name and regiment of the soldier they represented, and, where known, the age of the soldier when he died on 1st July 1916.

The day ran from 7am to 7pm and covered the length and breadth of the UK, from Shetland to Penzance. Sites they visited included shopping centres, train stations, car parks and high streets — taking the memorial to contemporary Britain and bringing an intervention into people's daily lives where it was least expected.

The volunteers were men aged between 16 to 52, reflecting the men who would have fought in the Somme. They were not trained actors but came from a range of professions, including a sheep farmer, flight attendant, doctor, lawyer, social worker, shop assistant, portrait artist and GCSE student. They came together to rehearse in theatres across the UK over a month-long period in the run-up to the performance. 'We're here because we're here' is one of the largest arts participation projects ever staged in the UK, with hundreds of additional volunteers working behind the scenes.

Jeremy Deller said: "I wanted to make a contemporary memorial to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, one that moved around the UK with an unpredictability in which the participants took the work directly to the public."

Rufus Norris, Director of the National Theatre, said: "This work by Jeremy Deller is a truly national piece of theatre and is a powerful way to remember the men who went off to fight 100 years ago. I also hope it will serve as a catalyst to strengthen ties with theatres and communities across the UK."

Jenny Waldman, Director of 14-18 NOW, said: "1st July 1916 saw 57,470 casualties on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, of whom nearly 20,000 died: it was the bloodiest day in British military history. Taking part in 'we're here because we're here' has given hundreds of young people across the UK the chance to find out more about the Somme, and in some cases discover the stories of family members who fought in the war. Working alongside brilliant artists, directors and theatres on this astonishing project was an experience they will never forget."

The specially commissioned event saw around 1,500 volunteers dressed in First World War uniform appear unexpectedly in locations across the UK. The National Theatre was one of 27 organisations which collaborated on 'we're here because we're here'. It was produced by Birmingham Repertory Theatre and the National Theatre, working in close collaboration with partners including the Lyric Theatre Belfast, Manchester Royal Exchange, National Theatre of Scotland, National Theatre Wales, Northern Stage, Playhouse Derry-Londonderry, Salisbury Playhouse, Sheffield Theatres and Theatre Royal Plymouth.

The project breaks new ground in terms of its scale, breadth, reach and the number of partners and participants involved. This is the first time three national theatres have worked together on a joint project, and the first time so many theatres have worked together on a UK-wide participation project.

Ellie Kurtz's photos of 'we're here because we're here' are shown on the front and back page of this edition of Review.

Legion d'honneur presentation at the Brighton centre.

On the 70th Anniversary of D-Day, the Government of France announced that it would recognise the selfless acts of heroism and determination displayed by all surviving veterans of the Normandy Landings, and of the wider campaigns to liberate France in 1944, by awarding them with the Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur. At the Brighton centre blind veterans Ken Hobbs, Jim Hartley and Frank Breach were presented with their Legion d'honneur by French Consulate Francois Jean in a ceremony that was led by Brighton centre manager Lesley Garven and attended by the Mayor of Newhaven Councillor Steve Saunders.



Picture: The three blind veterans wear the Legion d'honneur with their service medals. Top row from left to right: Brighton centre manager Lesley Garven, French Consulate Francois Jean, Mayor of Newhaven Councillor Steve Saunders. Bottom from left to right: Ken Hobbs, Jim Hartley and Frank Breach.

As Ken Hobbs was presented with the Legion d'honneur he thought of his father. "It was an incredibly proud moment to receive the Legion d'honneur as my sons Christopher, Malcolm and Gary were included in the ceremony at the Brighton centre. When the French Consulate pinned the medal to my blazer I thought of my mates who would never receive one. I also thought of my dad as he received the Croix de Guerre in recognition of his service in the 1914 to 18 war when he was an ambulance driver picking the wounded up on the front lines of The Somme and Verdun. He didn't talk about it. But then I didn't talk about the war for years, not until my grandchildren asked if they could take my medals to school. Not even my wife knew what I'd done. I was a member of the Normandy Veterans Association in Eastbourne but as there are now only three of us left the Standard was laid by in a very moving service. I thought of everyone I'd known and what we'd been through, including the good times we had, as there was always someone who would crack a joke. I've been back to Normandy a few times, including on the 70th Anniversary of D-Day when my son Malcolm took me over."



Picture: A smiling Ken Hobbs with his family following the Legion d'honneur presentation at the Brighton centre.



Picture: Frank Breach with his wife Joyce and their family.

Blind Veterans UK's annual Prisoner of War Reunion.

Introducing the AGM at Blind Veterans UK's Ex-Prisoners of War Reunion, the group's President, General Sir Peter de la Billière, KCB, KBE, DSO, MC & Bar, mentioned that during a conversation with Tommy Clough they had discovered they were on the same troop ship back to England at the end of the Korean War. Two men with a shared experience of war and their own deeply personal memories. They did not meet on the troopship. Their first meeting was at the Brighton centre.

Organised by Mandy Markwick, Secretary of the Ex Prisoners of War group, the Reunion took place at the Brighton centre. It was attended by blind veterans Sydney Tavender Chairman of the group, Tommy Clough the group's Vice Chairman, Grenville Davies, George Adam and Frank Unwin. Keith and Brenda Hill were unable to attend this year and they were both greatly missed.

During the lunch on 1st July Blind Veterans UK President Ray Hazan OBE, acting as MC, said how delighted and fortunate he felt to have Sir Peter and Lady Bridget de la Billière attend the Reunion.

He welcomed the guest speaker Angela Robson, an exceptionally talented award winning journalist, BBC broadcaster and documentary film maker who gave an account of her time reporting from war zones and how she tries to feature stories of courage and hope in her reports. Just as Syd, Tommy and Grenville did when they recounted their time as prisoners of war on the following pages.

The guests were Blind Veterans UK's Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, Ray Hazan OBE President & MC with Robbie Hazan, Lesley Garven Brighton centre manager, Mandy Markwick Secretary of the group, Margaret Martin Welfare Officer Java FEPOW Club 42, Agnes Sluga Health Care Assistant and Catherine Goodier Review Editor.

Angela Robson's speech is included in the Talking Review when she spoke of reporting in war zones around the world.



Picture: Blind veterans who are former Prisoners of War attended the annual reunion at the Brighton centre. They are featured with the distinguished guests.



Picture: Angela Robson, award winning journalist, BBC broadcaster and documentary film maker addresses the group in the Winter Garden at the Brighton centre. She is seated between Grenville Davies and Blind Veterans UK President Ray Hazan OBE.

Syd Tavender remembers his fellow Far East Prisoners of War.

In a green corner of England Syd Tavender was photographed standing beside a 30 foot section of railway line, its bumpers and iron tracks laced with messages, crosses and wreaths. They are the physical remnants that have been placed in memory of the thousands of Far East Prisoners of War who were forced to work on the Burma to Thailand Railway during WWII. The notorious Railway of Death.

Syd, who worked on the railway from 1942, knows that the 30 foot piece of track is also laced with the unseen sorrow, sweat, fear and blood of the thousands of men who were forced to endure such horrific labour at the hands of their cruel captors.

Syd was one of the lucky ones, he survived, and today the blind veteran is Chairman of Blind Veterans UK Ex-PoW group.

As a teenager he moved to India with his father, who worked as a British diplomat. After 'miserably failing' exams for the diplomatic core, he joined the Colonial Police in India before joining Gurkha Training School. In 1942 he was captured in Malaya by the Japanese while fighting with the Gurkhas at the Battle of Slim River. He spent three and a half years working on the Burma to Thailand railway along with 30,000 other British PoWs. Syd was also used as labour to build Changi airport for the Japanese.

He was released in 1945, weighing just 5st 3lb. He says the experience was something that few survivors wish to remember. Syd said: "If there was a party of Japanese PoWs, no one would speak of their experience. If people knew what we went through, they would understand. As prisoners there was no end in sight for us. The beating with bamboo sticks was continual. The worst experience was when typhoid hit the camp.

"The only way to get rid of it was to burn the dead. The boys were dying in their hundreds. The Japanese would light a huge bonfire. Two of us would grab the shoulders and feet of a dead man and swing him on to the flames. The heat would make the bodies rise up and I swear it was like they were staring at us."

After his return he was haunted by his memories. "The fires were the one thing I couldn't get out of my mind. I used to have violent nightmares for years after I came home," he said.

After the war he moved to Palestine with the police as a Colonial Officer, moving on to Burma and then Kuala Lumpur, still as a policeman. He was there for 30 years before returning to England.

In 2001, he finally received £10,000 compensation for his ordeal. But he vowed to fight on for an apology from the Japanese government.

Syd became a member of Blind Veterans UK nine years ago when he lost much of his sight as a result of age-related macular degeneration. Syd said: "It is an honour to be Chairman of the Ex-Prisoner of War group and to attend the annual Prisoner of War Reunion. Nothing can compare to the support Blind Veterans UK has given me."



Picture: At the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire Syd Tavender, Chairman of Blind Veterans UK Ex Prisoner of War Group, stands beside a section of the Burma to Siam Railway. Syd worked on the 'Railway of Death' from 1942.

Tom Clough, Deputy Chairman Blind Veterans UK Ex-PoW Group.

Tom Clough has over 1,000 reasons for us to remember Britain's forgotten war. Although he is almost too modest to suggest so himself, the memory of those 1,000 plus Britons who never came home is preserved in the vivid recollections of men like Tom. The memories he shares here are a poignant reminder of the need for experiences of Korea to be told and heard, for the genuine instances of bravery and humility that they reveal. Sitting in his home a few miles from the Imjin Barracks in Innsworth, Tom launches into an engaging account of his extraordinary time in the Royal Artillery, and his part in the battle from which the Barracks takes its name.

Tom said: "I joined the Army at 14, just at the end of World War II. In fact when I went to the Woolwich Royal Artillery Depot on VE Day; I think Hitler saw me coming! I had always wanted to join the Navy but only the Army were recruiting boy soldiers at the end of the Second World War, or so the Recruiting Sergeant told us.

"I did three and a half years in Woolwich where I was fully trained. Although I was only 14, it was a man's world so of course you smoked and drank with everyone else if you could afford it. I eventually went into man service in 1948 to a medium regiment, operating heavy guns. The pay also increased, which I greatly enjoyed. I got my first stripe soon after which was quite special as I was still very young, and I became a TARA (Technical Assistant Royal Artillery). Out of the blue, in mid 1950, I got an order informing me that I had a posting to Worcester as the OP (Observation Post) Officers Assistant.

"The Korean War began in June 1950, and as part of the Royal Artillery C Troop/170 Independent Mortar Battery attached to the Gloucestershire Regiment, I landed in Pusan on 19th November onboard the troopship The Empire Hallidale. Also onboard were the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers who were part of our Brigade. My father had offered to try and keep me on Service in the UK, but I wanted to go. For me, the prospect of the journey across was like a six-week cruise and General McArthur had promised that the war would be over by Christmas! And after all, this is why I joined the Army: it was a big adventure. As it happened, it turned out to be more of an adventure than I thought it would be.

