

April 2017

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



On the cover: Our Patron, Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO, is shown at the Llandudno centre with blind veteran Billy Baxter. In his role of R&T Liaison Officer Billy, showed the Countess the building.

Back page: HRH The Countess of Wessex is shown signing the Visitors' Book at the Llandudno centre. She is watched by blind veteran Bill Mooney who made the pen for the Countess.



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Patron: Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO.

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The Booking Office for the Brighton centre: To book accommodation at the Brighton centre telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500.

The Booking Office for the Llandudno centre: To book accommodation at the Llandudno centre please telephone 01492 868700 and ask for the Booking Office.

ROVI IT Helpline: If you need to speak with the ROVI IT Helpdesk please telephone the staff at the Sheffield centre on 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.

From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

I'm writing this month's letter just a few days after the truly awful act of terrorism on Westminster Bridge and outside The Houses of Parliament at the centre of democracy. The scale of depravity and malicious violence shown was truly incomprehensible. This was an evil criminal act and we must remember that the victims and their families must be spoken of and remembered as that they deserve the country's total sympathy and full support, but that the criminal concerned needs no further notoriety.

Three days later it was an unusual coincidence that we celebrated the annual Soldiering On Awards at a hotel on Westminster Bridge. The Soldiering on Awards is the national awards ceremony to recognise those veterans who have gone on to achieve great things, and in many cases contribute so much to the well-being of others. For everyone there it felt like an act of defiance, and a heartening feeling of strength and belief in the true bravery and courage of our serving military, veterans, and all those who support them. A minute's silence was observed, as we thought of those who were killed and injured in the terrorist attack, and of their families.

The event was attended by the Patron and Minister of Defence for the House of Lords, the Right Honourable Earl Howe, as well as General the Lord Dannatt, and many serving military, veterans and individuals from a wide range of charities and support organisations. Throughout the evening we heard of the nominees for all of the awards, and I could not help feeling a little emotional at the incredible achievements, and acts of giving and kindness that we heard. Nothing could be more uplifting and strengthen my faith in the resolve and bravery of our Great British military and all those who have supported them. All finalists were truly first amongst equals.

Given this, the evening was even more special as four blind veterans were nominated as finalists, and two won their award categories.

Our finalists were Mark Threadgold, who, following a tragic accident which left him completely blind, has gone on to set a number of world records as well as participated in numerous major sporting events.

Clive Jones was nominated for the Inspiration Award; a Welsh Guardsman and victim of a vicious attack which rendered him blind, Clive has rebuilt his life, raised a family, and raised over £50,000 for military charities. He is included in this month's Review for his work with Blind Veterans UK's Masonic Group.

Our President, Colin Williamson, was the winner of the International Award for his work in setting up and running Project Gemini, a peer to peer support programme that shares knowledge and strengthens relationships with blind veterans in the UK, US and South Africa.

Simon Brown; who was injured in Iraq, losing most of his sight and who is our Communication and Engagement Officer was the winner of the Sunday Express People's Choice Award for his dedication and work for charitable and voluntary organisations and motivation of others.

They are each inspiring and uplifting and great examples of individuals who have achieved Victory over Blindness. Congratulations to each of you.

March has been an exciting month for our charity, as there was great joy at our Llandudno centre when our new Patron, Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO, carried out her first official engagement, opening our Life Skills Centre there. The Countess engaged with everyone she met and showed a genuine interest in the people and in our work. During her inaugural speech the Countess remarked how she felt it was a bit of a step down for us to have her as Patron, as we had enjoyed the Patronage of HM The Queen for so many years. It was of course a great honour to have HM The Queen as our Patron, but we are deeply privileged to call The Countess of Wessex Patron and we greatly look forward to working together for many years.

The Life Skills Centre is a most impressive facility for working age blind veterans and trainees from BLESMA. Testimonies have shown how the training, which is tailored for each individual, has already helped trainees. Working with staff and with their peers they are able to re-evaluate where they are in their lives to take stock and move on, as they set and then implement their goals. Their final goal may be to volunteer, to go on to further education or return to work. It is another example of the life changing work that Blind Veterans UK has carried out for the past 102 years.

At our Brighton centre Lesley Garven, centre manager, made a very special presentation to Norman Perry, as he marked 75 years as a St Dunstaner. Norman, who was blinded in a gun battle in the Sahara during WWII, embraced Sir Arthur Pearson's attitude of Victory over Blindness and set a great example through his career and in the many sporting activities that he excelled at. I am sure you will all join me in offering your congratulations to Norman.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to The Brighton Radio Play Society, as the editor has told me of the fun she had taking part in a radio play with them. There's more information in this Review, but if you are at the Brighton centre from 2pm to 3.30pm on a Friday do join them as I'm told it's great fun. From 14th April they will start to record JB Priestley's classic An Inspector Calls. This month's Talking Review contains examples of their work, with some excellent sound effects, which I'm sure you will enjoy.

I hope that you are enjoying the beauty of spring and all that this season in particular brings to the senses.



Picture: The Chairman Tim Davis and Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB greet our new Patron, Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO, as she arrives at the Llandudno centre.

Norman Perry celebrates 75 years with our charity. By Laura Weston, Marketing Assistant.

Friday 10th April was a landmark day for Norman Perry as he marked 75 years as a St Dunstaner and blind veteran.

Norman, who is 97, was presented with a Blind Veterans UK plaque and an engraved silver salver to mark the day. Speaking about reaching the milestone Norman says: "It makes me feel very old! I am proud because St Dunstan's has been a hugely important part of my life, it's very nice of them to do this."

Norman was only 18 years old when he became gun sergeant, with his own gun and gun crew. He was two years too young to go overseas and was posted to Borden as a drill instructor. He later fought in Lilles and Ypres before landing in Newport in Belgium. In 1941 he was shipped out to the Middle East, beginning a period of fighting all over the world. He remembers battles in Iraq, Suez, Egypt, Libya and the Western Deserts. It was during one of these battles, in the Sahara, that Norman lost his sight, when the Germans attacked with trench mortars.

He recalls: "I was directing a gun teller, when I got one piece of metal in each eye at the same time. That spun me round, and something big hit me in the back. When I dropped, I got some more bits and pieces in the right thigh. I heard a Sergeant say: 'He's had it', and in the best Army language I could muster, I told him I hadn't."

After initial training at Tembani with St Dunstan's South Africa in Cape Town, he returned to England in 1943 to finish his training at St Dunstan's wartime centre in Church Stretton. From there, he moved to the RNIB physiotherapy school in London. Norman married his childhood sweetheart and became a physiotherapist. He ran the physiotherapy department at Grimsby Hospital for 30 years, building up the department from two to eight qualified physiotherapists.

Norman also has a rich history with several sports teams at the charity, going to West Berlin in 1974 and 1978 to participate in international skiing, and implementing several archery events. He also won the archery for the blind contest at the British Sports Association for the Disabled National Games at

Stoke Mandeville in 1976.

Chief Executive of Blind Veterans UK, Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, said: "It is a fantastic achievement for Norman to reach 75 years with Blind Veterans UK. He has been supported by the charity longer than any of our more than 4,000 blind veterans who are alive today. Norman is still such a great presence around our Brighton centre. For decades he has set a great example for blind veterans coming after him to follow."

In an article in the August 1977 Review Norman Perry is named as the winner of the totally blind category in the first ever archery championship to be held at Ian Fraser House (the Brighton centre).



Picture: Brighton centre manager Lesley Garven presented Norman Perry with a Blind Veterans UK shield and an inscribed silver salver on the day he marked 75 years with the charity.

Our Patron HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO officially opens the Life Skills Centre.