"My father Served with the Royal Artillery during World War II when he was captured in Singapore by the Japanese and made a PoW. Like so many he had a really rough time in Changi Goal and when he was forced to work on the Burma to Thailand railway. He came home safely in 1945, although in very poor health.

"In typical fashion upon arrival in Pusan, our trucks were on the wrong ship so we were forced to travel North to Kaesong by 'passenger train' where we picked up our trucks and continued as a deployed troop of mortars. It was at that time we saw our first Korean refugees, old men, women and children fleeing the conflict. I remember one night we heard an explosion from a field in front of our positions and thought we were under attack, but it was refugees walking onto mines. The Glosters did their best to bring the refugees out of the field and to safety. We gradually advanced 50 miles north of Pyongyang and it was then that the Chinese came into the war over the Yalu River. There were nine Chinese armies, totalling over 300,000 men. We gradually withdrew until we were south of the 38th Parallel. We were sitting in reserve above Seoul in the winter of 1950/51, which was bitterly cold. At that time the Royal Ulster Rifles were involved heavily with the enemy in Happy Valley and suffered many casualties. In February 1951 we took Hill 327, north of Seoul, which was quite an experience for me, especially as I was carrying the batteries for the radio. When we heard incoming fire I couldn't throw myself on the ground like everyone else as the weight of the batteries would have broken my back. I still recall seeing men blown up and to me it looked as though it was in slow motion. It's something I'll never forget.

"After that we went to the Imjin. The weather was reminiscent of an English spring and south of the Imjin river, the enemy was nowhere in sight. We even ventured several miles into enemy territory at one point and were greeted by only a few farmers. However, on the 22nd of April, Chinese forces began to advance across the Korean peninsula in the Chinese Spring Offensive, which was against our Brigade the Glosters, the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, the Royal Ulster Rifles and a Belgian Battalion. I hadn't thought there were that many Chinese soldiers in the entire country! We were forced to cover a divisional front, which was far too big for the number of men that we had. I realised then that we were in trouble."

'Trouble' seems like an understatement, for Tom and the other men were outnumbered 100 to 1 (or so it seemed) by swathes of Chinese troops in a valiant last stand, facing an uncertain outlook.

"We fought for three days alongside the Glosters on what is now known as 'Gloster Hill'. I have no idea how we managed to get up there with all of our equipment, fear probably! Yet strange as it sounds, once we were up the hill I didn't feel scared. Although there were of course moments of terror. The Chinese were either very brave or were very frightened and were being forced to attack by people behind them. I still felt hopeful as we had a bit of ammunition, and I thought the Americans would get us out. How little I knew!

"We used to say that the British Army never made a retreat; only a tactical withdrawal. After three days of fighting, things were getting pretty desperate. I turned to my comrade in our slip trench and said to him: 'This will give us something to talk about down the pub when we get back!'. We had very little water and food and we also had our wounded. When we got the order on the third day to withdraw we had to leave our dead and wounded behind with a Padre, the Medical Officer and medics who gave themselves up to the Chinese to try to save the lives of the wounded. I only had five rounds left in my rifle. I was a 20 year old soldier and I naively thought we would fight our way out. That's why as we got off the hill and into a valley I used one round to shoot a Chinese soldier before he shot me. It was then I heard the shout 'Don't shoot!' and realised we weren't fighting our way out. Further along the valley on our descent, Chinese troops came towards us from both sides and I heard someone say 'Alright lads, it's no good. They've got us'. And that was the start of two and half years in captivity.

"A group of us were sat in a muddy farmyard – bedraggled and bloodied from three days of battle – and a Chinese officer came to tell us 'For you, the war is over'. Having heard this line many times in war films, we all doubled up laughing. He walked away shaking his head, probably wondering why we were laughing so much at what he thought was a quite reasonable statement!

"It took us six weeks to walk the 600 miles to the prison camp and our training running up the hills in Korea stood us in very good stead for that. We all had dysentery and of course some of the men were the walking wounded who had been injured in the battle. The Chinese removed the more seriously wounded and left the walking wounded with us. As we walked we heard the battles behind us and we saw Chinese troops heading south. Medical treatment at the time was wholly inadequate as we were without any medical supplies. One man, a Bren Gunner, had splinters from the magazine, which had been hit, in his head and they had to be removed. He was numb and didn't really feel the pain

as a few of the men worked together to remove the splinters from his head. He didn't receive any further treatment, but I'm pleased to say he survived.

"Eventually we got to the prison camp, although it wasn't like the camps in Germany or Poland. It wasn't ringed with barbed wire, but with Chinese guards; it was part of a village that had been taken over by the Chinese forces. When we arrived, the morale of the American prisoners was low and I think our presence gave them a bit of a lift. We did all kinds of things, like pretending to walk an invisible dog around the camp. The Chinese must have thought we were crackers, but I think it was just the good old British sense of humour. We weren't allowed to send letters home; we could only send cards that declared that we were well and that we were being fed. We didn't hear about the death of King George or the Queen's Coronation for months after it had happened. Neither did we receive Red Cross parcels, which would have helped us greatly.

"Our health in the camp wasn't great as our diet was inadequate and there was a lot of sickness, including dysentery, cholera, yellow fever and many men died, especially among the Americans. I had yellow jaundice and other sicknesses, but recovered as most of us did. One of the first among us to die was our Troop cook 'Taffy' Moseley and in one day I saw 15 Americans go up Boot Hill. As we got used to the conditions in typical British fashion we adapted. We were louse ridden but when Lofty Simms somehow got hold of a pair of hair clippers and gave us haircuts that was a blessing. We had Mohicans before they were fashionable and had tonsures just like monks, or we just shaved all our hair off. I even had a shave with a 6" nail that Lofty had fashioned into a razor. That made it more tolerable as far as hygiene was concerned. It was the British sense of humour coming out again.

"I passed my 21st birthday in the camp in the February of 1952. After 18 months in captivity two of us tried to make a break for freedom in the August of 1952. Since it was impossible to blend in with the population the way you could have done in Europe, the only option was to make for the coast as quickly as possible. The escape "committee", which consisted of about half a dozen men, gave me a new watch (which was worse than the one I had reluctantly parted with to help another man escape previously!). I never met the escape committee as they were a covert group and we dealt only with an intermediary. The committee also gave us a route to follow, and one August night we got our stuff together to leave. But just as we had crossed the river, I heard the click of a rifle and knew that we'd had it.

"By trying to escape, I think we had offended them. It was as if they asked 'You don't like our hospitality?' The consequences of our escape attempt were severe. I was placed in a cramped disused toilet and was forced to wear handcuffs that bit into my wrists. The only light into the room was from a beam through a crack in the door where I watched a small spider as it lay in wait for any insect that settled into the beam of light. I watched that spider for many hours, which really took my mind off things. Since then I have been unable to harm a spider.

"The Chinese kept dragging me out in the middle of the night for interrogation, but since I wasn't telling them anything, they began threatening to deport me to Manchuria. The idea of capturing us in such large numbers was that they'd be able to brainwash us and convert us to Communism, which we would continue to champion when the war was over. I was worried about being deported and gave them fictitious names such as Tom Mick and John Wayne etc. When they didn't give up and the threat of deportation became very real and after a lot of interrogation from the Chinese and much deliberation on my part, I finally gave them the names of several "progressives" – PoWs who had begun to sympathise with communism – knowing that they wouldn't be reprimanded too harshly. Shortly afterwards, I was moved into an open barn space and into a small cage resembling a dog kennel: we used to call it the Kennel Club. I could only just manage to sit up in the cage. A party of Americans once passed by us and I saw the jaw of one literally drop open. He must have been horrified at the sight of us. We must have looked like The Dog's Trust – 'come and adopt a PoW!'

"I was eventually taken out and told that I'd been given six weeks in a labour camp a few miles from the main camp. There were less than 20 of us in there: all bad boys obviously. Although the work was hard as we gathered wood for the winter, broke it into logs and stockpiled it, we got to eat the same meals as the guards, which was a huge improvement on the old food. After my time of hard labour I resumed normal camp life. As I walked back into the camp with a Chinese guard we mistakenly went into the American compound as he didn't know where he was going. He left me alone for a few minutes while he got directions to the British compound. While I waited I had a whispered conversation with some Americans and told them that I was British and that I'd come from a labour camp. As we walked past them and back to our compound the Americans lined up and applauded and that cheered me up no end.

"We were eventually told by the Chinese commandant that the war was over,

but I think we only half believed it: we had been hearing accounts of drawn out peace talks for several years by that point. When we realised we were being released and as we marched out of the camp I'll never forget that we started to sing 'It's a long way to Tipperary'. At that time we wouldn't have minded where we went, as long as it was out of Korea! We got on a cattle train and travelled back to Panmunjon, where we were handed over to the Americans, and it was quite surreal. We were released in September 1953 and after almost three years in captivity, we were being treated like VIPs - showers, hot food and crisp new uniforms. Eventually we were put on the ship home from Singapore to Southampton."

A "glutton for punishment", Tom said that he couldn't imagine life outside of the Army. He went on to Serve for 32 years, taking postings in Germany and eventually Gloucester, where he now resides close to his three daughters Susan, Yvonne and Melanie. It was his return to Korea in 2011 on the 60th Anniversary of the Battle at Imjin which illustrates how important it is this year, on the 60th Anniversary of the Armistice, to remember the sacrifice made by more than 1,000 British soldiers and of course all the Forces fighting under the UN banner, which included the Commonwealth troops from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and India etc. Tom also believes it is important to remember the many Koreans who lost their lives. In all wars civilians suffer greatly and Korea was no exception and they should not be forgotten.

Tom concluded: "On my return to England I didn't speak with my father about my time as a PoW as we both understood one another. We knew what we'd been through and that was enough, although I tried to reassure him that it hadn't been as bad for us in Korea. I do speak with my fellow PoWs at the British Korean Veterans Association when we meet once a month. I really benefit from the annual Blind Veterans UK Ex-PoW Reunion at the Brighton centre, especially speaking with Billy Orr who is also a former Korean PoW. I greatly value being a member of both distinguished organisations and I thank Blind Veterans UK for all the training they have given me.

"After I had returned from the visit to Korea in 2011, my eldest daughter told me that she had learned more about my time in Korea from me talking to the press than she had learnt from me personally in all the years. Up until the BBC began asking me questions, I hadn't really talked about it. It's often called the Forgotten War, and it largely is forgotten. It might sound a cliché to say, but I think you have to talk about it on behalf of the blokes who didn't come home."

My time as a POW. By Grenville Davies.