HRH The Countess of Wessex undertook her inaugural engagement as our Patron, when, on the 28th February, she opened our Life Skills Centre in Llandudno. Before unveiling the plaque the Countess said: "May I just say from the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for having me here today. I feel I have some very big shoes to fill as obviously you have been fortunate enough to have Her Majesty The Queen as your Patron for many years and I really feel that it's a bit of a step down to have me following her. It is a huge, huge honour for me to be able to do that on her behalf and I'm thrilled that with my interest in sight impairment she asked me. It's been an enormous pleasure to meet everybody and everyone I've spoken with has said how incredibly fortunate they feel to have found their way to you. I hope that we do manage to support many more members in the future. I know that we have a lot more work to do together in the future, but I congratulate you for having the vision to create this. I saw the pictures of the building as it was and you've performed a major miracle! Clearly the people who come and stay here and have the benefit of using the centre will do very well. So I wish you all the very best and I look forward to coming back and doing many more things with you in the future. I very much look forward to seeing the garden at the Hampton Court Flower Show in the not too distant future. Thank you so much for giving me such a wonderfully warm welcome and it really is my honour to be your Patron."



Picture: On 28th February HRH The Countess of Wessex undertook her inaugural role as our Patron when she officially opened the Life Skills centre.

The Life Skills Centre was created using funds from the LIBOR money and donations that totalled £1.65 million. The outbuildings that are situated to the back of our Llandudno centre were refurbished and the Life Skills Centre includes a two bedroom house and four purpose built flats that are a mix of one and two bedrooms. The buildings have been joined by a glass atrium that accommodates the communal and IT area. The Life Skills Centre is for working age members of Blind Veterans UK and from BLESMA, as they are invited onto a programme that will enhance a multitude of life skills, from confidence building and independent living to the necessary skills and mind set to get back into work or further education. In the Life Skills Centre Blind Veterans UK's staff work with trainees for a period of six weeks to six months to improve their self-esteem, to give them back their purpose in life, and to assist on their journey towards independence when they return to their homes and their communities.

The first stage of the programme is to carry out an individual assessment with each person to find out how they would most benefit from the Life Skills programme. Next a bespoke action plan is created which they complete within an agreed timeframe. For the duration of their stay trainees live independently in the Life Skills Centre rather than the main Llandudno centre. After the day's training they can cook their own meals and watch TV or relax in their flat. Or if they prefer they can get together in the communal area with their fellow blind veterans and trainees from BLESMA and of course the main Llandudno centre is across the gardens.



Picture: Our Patron, HRH The Countess of Wessex watches as working age blind veteran Tom Boal demonstrates the independent living skills that he learnt at the Life Skills Centre.

One person to have benefited from the positive effect of the Life Skills Centre is Tom Boal who demonstrated his independent living skills to our Patron when he showed how to safely and proficiently prepare food. Speaking of the change he experienced as a result of the training he received Tom said: "We all come in as individuals and at the end we leave as a team with our goals in place. Some of us might want to volunteer and some of us might want to go back into work. Once we get to the end we'll all still be individuals, but we will each have our individual goals to achieve that we take back home. It really hit me one day when we were out tandem bike riding, as I hadn't been on a bike for a long, long time and it was rediscovering the sense of freedom. I just thought I'm on a bike peddling uphill, peddling downhill, and you've got the wind and the air rushing past you. And I was hit with a total sense of — I can do this. Another part of the training that really stood out was as we sat in the classroom and we had two sessions that looked at how our thought and brain processes worked. It made sense to think of things as a target. Things that are achievable. Things that we have control over. And things that we have no control over. Sight loss is something that we have no control over, but what lies ahead of us we do have control over. Realising that gives you the power and belief to retake control. I entered the Life Skills Centre as a shy person and by the end of the week I left as a very different person with my goals very firmly in place."

Hugh Megarry, a blind veteran who was blinded by the IRA, works as a volunteer IT trainer at the Life Skills Centre. After speaking with the Countess about the different types of technology Hugh said: "I was delighted to meet the Countess who was genuinely interested in talking about Apple and accessibility with Microsoft. I've been to the Life Skills Centre a number of times to train our members in IT and I remember in 1969 going to the RNIB's rehab centre and how terrifying it was going there as a 17 year old. I think there is something to be said about taking someone out of their comfort zone and getting everyone to work together as that brings out the best. You're working with ROVIs and tutors during the day and when you break if you want to cook your own meal and eat it alone in your flat you can, but there's also the communal area to catch up with others who are taking part, as peer support is crucial."