Grenville Davies, who is 94 and originally from the Welsh Valleys moved to Birmingham in 1935 where he still lives today. He was introduced to Blind Veterans UK by Terry Bullingham and became a member in 2012. They met when Terry was invited to address a branch of the REME Association that Grenville is involved with and they became friends. When Grenville's sight started to fail it was Terry who told him to contact the Membership department at Blind Veterans UK.

Grenville says that he has benefited greatly by joining the charity and he is staggered by the training that has helped him to cope with his sight loss. He attends the annual Prisoner of War Reunion at the Brighton centre and enjoys visits to the Llandudno centre.

He has published a book, *Came the Day*, that is available in bookshops, libraries and online. In it he relates his experiences when taken Prisoner of War at the beginning of WWII. Held in Stalag XXA and XXB POW Forced Labour Camps in Poland and Germany his story is retold from a diary he kept on scraps of paper obtained whilst in camp. Knowing the Germans were withholding Red Cross parcels containing food and provisions, being thoroughly demoralised through near starvation, hard work and cruelty, interspersed with occasional acts of kindness, simply increased the mental instability of many men, some of whom were driven to suicide. *Came the Day* tells how prisoners, with no hope of escaping, did their best to live off their wits and impede the German war effort to the best of their ability. Eventually, riddled with lice, disease, and in a state of near collapse, as the allies began to advance closer to the German borders, late one evening they were removed from their camps and aimlessly marched for hundreds of miles in the most atrocious weather conditions imaginable, not knowing whether at any moment they would be abandoned or shot.

Grenville begins.

Having joined the TA in June 1939, I was called up three months later and shipped to France in late December as a member of the British Expeditionary Force. I was then a Private in the 14th Army Field Workshop Royal Army Ordnance Corps. After a fairly aimless few weeks playing soldiers in three remote parts of the Pas-de-Calais, we eventually established part of our workshop in Belgium for the recovery sections. I was in the main part of the unit along with the HQ at Carvin near Lille, at the furthest point from any action.

We carried out our duties repairing trucks and various armoured vehicles until mid May when we had to pack up all the equipment and were then confined to barracks for four days awaiting further instructions. Eventually we were ordered to move out after the local brothel, which was situated adjacent to the Officers' quarters, was hit by a bomb.

We eventually arrived in the grounds of a chateau where a signal from General Gort was read out congratulating us on our work and achievements and rewarding us with a well earned rest. That evening, enemy planes bombed an airfield, which unbeknown to us, was adjacent to our 'haven of rest'. At dawn we were again on the move to another chateau where we duly waited for some German tanks to come and inflict considerable damage to the chateau and us. The Colonel gave the command 'make for the coast; every man for himself.' Famous last words as he and his accompanying officer were unfortunately killed soon after by French machine gunners who were supposed to be assisting us.

I boarded a truck with other lads without any of us knowing where we were going. The only information we could get from the locals was that we were totally surrounded by the Bosch. We decided to conceal the truck for the night, spread out and have a go for freedom in the morning. On re-assembling we found two colleagues and the truck had vanished. A decision was made to split up into small groups and endeavour to contact more British soldiers. I had a couple of mates with me. For four days we meandered around aimlessly, constantly getting within close proximity of German convoys. Unbeknown to us this was the big assault on Dunkirk. Eventually we were captured by members of a Supply Unit who moved us to St Omer where allied captives were being held. During the next few days we were moved from place to place in ever increasing numbers, eventually arriving at Cambrai. From there we were transported in cattle trucks — although the notice stated '8 horses or 20 men', we were herded in batches of 50.

Jeering and spitting.

Four days later we arrived at Trier just outside the border of Luxembourg. No food or water had been issued and everybody was showing signs of wear and tear. It was a sunny day and the town was festooned with Nazi flags and banners. The camp was situated on top of a hill and it seemed that the route was lined with the entire population, who seemed to have great enjoyment jeering and spitting on us. Third Reich! The camp was of the concentration variety and introduced us to the pyjama striped clothing issued to all the sad

inmates. However, at last we were fed, albeit rather frugally, and the following day we re-ran the gauntlet and returned to our cattle trucks for a further four days. By now Francis, a friend of mine from civvy street, had developed dysentery.

Our next destination was Thorn, Headquarters of Stalag XXA. Here I was housed in Fort 17 an old Polish cavalry barracks, where we were documented, numbered and had various items of uniform confiscated and substituted with old Polish equipment. One consolation was that we now received regular rations which were primarily a soup of potatoes and swede, supplemented with a portion of bread or biscuits and acorn coffee. Francis was soon sent to work on a farm and I eventually went to Langfur in a group of 100 removing soil from a field, which was then transported to an adjacent airfield. Months later we were moved to Willenberg, the Headquarters of Stalag XXB, which housed British, French, Belgian and Serb prisoners. As I had a wounded leg from a scar that turned into an ulcer I wanted to avoid any further work for a year.

On Christmas Eve 1941, a party of Russian prisoners came to the camp who were infected with typhus. This resulted in the entire camp having to trudge five miles to Marienburg to be deloused, commencing on Christmas Day. The first group were the hospital patients and I was in the second group classified as 'Excused Duties'. Having just collected our dinner, for which we had forfeited rations for a period of weeks to ensure a dry dinner as opposed to the customary soup, we were ordered to leave everything and set out for the delouser. On our return in the evening we found the huts had been fumigated leaving the food inedible. Happy Christmas!

The following Easter Monday I was detailed for a farm working party in Schonau. Here I remained for a year, but following an altercation with a neighbouring farmer I was sent back to the HQ to serve 14 days in solitary confinement. On my release I joined the Reichbahn party, which was great news as it was to be considered one of the plum jobs operating out of the main camp. It involved a five mile hike to a railway siding where we unloaded an average of 10 tons of coal per man. Eventually the entire party was despatched with an additional 100 to work in a Sugar Factory at Altfelde. There I became assistant to a female chemist who hated the job as much as she hated the British. She was an explosives chemist who had volunteered for the post in the Sugar Factory. We worked 12 hour shifts without any breaks (food was brought to you), then at weekends the shifts changed to 18 hours with a 10 minute

break. The changeover came at midday on Sunday and was the only time the majority of the lads saw daylight. My job was quite easy as I only fetched various samples at given periods, cleaned the utensils and fetched meals for the chemist and manager. Consequently I had lots of freedom to roam around and was able to relieve fellows who were unable to leave their positions.

14 days in the Bunker.

Token escapes were commonplace, but when escapees were picked up beyond the factory confines and returned to the camp they were given 14 days in the Bunker and on release were posted to a different job. As I enjoyed a lot of freedom the Germans suspected me of involvement with the escapes, and the manager, who was not too bad, would ask me who would be the next to go so that he could get someone to cover. Incidentally, I had no knowledge of the spontaneous escapes. Eventually I fell foul of the system when I lit a cigarette in a forbidden area and was given the mandatory 14 days in the bunker.

One day six of us were detailed to work in an engineering works repairing farm equipment. Obviously we had been selected from the engineering experience details that were given in our Army Paybooks. We didn't want to give our captors the advantage of our expertise and denied all knowledge of the experience they required. I said I was a clerk and I remember a fellow POW said that he was a deep sea diver. After four days of fooling around, and causing a little damage, five of us were returned to our previous job. The Reichbahn party were eventually drafted to Maxtal which was a railway rolling stock repair yard. I was selected to become a Blacksmith's striker to a little, old, retired, Polish Smith. We frequently fell out as he was afraid of the charge hand who would inundate him with work while taking it easy himself. This would prompt me into 'strike action' where I would sit down and read a book.

On Sunday 21st January 1945 everything changed for us. I can still recall that it was a bitterly cold day and snowing heavily. At 8pm we were assembled and told to pack a haversack and blanket and be ready to move within one hour. Chaos prevailed as we discarded prized possessions, packed all our food and donned as much clothing as possible — virtually two of everything. We marched to a small railway station and were transported to a farm that had been designated as an assembly point for all British POWs in the area. Here I met Francis again, who I had last seen some four years earlier as he had spent the entire period at the same farm! As a result he was quite hale and hearty.

I had always envisaged the day of liberation would involve us being drafted into a camp and left and I thought this was the moment. How disillusioned can one get! In appalling conditions we started a long march that was to last for 85 days, as we covered 870 miles with just 20 rests, when the majority of nights were spent in barns. After two nights we could hear heavy gun fire and presumed the Russians were not too far away. My pal Gordon and I thought we could escape and decided to take a chance and leave the column under cover of darkness. We made our escape and crept into the loft of a house and in the pitch darkness it was rather eerie but we were so exhausted we soon fell asleep. We woke at daybreak to find that we were surrounded by frozen sheets and various other items of the family wash. Returning to the streets we walked along the main road towards who we hoped would be our rescuers as we thought they were Russian troops. It was not to be as a Latvian Division of the German Army were in residence. They were none too pleased to see us and escorted us back to rejoin the rest of the column.

Before they found us I had acquired a sledge, which had been left outside a shop and it was great for carrying our kit and it proved to be a very important acquisition. On the 26th, having settled in a school building after covering about 15 miles in very arduous conditions, we were regrouped at 10pm to suffer what had to be our worst experience. A party of Russian POWs who were attached to us were so grossly undernourished that they were virtual skeletons, their wasted bodies were apparent through their inadequate clothing. A blizzard was raging, the cold was intense and these poor souls were beyond exhaustion. They didn't have the strength to walk, although they kept pushing themselves, and when they collapsed they appealed to the guards to shoot them to put them out of their misery. Having been a church member from a very early age and throughout my life, I am afraid my faith was badly shaken. If there was a God how could he allow such circumstances to prevail? Eventually we staggered into Jastrow and our haven was a church. The Russians were put on the ground floor and we went up to the balcony. A candle beneath a picture of the Madonna and child gave the only illumination. The Russians smashed furniture and lit fires and eventually a modicum of silence prevailed. Suddenly, music from a violin could be heard and it appeared that the entire group of Russians joined in singing a song that has haunted me ever since and remained in my memory. Years later the same tune, *The Carnival is Over*, which I discovered was a Russian folk song, *Volga, Volga Ruski*, became Number One in the hit parade.

The following morning the blizzard had abated and the British were allowed out of the church. Gordon looked after our kit while I went outside and was confronted by a soldier from my unit who I had not seen since France. He had an American Red Cross parcel and informed me where the store was. I ran there only to find all the parcels had gone but lots of items were scattered around. I grabbed a container which must have held five packages and gathered up various tins of meat and fats with the knowledge that we had a sledge to transport it. This proved to be our salvation as official issues of food were extremely erratic and three or four days without rations were commonplace.

Stark naked and waving towels.

Each day we marched westwards and even the guards who were changed at intervals began to realise things were not going their way any longer. Our columns were frequently split as accommodation and food became more difficult. As the days passed the weather improved and nothing of any great significance happened until April when we reached Hamlin and had a rest period. Our billets were outside the town and when it was decided that we should be deloused we were split into groups to attend delousing sessions in a German Barracks. My group had just put our clothes in the ovens when allied planes arrived and gave Hamlin a pasting. Much to the disgust of the 'master race' we ran onto the parade ground stark naked and waving towels. The following day we had to go to the station and help remove bodies and debris.