"The Life Skills Centre really helps working age veterans to set goals to make their life choices a reality. It provides the reality of living on their own and managing on their own, but with the knowledge that support is available. But as you have five or six trainees living in the Life Skills Centre the support between them is important as they work together. Of course it also depends

where that person is in their own personal journey. I've known people who have lost their sight and have sat in their house for three years as they're understandably afraid. I've met others who are doing something within six months. It's about acceptance, and when they're ready to move on, and no amount of professional prodding and pushing will get someone to move on if they're not ready. You can ring them up every now and again and if they're still saying 'no clear off' you just wait until they're ready.

"All you can do is encourage and find some hook that will help that person to re-engage and move forward. When I've trained blind veterans to use social media the hook was that they wanted to keep in touch with family and friends in other parts of the world. That's the hook that creates a spark that gets them involved and moving forward. Or it could be rediscovering their hobby or finding a new one. Just as Tom spoke about rediscovering cycling when I lost my sight I sold all of my fishing gear and I've met blind veterans who did exactly the same. Within 18 months of being blinded I was back fishing and had to buy the equipment again. Another hook is privacy, as sometimes people are afraid to express themselves if someone else is reading or writing a letter for them. By learning just the basics of IT they have their privacy back as they can send and receive emails, write their own letters and use a scanner to read their correspondence. There's no longer the need to rely on a third party to read your bank statement or medical letters. And of course for Life Skills participants it could using technology to apply to jobs, for college coursework or to use it in their work."



Picture:
Introduced by Steve Boswell, Llandudno centre manager, HRH The Countess of Wessex speaks with Hugh Megarry.



Picture: The Countess speaks with working age blind veterans Roan Webb and Chris Nowell. Roan has undergone IT training with Hugh Megarry and Chris Nowell instructs on photography.

A laughing Countess of Wessex and Billy Baxter, R&T Liason Officer at the Llandudno centre, are featured on the cover of this edition of Review. Here Billy speaks of the background to the photo: "I was honoured and privileged to be chosen to escort our new Patron around our centre. It's been my home and place of work for the last six year when I've seen the centre grow. It gives me immense pleasure to show guests around the place that I love. However it was with a certain amount of trepidation knowing that I was to take a member of the Royal Family around the centre and all the worry of the escorts, the close protection team, the Lord Lieutenant, the Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team — no pressure! I was to meet the Countess as she exited our dining room after a presentation about the charity from Chief Executive Nick Caplin and Steve Boswell the centre manager. The doors opened and I stood firmly to attention ready for the Countess to come over. As soon as she spoke she immediately put me at ease and we started to laugh. I think she turned round to Steve and said 'This is going to be fun!'