As a result of this it was decided that we should be moved back towards the East. By 9th April 1945 we were in Schladen and while Gordon and I were shaving we noticed that the RAMC were holding a sick parade and there was my old pal Francis. He was in a terrible condition, haggard, filthy, matted beard and covered in lice. He said he was dying and had received no medical aid. After the parade I spoke to the medics who said that they could not help as he was not prepared to help himself. I explained that he was a friend from civvie street who had always kept himself immaculate and that I would clean him up. I did this with the help of Gordon. I cut his hair and beard, shaved him and generally tidied him up, exchanging some of his clothes for our slightly less contaminated ones. The medics spoke to the appropriate staff and he was transferred to a hospital where he remained for a further five weeks after liberation before he returned home.

It was only three days later on 12th April that we got to Ummendorf and were locked in a barn adjacent to the main road. There was a rear door, which had

escaped the notice of the guards and on hearing a horse and cart rumbling past, I went to investigate and found it laden with crates. True to years of scrounging I grabbed one that contained boxes of cigars. During the night we had a rude awakening by a local English speaking civilian who announced that our guards had left and the Americans were not far away. He also said that he would ensure we all got fed. As nobody believed him he was showered with abuse and told in true Tommy language where he should go. Eventually somebody did get up to investigate and confirmed that our guards had left. There was no jubilation, as one would have possibly anticipated. No doubt our spirits and morale were so low that we always anticipated the worst would always happen. So we returned to the straw for yet another night.

At 10.30am the following morning American tanks rumbled in and while they threw us K rations, Gordon and I reciprocated with cigars. For a further two days we lived in that barn until trucks arrived and took us off to Hildesheim to await flights home. Here Gordon and I parted company as he was delegated as a reserve for anyone missing their flight. He flew home direct, whereas I went to Brussels the following day and then finally arrived at Wing near Aylesbury on 19th April, almost five years and four months since leaving England. Two days later I was allowed to go home to enjoy three weeks leave before reporting back to retrain for the Japanese war.

The total march lasted 85 days with 20 rest periods and covered approximately 870 miles. I have since returned to visit the places we marched through.



Picture: Grenville Davies.

Coffee morning for Blind Veterans UK. By Jim Chapman, blind veteran.

On 2nd July my wife Margaret and I held a coffee morning on behalf of Blind Veterans UK, the charity that now means so much to us. On the morning of the event we looked skywards with some apprehension, but we need not have worried, as we were greeted by a clear blue sky and warm sunshine, although there was a stiff breeze blowing.

Along with a small group of willing and enthusiastic helpers we set about preparing our garden for the expected visitors where a marvellous selection of homemade cakes and coffee awaited them.

The guests soon began arriving in large numbers. Upwards of 50 people attended and thoroughly enjoyed the delicious fare on offer. There was a continuous hum of conversation throughout as everyone caught up on the latest 'news'!

Everyone clearly enjoyed the morning, so much so, they hoped that it would become a regular event. Clearly guests had donated very generously and when all donations had been totalled, to everyone's surprise and delight, £518 had been raised for Blind Veterans UK. So it proved to be well worth the effort!



Picture: A highly successful coffee morning.

Armed Forces Day 2016.

Blind veterans and the No One Alone team came together to celebrate Armed Forces Day on Saturday 25th June 2016.



Picture: Blind veteran Jim Wood travelled to the National Memorial Arboretum with his wife Diane to thank blind veteran Diane Mountford and the No One Alone team for encouraging him to join Blind Veterans UK. Jim had previously met them at an exhibition they attended to find veterans who are eligible to join our charity. Jim, who served in the Royal Military Police, told Diane Mountford that he is very excited about the future that is now available to him with Blind Veterans UK.



Picture: Blind veteran Morris Saxby-Taylor organised an Armed Forces Day Parade in Gillingham, Kent



Picture: Blind veteran Charlie Eastwood manned a Blind Veterans UK No One Alone stand with Welfare Officer Ray East in Cleethorpes, East Lincolnshire.



Picture: Blind Veterans UK Standard Bearer Brian Eldridge represented our charity in the Armed Forces Day Parade in Cleethorpes.

GOAL Group adventures from the Brighton centre. By Dave Hazelgrove.

Seven GOAL Group members — Diane Mountford, Lindy Elliott, John Cantwell, John Brice, Eddy Perry, Carole Sharpe (with guide dog Fran), and me, Dave Hazelgrove, met at the Brighton centre on Monday 13th June. We should have been joined by Jeff Warn, but unfortunately he had to drop out at short notice.

We stayed at Port Hall the local accommodation that is only a short walk from the Brighton centre. After our evening meal at the centre we settled in for what has become our usual evening pastime of Quiz and Libation, the libation part very ably organised by John Cantwell. I did my usual part reading out the questions and interspersing them with readings from an original copy of The Tony Blackburn Joke Book, dated 1500BC! We also had a getting to know us session for our newbies, Carole and Eddy, and a general fuss for Fran.

Tuesday started after breakfast, when we were met at reception by two of the centre's volunteers, Mike Maddox and Rob Thornton. Our venue for the day was the ex-RAF base at Tangmere, which now houses an aircraft and aviation related museum.



Picture: John Cantwell in the bi-plane at Tangmere ex RAF base.

At Tangmere we were met by Brian Blackman a staff member who stayed with us for the day and did a sterling job of describing everything to us and telling us something of the history of the base and of many of the exhibits. We were free to touch quite a few items on display, with suitable warnings given where certain items were hazardous (sharp edges and such).

We had a real problem getting John Cantwell out of the biplane. I seem to recall certain phrases about The Red Baron and Snoopy, but I might be mistaken. We all extend our grateful thanks for the able assistance of our volunteers and the staff at Tangmere for such a memorable day.

On Wednesday, we were joined at reception by Vivien Thompson and Linda Chase, our volunteers for the day. Both ladies have accompanied us in past events, and it was lovely to renew our acquaintanceship.

Our venue for the morning was the Sea Life Centre near Brighton Pier. After some walking around to find the disabled entrance (to avoid all those stairs) we were met by Mike, who showed us around and was able to keep things very interesting with talks on most of the inhabitants of the Sea Life Centre. Although we weren't that able to see some of the smaller fish and crustaceans. The anaconda was certainly big enough to see, but as it spent most of its time under water we couldn't make it out too well. A ban on flash photography and the general darkness meant that I was unable to take any photos of the visit.

After lunch back at the centre, we were back on the local buses into Brighton again, where we were to visit the Police Cells Museum under the Town Hall. Touted as "an arresting experience" it is a vile calumny to suggest that certain of us had return tickets to ensure that we all got out again! No names, but you know who you are.

We were met and ably escorted by Alex Durie who we all recognised as a kindred spirit (may the Gods help him!) and who seemed to enjoy showing us around and had almost as much fun as we did. It was only a mercy that all the standard cell locks and keys had been removed, although that wasn't enough to stop certain people from trying to experiment with the doors. No names John. Fran did try to keep things under control, but she was always going to be on a losing streak. Did somebody mention chocolate?



Picture: The GOAL Group in the clink in Brighton Prison Cells Museum.

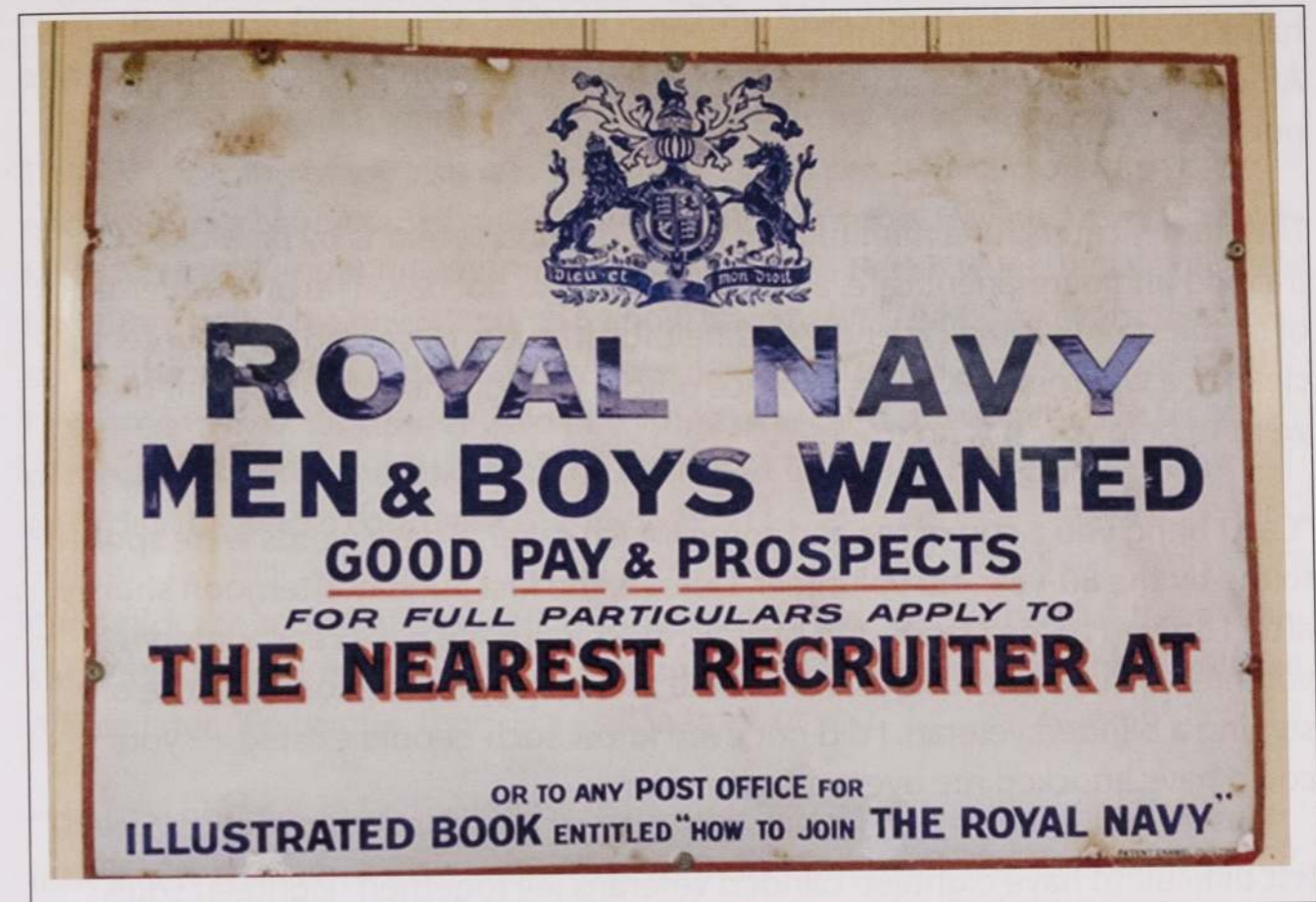
After extracting ourselves from the cells, not easy, we walked down to the Pier, where we boarded the Volks Electric Railway for a trip along the seafront as far as the Marina. Once at the Marina, we went into the Brighton Bowlplex for a return grudge match after Sheffield between myself and John Cantwell. All of us played and everyone did far better than they thought they would. A couple of us were of the opinion that people in our situation can't possibly do 10 Pin Bowling, and we proved that they were wrong. High scorers? Carole Sharpe got 92. John Brice got 93. John Cantwell scored 98. Me? I managed 126.

Having worked up an appetite we adjourned to the local Wetherspoons (other restaurants are available), where we all enjoyed our evening meal. Afterwards back to Port Hall for the evening quiz.

After breakfast on Thursday, we boarded our transport to the Bluebell Railway at Sheffield Park. We were met there by our volunteers for the day, namely Rob Thornton and his colleague John. Rob is a member of the Bluebell Railway Society, so was also able to act as a guide.

We boarded the train, pulled by a Class 5P locomotive for just over 40 minute trip to East Grinstead. At East Grinstead we had a chance to get out and watch as the engine was uncoupled from the front of the carriages, moved and re-coupled to the rear for the return trip.

Back at Sheffield Park, we had lunch in the station facilities and then were shown around the workshops and engine sheds by Rob and John. After the engine had done some shunting and re-positioning work around the station, we were escorted across the tracks to the second platform. This was a very thoughtful touch, as it meant that we didn't have to brave the up and over standard means of changing platforms and all those steps. There were a great many old posters and signs around the station. We're still trying to work out the poster that is shown below. Perhaps Senior Service representatives can help.



The second platform housed a small museum that we all enjoyed thanks to the care of the resident staff members, and a small disconnected signals box. Some of us were adventurous enough to try throwing (a very accurate way of describing it!) the signals levers. After being escorted back across the rails to the exit via the shop, and deeply thanking our volunteers for their time and efforts, we rejoined our transport for the trip back to Port Hall and our usual quiz. On Friday, immediately after breakfast, we started to head for Brighton station where we said our cheerios until the next GOAL event.

If you are aged between 60 and 76 and would like to join us on a future GOAL event, please contact Chris Humphrey on 01603 701402 or Carol Davies on 01754 450232 and they can tell you more.

The great Spirit of Great Britain. By Don Wessels, South African blind and handless veteran.

As participant of Project Gemini 2016, there was one thing I did not expect, but which in the end stood out for me. It was the “never say die” spirit of the British people — it blew me away!

Project Gemini 2016 was a weeklong get together of six British blind veterans, half a dozen American counterparts and two blinded veterans from South Africa. We congregated at the beautiful and well run Llandudno centre in northern Wales.

This facility caters for a multitude of needs of blind veterans by providing training and permanent care, as well as a place to holiday. The one trademark of all the staff was their friendly and helpful attitude. Never did I encounter a cleaner, a waitress, a ROVI or an office official who did not exude a spirit of “I want to help you; it is no trouble”.

“Can I bring you a cup of tea and some Welch cake?” These words were spoken to me by the 80-year old volunteer, Doreen, the first Sunday afternoon shortly after I arrived at the Llandudno centre. Never in my life have I encountered a volunteer who dedicated his or her time and energy for the soul purpose of serving a blinded veteran. I did not even know such people existed — you could have knocked me over with a feather!

Is it difficult to have eighteen blinded veterans jell together? Eighteen souls from different nationalities and different backgrounds? No problem, just let them strip down and gear up in similar apparel for a rib-boat trip on the Irish Sea; or let them all zip-wire up to 100 mph and then all skydive in an air tunnel. Add to that a good measure of British wit and some good laughs — amply provided by project co-ordinator Colin Williamson, and you have a perfectly happy, receptive group. A group learning from each other and learning through exposure and thrilling experiences — it was truly marvellous!

When we visited places such as Carnarvon Castle, Liverpool, Birkenhead and Manchester, the British public was more than polite and helpful, in fact they were encouraging.

“We will fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender.” This is an extract from the well-known 1940 speech of British WWII Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. With this speech Churchill, the man of words, encouraged, nay invigorated the British nation and all allies to resist the expected German onslaught following the Dunkirk evacuation.

I see that attitude today still in the British nation: never say die, never say no he can't. Thank you for that, for rubbing it into my fibre too. It has revitalised me and is now part of my being — I will never surrender.

The last morning of my visit was spent enjoying a peaceful cup of tea in the enclosed courtyard at the back of the Llandudno centre. Having a cuppa at the table next to me, was an 89-year old partly sighted British veteran. “I've recently had three major leg operations and I now have to walk with the aid of two sticks,” he said following an inquiry from me. During a lull in the conversation I excused myself. Without the aid of a white cane, arm outstretched in front of me, I walk down the length of the courtyard to ‘see’ if the perimeter wall encircles the whole courtyard.

Click-click the sound of two walking sticks following me. “Be careful, there is a step,” the 89-year old, semi-blind veteran with the three leg operations tells me. A little later, “Be careful, there is a wall in front of you.”

“Thank you for your help,” I said to my unexpected benefactor whilst feeling a little guilty that a frail man, more than four decades my senior, is endeavouring to help me. “No problem, I have to help you, because what happened to you could have happened to me.”

In the words of Sir Winston Churchill, ‘Attitude is a small thing that makes a big difference’.

I salute your spirit, Great Britain!

Chicago. My kind of town. Project Gemini 2016. **By Colin Williamson, Contributing Editor.**

Legendary crooner Frank Sinatra once sang about Chicago being "his kind of town". William A. Hulbert, one of the founders of the National League, recognised as baseball's first major league, went a step further when he stated "I'd rather be a lamppost in Chicago than a millionaire in any other city." Those of us who were fortunate to attend the recent Project Gemini event in this historic city would readily agree.

The Project Gemini group, consisting of beneficiaries Andy Allen, Maria Pikulski, Mick Scanlan and Tom Boal and accompanied by staff members Colin Williamson and Simon Brown departed Heathrow on Sunday 19th June and arrived into O'Hare International Airport mid-afternoon after an eight hour flight courtesy of British Airways who once again stood up to the plate and donated the air fares. We were met by U.S. blind veteran and former First Sergeant Dan Wallace who served with the elite US Rangers and Blinded Veterans Association director Tom Zampieri. Also on hand to greet us was Cook County Sheriff's Department employee Sheriff Pat McCool who had volunteered to drive us around for the week.

Pat drove us the short distance to our hotel where we were allocated our rooms and after unpacking and freshening up we were whisked off to one of Chicago's finest steak restaurants where we were treated to a fantastic meal courtesy of the Gary Sinise Foundation. Gary Sinise played the role of Lieutenant Dan in the iconic Forrest Gump movie and is the founder of the foundation, devoting most of his time supporting the men and women who were deployed in response to the tragic events of September 11th, 2001. One of the ambassadors of the foundation, US stand-up comedian Tom Dreesen who grew up in one of Chicago's southwest suburbs, stopped by to say hello and welcomed us to the city.

On Monday we were taken to Hines Blind Rehabilitation Centre where we met our fellow blind veterans from the U.S. who were at the centre to participate in various programmes as part of their rehabilitation. Some of them were previous Project Gemini participants so we spent a good hour catching up and renewing acquaintances. We were then given a tour of the entire Veterans Agency hospital (which is so vast it has its own post code) by the blind rehabilitation centre Chief, Denise Van Koevering and given a welcome speech delivered by

the hospital's interim director Marc Magill.

After lunch we headed to the bowling alley where we had a couple of games of ten pin bowling and got to know some of the U.S. veterans whom we were going to spend the week with.

Tuesday morning saw us back at the blind centre and after a quick briefing on the hand held Trekker Breeze talking navigation system for the blind and vision impaired we were split into small groups and taken by vehicle on a tour of a nearby suburb to see how the system works. After the session ended we once again boarded our Cook County Sheriff's bus and headed downtown to Chicago's waterside. We had lunch near to the historic Navy Pier and then took a boat trip along the Chicago River where we were entertained by a very witty and knowledgeable tour guide who gave us a running commentary on the various buildings and bridges that we passed. It was a very nice way to explore the city and everyone enjoyed themselves. After the boat trip we had dinner at a popular pizza restaurant courtesy of American Airlines.

On Wednesday morning we visited the centre for a short while before boarding the bus and heading for the famous Wrigley Field to experience the most eagerly anticipated baseball game in the city, Chicago Cubs versus St. Louis Cardinals!

During the game, which unfortunately the Cubs lost, we were introduced to the crowd and given a standing ovation which was fantastic. We also enjoyed what is a bit of a tradition at baseball games up and down the country, beer and a hot dog!

Thursday morning was spent as guests of the Riverside Golf Club where we had a round of golf and took part in a putting competition. Another competition we participated in was hitting the ball across a stretch of water affectionately nicknamed 'the pond' which was great fun and which made everyone really concentrate, especially Mick and Maria who were really getting into the swing! The Riverside club also provided a splendid lunch for us all. In the afternoon we visited a nearby shopping mall and in the evening we went along to a local bar that is a favourite watering hole for the in-patients at Hines VA hospital, McGaffers Saloon where we had dinner and a few drinks and chatted about the morning's golf session. It was amazing to witness as the night progressed and the more beers that were downed how everyone's golfing prowess improved dramatically!

We returned to the blind centre on Friday and after a BBQ lunch we were back in the classroom where we had an awards ceremony and exchanged tokens of our appreciation for the splendid hospitality that we had received from everyone concerned with the visit. Sheriff Pat McCool (great name and a really big character) was presented with a North Wales Police bobbie's helmet courtesy of Llandudno Activity Team Leader Mark Hollis who is a former police officer along with a plaque for all of his hard work ensuring that we were at the right place at the right time. Another volunteer, former US Army Ranger Joe Amerling was presented with a gift for his part in what was a tremendous week. Joe did a sterling job in looking after us and was always on call to lend a hand. Tokens of our appreciation were also given to Blind Centre chief Denise Van Koeving and the BVA's Tom Zampieri and Dan Wallace for the splendid job they did in organising the week. After we left the centre we had a quick fifteen minute turnaround before we headed to south Chicago and Connie's Pizza Restaurant, one of Chicago's finest, we were had dinner courtesy of Cook County Sheriff's Department and the Chicago Police Federation. Simon presented Lieutenant William 'Billy' Evans from the Sheriff's Department with a Blind Veterans UK plaque in recognition for all of his efforts in ensuring that we were well looked after during our time in this great city.