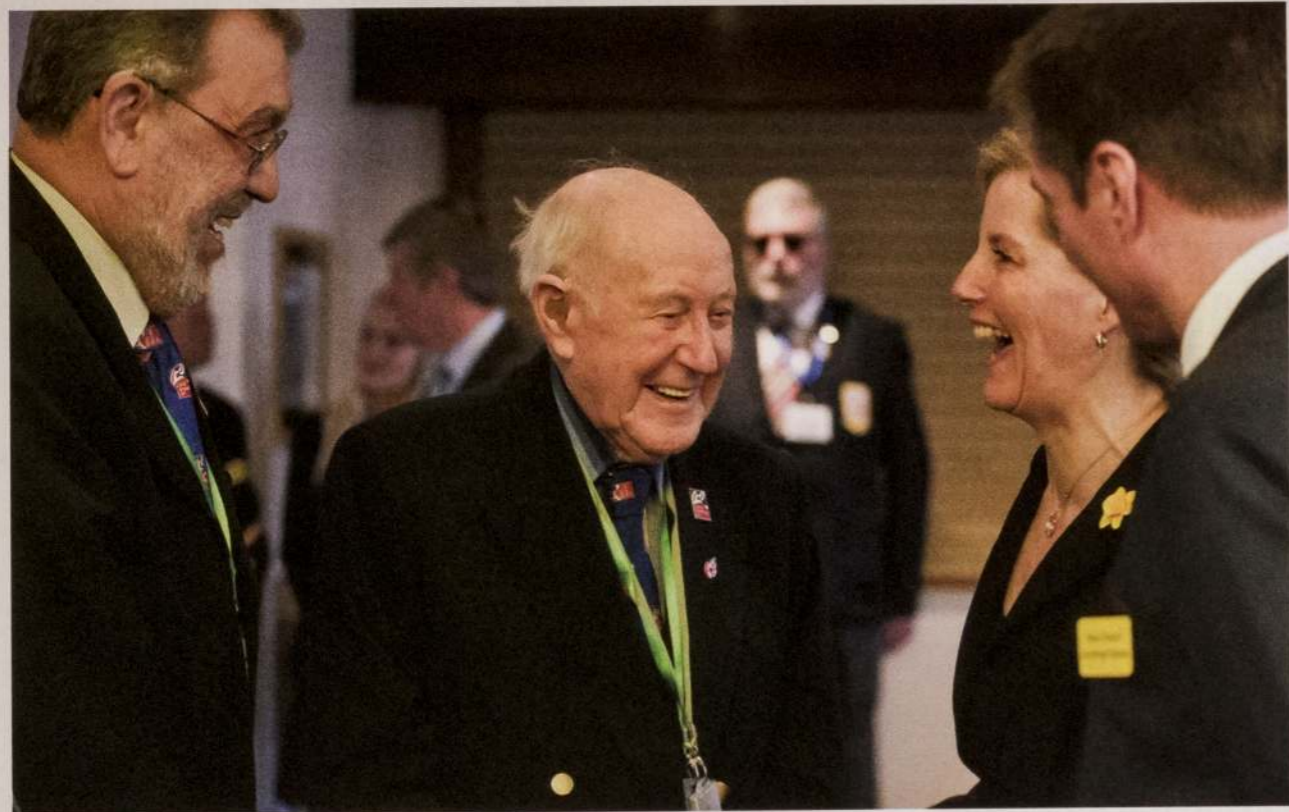
"And it was like taking an old friend around the building as she made it so easy. We introduced the Countess to the members in the lounge and she spoke to everyone and made them feel very special. We left the members' lounge and went into the North Wing corridor where the display was under the big

staircase and she just hooked her arm into mine. I took great delight in showing the Countess the pictures that had been made by blind veterans. As we chatted I was fully aware of her authority and what she represented, but it was so easy to speak to her and we were like two naughty school children walking around. I pointed out a piece of art that had been made by the late Alan Saunders that showed his Regimental cap badge of the Royal Marines and I explained how he'd made it out of mosaic in our Art & Craft Workshop. As I was talking about it, and about Alan, she started to giggle, as I wasn't pointing to Alan's mosaic cap badge at all. I was pointing to the boiler room door and it said no exit without authority. So nothing like the picture in question! I turned round to the Countess and said 'Please excuse me ma'am I've got bad eyes you know!' She just burst out laughing and that's the story behind the photo on the cover and we continued to giggle all the way round as I pointed things out and she'd move my arm and say 'Do you mean this over here?' And I said yes it's obviously been moved or it's moved itself. It was fantastic to introduce our new Patron to my fellow blind veterans and to fellow members of staff. Afterwards people thanked me for putting them at ease as they could see us laughing and that helped them to relax. The Countess was so relaxed and genuinely interested in everyone she met and in our work. She was amazing and like Her Majesty The Queen she will be an exceptional Patron."

A podcast with Billy is included in the April Talking Review when he guides you through the Life Skills Centre.