Soon it was time to leave so on a hot and sunny Saturday morning we said goodbye to our friends Tom Zampieri and Joe Amerling who were heading off to Texas and Georgia respectively before boarding the bus one last time. After dropping off Dan Wallace at the train station we continued our journey to O'Hare International Airport and the start of our journey home. British Airways came up trumps again and soon had us checked in and whisked through security and after some last minute duty free shopping we were invited into the B.A. Business lounge where we had a lovely meal and relaxed for a couple of hours before our flight home. Thanks must go to Judy from British Airways for all of her help and assistance at the airport, it was really appreciated.

It was an amazing week and I'd like to place on record my thanks to all of the staff at the Hines Blind Rehabilitation Centre for making it such a positive experience for all concerned. Thanks also to volunteers Pat McCool and Joe Amerling for their contribution, we really couldn't have done it without you both. Thanks also to Tom and Dan from the Blinded Veterans Association who put together a marvellous itinerary and I'm sure that I speak for everyone concerned when I say that it was a really memorable week and one that we'll remember for a long time to come.

To close Project Gemini participant Andy Allen wrote the following after his first experience of the peer to peer support programme.

Andy Allen: I would like to begin by thanking you, Steve, Mark and the team at the Llandudno centre, Danny, Pat, Joe, Denise, Maggie, and all the staff at the Blind Rehabilitation Centre Chicago. I would like to extend my thanks to all those involved behind the scenes, of which I'm sure there is many, so I apologise if I have left anyone out, for an experience of a life time. The hospitality afforded to us during our time in Chicago and Wales was truly amazing.

During my time on Project Gemini, both at Wales and Chicago a key theme presented itself throughout, the 'never say die' spirit of the British, American and South African veterans involved, whether it was when zip lining, sky diving paddle boarding or just sharing our life experiences prior to and after injury or how we have been able to adapt to live after sight loss.

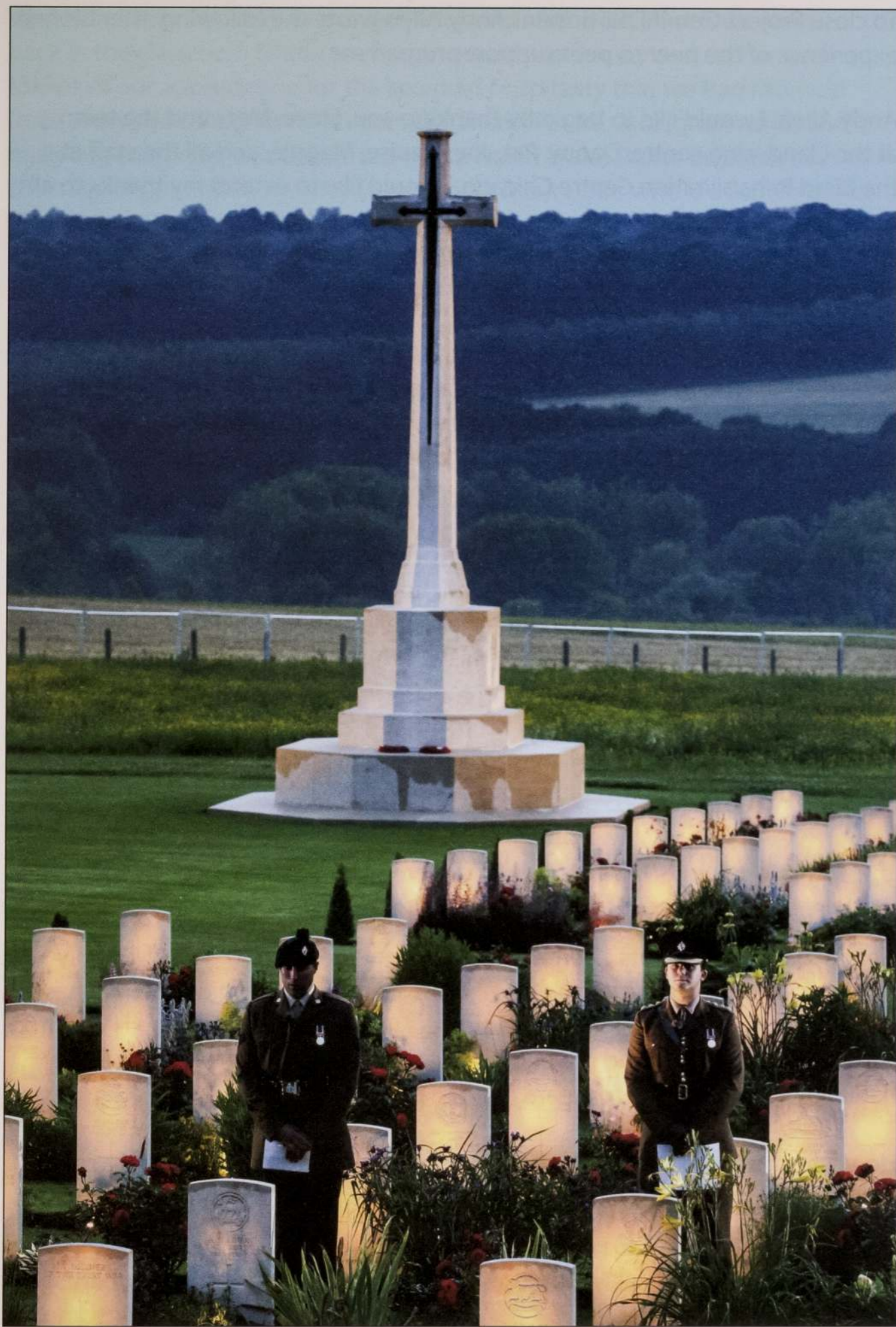
After being injured I have always strived to live an independent life, attempting to do everything I possibly can for myself, however before participating in Project Gemini the furthest I would have travelled on my own was a taxi to work and back, approximately a couple of miles. Project Gemini has given me the confidence to be able to travel further independently. Something I would have always avoided.

Winston Churchill who was famous for his many inspirational quotes once said:

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

For me Project Gemini sums this quote up. I witnessed first-hand how Project Gemini gave participants a sense of purpose and new found drive. Not only on the golf course! In life we are never done learning and Project Gemini has taught me that no matter how hard life gets you must never give up. I watched (Listened) as those around me engaged in conversation and banter as if they had known one another for years.

However, most importantly Project Gemini gave me the opportunity to meet some truly amazing people who I am proud to say I had the opportunity to get to know and learn from.



The second part of Leo Neasham's account of his experiences during The Battle of the Somme.

In the July issue of Review we included the first part of Leo Neasham's account of his time fighting in The Somme Offensive. We ended when he wrote of a young British officer who was killed by a sniper. An officer whom Leo could not warn of imminent danger as it went against all regulations to address an officer, unless first addressed by him. Here we continue Leo's powerful narrative.

In the years that have passed, I've often relived that moment. It seemed so tragic. A young life, full of promise, some proud mother's son lost to the world because of a ridiculous order preventing me from warning him. Strange, that in Vera Britten's Testament of Youth it is reported that her lover was lost in a very similar manner and could have been saved in that instance, those under his leadership could have warned him. No doubt similar incidences have occurred many times over. Can we never learn to listen to experience? Is a superior position always indicative of superior knowledge?

To return to the moment, I was bending down trying to extract the pin from a grenade. The finger ring had broken and it needed a thumb and finger grip. All's well. I raised my arm in the usual bowling position. My head must have come forward. Mr Sniper was onto it, aimed at my temple, missed and the bullet went through my arm. The hand grenade fell. The lad behind picked up the grenade and threw it into the air. It exploded just above us. A very brave act, but those sort of heroics are not recognised, unless the officer says so, and our poor lad, he will not say anything to anybody any more.

Now to scramble up. The tin hat had moved over my face, and so a full mouth of this wet mud seemed to be all. Playing around trying to get the mud from my mouth and do something about the arm. I caught a glimpse of Mr Sniper rolling over on his back. Somebody had got him. Almost immediately an explosion in my face. What now? Perhaps it's mud. I can't see. Whilst trying to gather myself together as it were, Ginger caught me with both hands on the shoulder. 'Rifle? Leave it.' Turning me around he said, 'Go that way, keep in the shallow trench and don't stop.' And so I wandered away. Where was I going? We had come up in the dark of night. I knew not where our own lines were. Carry on I must.

How difficult it always had been to walk in this morass. Now it seemed impossible, especially as I was unable to see the way. Trying to lift the feet, falling down and struggling up again. Yes, I must go on. I must not faint. No,

that would court disaster. No sound of passerby or voices, wherever am I? But I must go on. At some moments I could sense a light shadow of vision. Well, that's something. But it soon faded. It didn't last. How long did I wander there? Seemed no means of telling.

Suddenly the quietness was broken by violent shelling. The Hun had decided to prevent if possible, the movement in of our supporting troops. They probably thought the whole British Army was attacking, not 20 teenagers! The spray of shrapnel caught me in the leg, fall over into the mud. Oh yes, the right leg was badly shattered. I wasn't able to move. If I lie still a while, perhaps I can stand up again. Wish I had my equipment here. There was some water in that bottle. I must try to think clearly. I thought of my mother, however would she take this? But she will not know, and I hope she never will. I think I can see my mother, in conversation with a lady to whom I have not spoken. They haven't even seen me, they fail to notice me at all. I seem to recognise the little lady, perhaps it's the mother of the Second Lieutenant! No, it cannot be. She's surely no more than 18. Very pretty, and petite, and with lovely dark hair. They move away without even speaking to me.

I was beginning to abandon all hope. Then I overheard the speech of somebody near me, yes, it was guttural German. I called out with the loudest voice I could muster. The speech was near, the voices were clearly audible, the language I failed to understand. The voices were coming from more than one person, it seemed a group holding short discussions. Then the voices died away, perhaps they had moved on. No, I hear them again. They have returned. Speaking in short staccato sentences. Perhaps I'm a little mentally unbalanced. What was I expecting to happen? The various wounds were causing me distress.

In a few moments some object was thrown near to me. One of them bundled me over onto what appeared to be a stretcher. It was lifted from all corners, and I was moving. There were four of them, because the voices came from the four corners. They must be German prisoners, heutenbergers. I wondered they had been driven out of the redoute and sent back by the lads. What a journey! Sometimes I thought I would roll off. Often they dropped the thing, and rested during some shelling. The journey seemed interminable. How long I know not. Time had no meaning. I must have been floating between states of consciousness. I imagined I heard English voices — yes they were English easily identifiable by soldierly language. Yes, they were shouting. Such a babble! As to be almost inaudible amongst the distant rumble of exploding shells.

My rescuers dropped me again, which proved to be the last time. English voices came from all around me. I was gently lifted again and conveyed to a dug-out, or similar enclosure. How I wished I could have seen or known my rescuers. That was not to be. I so much wanted to touch their hands, to thank them. But that would be fraternisation with the enemy, an offence punishable by death. All I could do was be grateful, as I have been throughout the long years that have passed. They had saved my life, when their real purpose should have been to destroy it. They must have been exhausted. I was conscious that they were being shouted at, and I suppose, rounded up or marched off, into a prison camp. Even so long after, I sometimes wonder if it actually did happen, or was it a dream?

At that moment I did not actually know where I was, but I soon learned it was a casualty clearing station outside Albert. They had carried me over that awful mud for near three miles. The medical orderlies who had brought me into this enclosure were instructed by a kindly voice that bade them rip open the trouser leg and sleeve. Rough dressings were applied, the attendant presumably a medical officer or doctor soke very softly. I asked him if he could bathe my eyes and somehow relieve the pain. He regretted that he could not touch that and called for 'the man' to be taken to casualty hospital. Two lads conveyed me to a sort of motor vehicle, I suppose it was. One stayed with me, the other I presume was the driver. For a period of a half hour or so we journeyed to the hospital. I asked what time it was, and was told that it was 7.30 and dark. The way back had taken twelve hours.

To be continued. Leo Neasham joined the Royal Norfolk Regiment on 7th October 1914. He was wounded on the Somme in October 1916 when he lost his left eye and sustained shrapnel wounds to his right eye.

The photograph on page 50 was taken on Thursday 30th June 2016. Soldiers stand at night amongst lit war graves during a military led vigil to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of the Somme. The commemoration took place at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Thiepval Memorial in Thiepval, France, where 70,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers with no known grave are commemorated. **Photo credit:** Gareth Fuller/PA Wire.

Family News.

Congratulations to:

Birthdays:

Stefan Ciesla who celebrated his 104th birthday on 18th August.

John Newins who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 1st August.

Walter Henderson who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 7th August.

Ronald Brendell who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 22nd August.

Edgar Waller who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 29th August.

Huw Williams who celebrated his 101st birthday on 24th August.

Marjorie Wakeford who celebrated her 100th birthday on 4th August.

Anniversaries:

Platinum (70th):

George & Irene Slater of Leyland, Lancashire on 1st August.

Ted & Joyce Cooper of Northampton, Northamptonshire on 3rd August.

Eric & Margaret Mawer of Colyton, Devon on 17th August.

Blue Sapphire (65th):

John & Hazel McIntosh of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire on 4th August.

Ronald & Freda Simpson of Hartlepool, Cleveland on 6th August.

Billy & Pera Allison of Hartlepool, Cleveland on 7th August.

John & Joan Jarvis of Ashted, Surrey on 25th August.

Diamond (60th):

Roy & Diana Sutton of Belper, Derbyshire on 1st August.

Colin & Joy Bromfield of Coventry, West Midlands on 6th August.

Brian & Jackie Pryce of Worthing, West Sussex on 11th August.

George & Joan Storey of Rainham, Essex on 22nd August.

Golden (50th):

Ronald & Margaret Davies of Middlesbrough, Cleveland on 8th August.

David & June Wheeler of Darlington, County Durham on 13th August.

Bill & Daphne Tippett of Redruth, Cornwall on 20th August.

Pearl (30th):

George & Marian Lewis of Aberystwyth, Dyfed on 1st 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.

Michael Cole who died on 29th January 2016. He was the husband of Janet Cole.

Harriet Green who died on 9th May 2016. She was the widow of the late Harold Green.

Marguerite Mellish who died on 23rd June 2016. She was the wife of Gerald Mellish.

Ivy Mendham who died on 8th June 2016. She was the widow of the late Roy Mendham.

Joan Poulter who died on 17th May 2016. She was the wife of Geoffrey Poulter.

Gisela Sykes who died on 30th May 2016. She was the widow of the late Henry Sykes.

Joan Taylor who died on 13th February 2016. She was the wife of Bernard Taylor.

Peggy Upward who died on 4th July 2016. She was the wife of Peter Upward.

Marion Warwick who died on 15th March 2016. She was the wife of Frederick Warwick.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

John Aaron of Kettering, Northamptonshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1957 to 1960.

Joseph Aitken of Millom, Cumbria served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1956 and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1969 to 1972.

Peter Appleby of Orpington, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Joyce Austin née Geach of Thames Ditton, Surrey served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1943 to 1946.

Jeffrey Baines of Oswestry, Shropshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1964.

Winifred Barlow née Lee of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Naval Voluntary Aid Detachment from 1944 to 1946 and the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1957.

Ronald 'Ron' Bartlem of Chester, Cheshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1942 to 1953.

Esther Bromley née Boardman of Salford served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1954.

Donald 'Don' Brown of Midsomer Norton, Radstock served in the Somerset Light Infantry from 1945 to 1948.

Ronald Brown of Liverpool served in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers from 1948 to 1964.

Dennis Button of Hinckley, Leicestershire served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1945 to 1959.

Alfred 'Vic' Cadd of Stalybridge, Cheshire served in the Lancashire Fusiliers from 1952 to 1958.

David 'Dave' Cameron of Broughty Ferry, Dundee served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

William 'Bill' Charlton of Sunderland, Tyne & Wear served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1951 to 1953.

Joseph 'Joe' Child of Saltdean, East Sussex served in the Royal Signals from 1942 to 1945.

Ronald 'Ron' Coe of Chelmsford, Essex served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1955.

Patricia 'Tricia' Cole-Johnson née Jousiffe of Erith, Kent served in the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1949 to 1952.

Frederick Corns of Stockton On Tees, Cleveland served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

Eileen Collins née Wood of Ashbourne, Derbyshire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Peter Collins of Edinburgh served in the Royal Engineers from 1962 to 1966.

Raymond 'Ray' Collings of Paignton, Devon served in the Royal Air Force from 1957 to 1962.

Michael Comlay of Waterlooville, Hampshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1957 to 1966.

Robert Daniel of Plymouth, Devon served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

Raymond Draper of Torrington, Devon served in the General Service Corps, Royal Warwickshire Regiment and the South Staffordshire Regiment from 1944 to 1948.

Evelyn Dean of Stockton On Tees, Cleveland served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1954.

Daniel Donegan of Chorley, Lancashire served in the General Service Corps, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and the Royal Army Educational Corps from 1945 to 1948.

Neil Eastwood of Hoole, Chester served in the Queen's Division and the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers from 1975 to 1978.

Eric Edmond of Cwmbran, Gwent served in the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1964.

Clifford 'Cliff' Ellwood of Addlestone, Surrey served in the General Service Corps, Royal Lincolnshire Regiment, Dorset Regiment, Royal Artillery and Royal Military Police from 1943 to 1952.

John 'Les' Fitton of Runcorn, Cheshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Adele Forbes née Wood of Bournemouth served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1946.

Eric Foster of Clitheroe, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

Russell Game of Ipswich, Suffolk served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1955 to 1957.

John Gillard of Watford, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Army Medical Corps, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1942 to 1946.

Robert 'Bob' Goding of Stevenage, Hertfordshire served in the Army Catering Corps and the Royal Signals from 1955 to 1961.

Douglas Goldsmith of Brighton, East Sussex served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1943 to 1959.

Ronald 'Ron' Goldsmith of Pembroke, Dyfed served in the General Service Corps and the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment from 1947 to 1949.

Reginald 'Jim' Goodchild of Watlington, Oxfordshire served in the General Service Corps, Royal Army Service Corps and the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry from 1943 to 1947.

Brian Gresham of Oswestry, Shropshire served in the Royal Navy from 1949 to 1981.

Joseph 'Tommy' Guy of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Merchant Navy from 1966 to 1983.

Queenie 'Robbie' Hall née Robinson of Stowmarket, Suffolk served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1940 to 1945.

Reginald 'Reg' Hallwood of Bangor, Gwynedd served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

John Hanley of Watford, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1938 to 1966.

Richard Hardman of Blackpool, Lancashire served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Henry Hardy of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1937 to 1946.

Vivian Harris of Cardiff served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

Ernest Hawkins of Brentwood, Essex served in the Royal Artillery from 1956 to 1958.

Clide 'Merve' Heedick of Rugby, Warwickshire served in the Royal Signals from 1962 to 1971.

Derek Hibbert of Droylsden, Manchester served in the Manchester Regiment and the Lancastrian Brigade from 1950 to 1956.

Dennis 'Denny' Hodgson of Consett, County Durham served in the Royal Navy from 1950 to 1951.

John 'Merfyn' Holt of Llandudno, Gwynedd served in the General Service Corps, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Welch Regiment and the South Wales Borderers from 1943 to 1945.

Patricia 'Molly' Jones née Rumsby of Diss, Norfolk served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1955.

Robert 'Bob' Jones of Orton Wistow, Peterborough served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Ronald 'Ron' Jury of Bracknell, Berkshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1969 to 1991.

John Kirsopp of North Shields, Tyne and Wear served in the Army Catering Corps from 1951 to 1964.

Clare-Marie Keating née Pemberton of Hook, Hampshire served in the Royal Air Force from 2001 to 2007.

Frederick Knight of Gloucester, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Arnold Lawson of Spennymoor, County Durham served in the Army Catering Corps from 1958 to 1974.

Hywel Lewis of Sketty, Swansea served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1951.

Kenneth Loney of Crowborough, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1954.

Lionel Marks of Bushey Heath, Bushey served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1945.

George Marshall of Bretton, Peterborough served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1991.

Ronald Meads of Worthing, West Sussex served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve from 1939 to 1945.

Bryan McAvoy of Liverpool served in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders from 1953 to 1959.

James Moran of Birmingham, West Midlands served in the General Service Corps, Royal Ulster Rifles, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and the Green Howards from 1942 to 1947.

Colin Morris of Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1949 to 1951.

Robert Morris of Newport, Gwent served in the Royal Air Force from 1956 to 1957.

Gordon Munro of Bognor Regis, West Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Walter 'Wally' Nixon of Colchester, Essex served in the Royal Artillery from 1942 to 1946.

Jacqueline 'Jackie' Oliver née Deakin of Morpeth, Northumberland served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1970 to 1992.

Kenneth Parcell of Hanwell, London served in the General Service Corps, Royal Armoured Corps and the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars from 1946 to 1948.

Walter 'Ted' Parr of Pwllheli, Gwynedd served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1954.

Vinayak Patel of Kentish Town, London served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1965.

Brian Perry of Bridgwater, Somerset served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Brendan Protano of Winsford, Cheshire served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1975 to 1977.

Alan Rayner of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Navy from 1951 to 1954.

John Robinson of Tadworth, Surrey served in the Royal Artillery from 1950 to 1964.

Jack Rothwell of Blackpool, Lancashire served in the Royal Marines from 1942 to 1946.

Gordon Russell of Moreton In Marsh, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Air Force from 1957 to 1975.

Benjamin Seal of Barry, South Glamorgan served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Ernest Seymour of Hatfield, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1954 to 1960.

Keith Seed of Broughton, Preston served in the Royal Tank Regiment and Royal Army Service Corps from 1950 to 1964.

John Smith of Rainhill, Merseyside served in the Merchant Navy from 1950 to 1960.