Picture: The Countess of Wessex took time to speak with everyone in the lounge. She is shown with blind veteran Doris Wilkinson and Norman and Brenda Disley.



Picture: The Countess of Wessex was introduced to blind veterans Rhydwyn Lewis, above right and the Rev. Alex Potts, above left, who welcomed our Patron to the Llandudno centre. An interview with the Rev. Potts will feature in a future edition of Review. As a Royal Army Chaplain the Rev Alex Potts was the first Chaplain into the Former Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992.



Picture: HRH The Countess of Wessex took the time to speak with everyone in the lounge. She is shown sitting on the edge of a table listening to one blind veteran.



Picture: Blind veterans Meena Bauer and Olga Tilley tell the Countess how much they enjoy life as blind veterans and visits to the centre for training and to see friends.



Picture left: In the Art & Craft Workshop.

Picture below: Mary Cliff shows the Countess the mushrooms that are being made for our garden at RHS Hampton Court Place Flower Show. When the Countess asked blind veteran Mary about her war service and Mary said she had served in the Royal Army Pay Corps the Countess joked 'Oh giving money away'. Mary jokingly informed her that after the war with her work for the Inland Revenue she took the money back.





Picture: In the Battle of Britain Room the Countess was shown equipment to aid independent living. IT Instructor Erica Allison demonstrated the OrCam glasses.



Picture: The Falklands Room was set for acoustic rifle shooting as Dewi Roberts, Activity Team Instructor worked with the Countess. Blind veterans Steve Thomas and Carl Adamson who are shown in the background were part of the demonstration of acoustic rifle shooting and archery.

Steve Thomas, a working age blind veteran who joined the charity in 2013, met the Countess when she watched him and fellow blind veteran Carl Adamson as they demonstrated acoustic rifle shooting and archery. Steve told the Review: "It was a great experience and an honour to meet the Countess who really took her time to meet and speak with everyone. Doing the demonstration was part of giving something back to Blind Veterans UK, as the charity has helped me so much and improved my confidence, IT skills and made me feel that I'm worth something again. The support at the centre is invaluable and working with Mark Hollis, Carl and I are once again training for the 100K Yorkshire Challenge."



Picture: A natural, the Countess scored a bullseye when she tried her hand at blind archery.



Picture: Blind veteran Mike Johnson and Lee Evans Sports & Rec Instructor demonstrate the anti-gravity trainer that uses technology devised by NASA to aid rehabilitation.



Picture: Pam Wilner of TnS Caterers was just one member of staff to be introduced to the Countess. In 2014, in a liberating act Pam, had her head shaved to raise money for Blind Veterans UK.