Reginald Stammers of Downham Market, Norfolk served in the Royal Artillery from 1945 to 1959.

Peter Symington of Scunthorpe, South Humberside served in the Royal Engineers from 1957 to 1958.

Lloyd Tarr of Taunton, Somerset served in the Army Catering Corps from 1949 to 1972.

Arthur Thame of Baldock, Hertfordshire served in the Home Guard, General Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1941 to 1948.

Peter Thomas of Orpington, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1960 to 1962.

Evelyn Tilley of Llandudno, Gwynedd served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1942.

Dorothy Tolson née Radford of St. Austell, Cornwall served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1945 to 1950.

Alexander Wallace of Belfast served in the Black Watch from 1958 to 1974.

Mabel 'May' Wallace née Gardner of Watford, Hertfordshire served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1945.

David Watts of Windsor, Berkshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1948 to 1953.

Derek White of St. Albans, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1958.

David Whittle of Newton Le Willows, Merseyside served in the Army Catering Corps from 1961 to 1963.

Kenneth Wigham of Bishop Auckland, County Durham served in the Light Infantry from 1967 to 1968.

Cyril Williams of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

Joan Wintle née Kent of Brent, London served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1953 to 1966.

James 'Jim' Wood of Telford, Shropshire served in the Home Counties Brigade, Royal Military Police and the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1987.

Albert 'Jim' Wright of Abingdon, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1976.

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.

Harold Beeby of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 31st May 2016, aged 90. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1943 when he served in the UK, mainly at Boscombe Down until discharged as an Aircraftman First Class in 1948.

Leonard Brassington of Wilmslow, Cheshire died in 2016, aged 101. He served in the Lancashire Fusiliers from 1940 to 1946, serving in Burma.

Catherine 'Kitty' Brown of South Croydon, Surrey died on 23rd June 2016, aged 91. She served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1942 until 1945, discharging as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Evelyn 'Joan' Catt of Arundel, West Sussex died on 16th January 2016, aged 92. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1941 and served with anti-aircraft batteries in Leeds, Hull and Doncaster. She was discharged as a Corporal in 1945.

Ivor Coats of Clapham, London died on 13th June 2016, aged 93. He joined the 12th Lancers in 1940 and served in North Africa and Italy. He lost his right leg below the knee during the war and was taken prisoner in Italy. He was discharged as a Lieutenant in 1948.

Joan Dove of Kensington, London died in 2016, aged 95. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941 and served as a fitter on Hurricanes and Spitfires in the UK until 1946, discharging as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Albert Goudge of Bungay, Norfolk died on 18th June 2016, aged 102. He joined the Royal Navy in 1942 serving on several ships, notably HMS Starling, in home waters, the Atlantic, Russian convoys and with the Pacific Fleet. He visited Saigon, Rangoon, Bangkok and many other cities in the region before being discharged as a 1st Class Stoker in 1946.

Ronald Grenfell of Sunderland, Tyne and Wear died on 30th May 2016, aged 91. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1943 and was a rear gunner in Halifax

bombers. After the Italian operation he was taken prisoner in Poland and held as a PoW in Germany. Liberated and subsequently discharged in 1947 as a Warrant Officer.

Phillip Grieve of Taunton, Somerset died in 2016, aged 94. He joined the Royal Navy as a boy in 1937. He specialised in anti-submarine defence and served all around the world, most notably on Arctic convoys. Commissioned after the war he was discharged as a Lieutenant in 1959.

Mary Hallworth née Duffy of Accrington, Lancashire died on 15th June 2016, aged 94. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1940 and served in the UK as a cook. She married in 1942 and was discharged in 1943 in the rank of Private.

John Hanson of Uxbridge, Middlesex died on 13th January 2016, aged 96. He joined the 4th Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment in 1939, initially serving in the UK. He was deployed to France on D+12 as an assault pioneer and moved through Normandy, Belgium and Holland to Germany, dealing with mines and booby traps. He left the Army as a Sergeant in 1946.

Albert Hirdle of Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire died on 21st April 2016, aged 95. He joined the Royal Navy in 1940 and served in landing craft in the Middle East, Burma, India, Italy and on the Rhine until discharge as a Leading Seaman in 1946.

David 'Dave' Hogan of Bournemouth died on 7th June 2016, aged 92. He joined the 13/18 Royal Hussars in 1941 serving in Western Europe as a tank driver. On 13th March 1945 in Germany, eleven of his group of 14 were killed by a bomb dropped from an Me262. Although he survived, he lost both legs. He was discharged as a Private in 1947.

Desmond Holmes of Horncastle, Lincolnshire died on 4th July 2016, aged 92. He joined the General Service Corps in August 1942 for training and was briefly in the Royal Irish Fusiliers before transferring to the Royal Artillery in October 1942. He served in Northern Ireland, North Africa, Italy, Austria and Germany, until discharged as a Warrant Sergeant in 1947.

Ralph Holt of Crowborough, East Sussex died on 3rd July 2016, aged 93. He joined the Home Guard in 1942 and manned the searchlights in the Crowborough district. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1945.

Sydney King of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on 9th June 2016, aged 88. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1945 and served in Palestine with 6th Airborne as a driver. He was discharged in 1948.

Isaac Lovett of Harleston, Norfolk died on 4th June 2016, aged 86. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1947 and served in the UK and Singapore until discharge as a Lance Corporal in 1949.

Kathleen MacKenzie née Hall of Rotherham, South Yorkshire died on 6th June 2016, aged 93. She served with the Women's Auxiliary Air Force as a cook at RAF Luffenham from 1941 to 1943, discharging as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Edward 'Ted' Mawdsley of Harlow, Essex died on 23rd June 2016, aged 95. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940, specialising as an Aircraft Instrument Technician. He subsequently served in both Coastal and Bomber Commands in the UK. Later he volunteered to go to North Africa where he served supporting the invasion of Sicily and Italy. Discharged as a Leading Aircraftsman in 1946.

Walter Meaton of Dyfed died on 29th April 2016, aged 91. He joined the Royal Navy in 1942, serving in India and Malaya where he was responsible for Typex machines. He was discharged as a Coder in 1946.

Grace 'Toni' Middleton of Bourton on the Water, Gloucestershire died on 1st April 2016, aged 100. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941, later becoming a clerk at RAF Tempsford on Operation Control in Bedfordshire and remained there until VE Day. She completed her service at Ludford Magna and was discharged as a Sergeant in 1945.

Leonard 'Len' Moore of Eltham, London died on 1st June 2016, aged 91. He served in the Home Guard before joining the Royal Navy in 1943 when he served in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific oceans. He left the Navy in 1946 as an Able Seaman.

Samuel Myrans of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 26th June 2016, aged 89. He served in the Royal Navy for National Service from 1945 to 1947, discharging as an Air Mechanic 2nd Class.

Alan Norman of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire died on 21st May 2016, aged 87. He joined the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1950 and served as an engine fitter at RAF Linton on Ouse until 1952.

Gerard 'Roman' Oskiewicz of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 21st June 2016, aged 93. He finished college before he had to flee from the Germans, taking a route through Romania and Yugoslavia and finishing up in the South of France. Joining the Polish Army in 1940, he served in the UK and France, and was a Corporal at the time he was discharged in 1948.

Norman Patterson of Liverpool died in 2016, aged 93. He enlisted into the Royal Air Force in 1942. He specialised as a wireless operator and was subsequently posted to the Gambia, working with Sunderland Flying Boats. He later served in Dakar and after 18 months was posted back to the UK, based at Little Rissington. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

Leslie 'Les' Payne of St Martin, Guernsey died on 13th June 2016, aged 88. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1945. He served in the UK and as a maintainer on oxygen cylinders until discharge as an Aircraftman First Class in 1948.

Roland 'Roly' Pitts of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 30th June 2016, aged 85. He joined the Royal Navy for National Service in 1949, qualified as a Stoker Mechanic and was based in Portsmouth and Southampton. As a proficient boxer he extended his service to box for the Navy. He was discharged in 1954.

Robert Ramage of Prestwick, Ayrshire died on 13th June 2016, aged 96. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941. A radio mechanic who was later involved with educational training as a lecturer helping RAF servicemen who were being demobilised he served at RAF Duxford, Elsham Wolds, Hemswell and, Gainsborough. He was discharged as a Flight Sergeant in 1946.

Frank Reynolds of Wigston, Leicestershire died on 28th March 2016, aged 91. He joined the General Service Corps in December 1942, transferring to the Royal Leicestershire Regiment the following month. He was medically discharged as a Private in 1945 after losing his left leg due to a mine blast on D-Day.

Henry 'John' Roberts of Bognor Regis, West Sussex died on 12th June 2016, aged 95. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 and carried out his training at Blackpool followed by Yatesbury No 2 Signal School where he specialised as a Wireless Operator and a WT Air Gunner. He was discharged in 1946 as a Corporal Instructor.

Ben Saunders of Lowestoft, Suffolk died on 4th June 2016, aged 94. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force in 1941. He served in South Africa, Egypt, and Greece as a carpenter before discharging as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

Stephen 'Steve' Shepherd of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 20th June 2016, aged 64. He joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1974. He had postings in BAOR, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, the UK and a brief spell in France. He specialised as a B Vehicle Mechanic (BVM) and was discharged as a Corporal in 1983.

John 'Jack' Suckling of Solihull, West Midlands died on 18th May 2016, aged 101. He joined the General Service Corps in February 1945, transferring to the Royal Artillery after two months. Drafted to Palestine and Egypt he discharged as a Bombardier in 1945.

Robert 'Bob' Tolson of Colliers Wood, London died on 11th June 2016, aged 80. He enlisted in the Army Catering Corps in 1953 where he served in Germany. He discharged as a Private in 1955.

Terrison 'Terry' Whitehead of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 24th June 2016, aged 90. He joined the General Service Corps in January 1944, transferred to the Gloucestershire Regiment in April 1944 and the Devonshire Regiment in October 1944. Serving in the UK, Germany and Austria, transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps in 1946 and was discharged as a Staff Sergeant in 1952.

Winifred 'Win' Wild née Hubble of Burton on Trent, Staffordshire died on 6th July 2016, aged 95. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1942 where she served in a training role both for recruits and officers. She was discharged as a Sergeant in 1943.

Derrick Williams of Twickenham, Surrey died on 1st March 2016, aged 89. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1946 and served as a radar instructor in Essex until 1948, discharging as a Sergeant.

Jean Williams of Ipswich, Suffolk died on 14th June 2016, aged 97. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1940 and qualified as a Physical Training Specialist. She served at HMS Ganges, and was commissioned at RN College Greenwich. Serving at Greenock and Portsmouth before being discharged in 1945 as a 3rd Officer.

Leonard 'Len' Williamson of Blackburn, Lancashire died on 15th June 2016, aged 79. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1954 and trained at RAF Padgate. He served at RAF Barrett Down and then Swanton Morley serving as a blacksmith and welder. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1959.