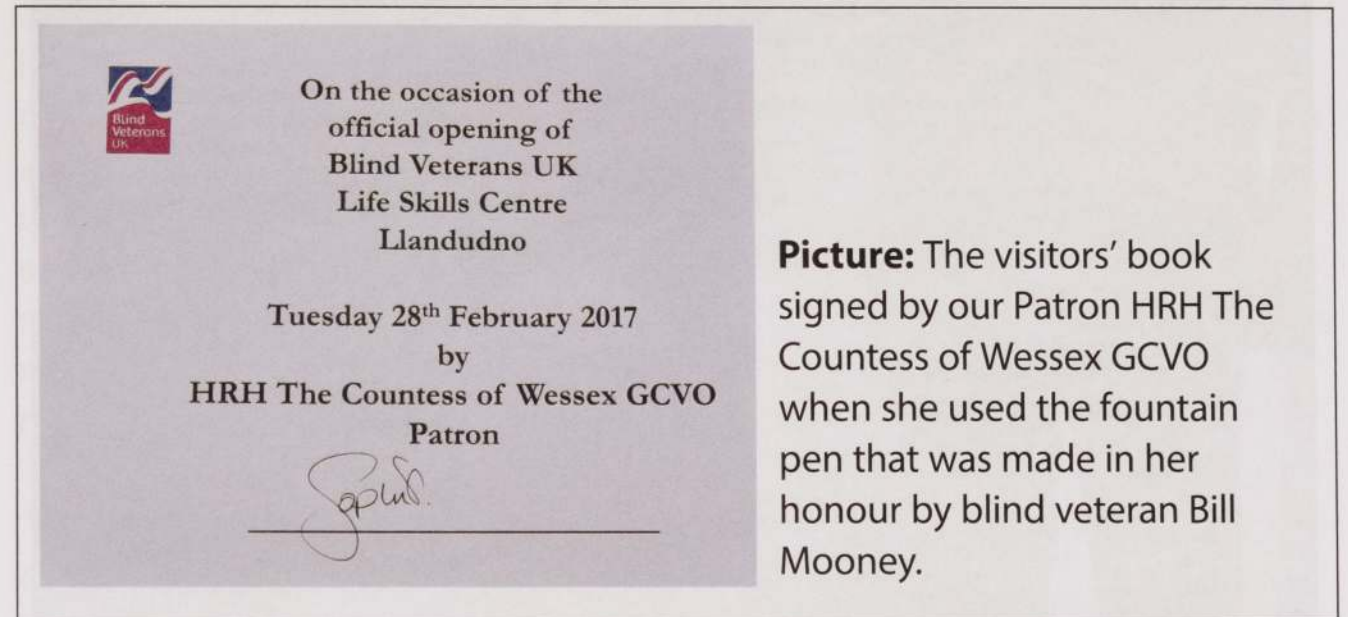
Bill Mooney, who joined Blind Veterans UK in 2010 made a very special pen that The Countess of Wessex used to sign the visitors book to record her first visit to the Llandudno centre and her first engagement as our Patron.

Bill said: "I was a joiner before I lost my sight but it was part of my trade that I learnt how to turn wood. I worked in a steel works and you had to learn lathe work as part of the job. I've carried it on, although I can no longer see enough to measure to make furniture, but I still do wood turning as occupational therapy. You've heard it so many times before, but we owe Blind Veterans UK so much and this is a way to say thank you and to give something back to the charity. Before I came to Blind Veterans UK I was in No Man's Land as I didn't know where to turn to get advice. Social Services didn't do a lot so it has to be very hard for people who haven't got this lovely support that is Blind Veterans UK.

"Becoming a blind veteran I rediscovered skills I thought I'd lost forever. I was off the lathe for 18 months when my sight first failed and after I was accepted as a blind veteran I got my first message of hope when David Habershon phoned to ask my interests. I told him wood turning and he said they did wood turning at the Brighton centre and that he'd arrange to get me involved. It hasn't really stopped since then and I've made bowls and pens and other items that are sold to raise money for the charity. For the Countess's visit I made a pen that's become my signature pen. I turned to making pens as it's something that everybody uses as not everyone wants a bowl. The Countess's pen was made from yew burr as a friend who is a timber supplier said he would send me some timber that the furniture in Buckingham Palace is made from. He did and the figuring in the burr was so beautiful that I had to use it. Thankfully as I have a friend who is a professional pen maker he pointed out that the Countess is left handed and he sent a left handed nib. After making the pen the final part was a trip to Newcastle to buy some Mont Blanc ink to fill the pen for the Countess to sign the visitors' book. The pen is testimony to my instructors as it shows how far I've progressed. I never tire of telling everyone how much Blind Veterans UK has done for me and how much I also owe to Elizabeth Dodds my Welfare Officer."

One of Bill's earlier creations is on permanent display at the Llandudno centre. It's the burr elm bowl that he created to celebrate our centenary in 2015 and to show the journey of a blind veteran.

Here Bill speaks of his thoughts as he made the bowl. "When I created the centenary bowl I wanted to portray my journey and the journey of other blind veterans. You have the rough texture of the bowl as I wanted the ruggedness to show the determination of the members of Blind Veterans UK on their journey. The inside is smooth to show the transition that they've made in their lives, but there are a few holes in the bottom to show the few pitfalls along the way through life. The rim was to represent the age of the charity and to mark our centenary. The two badges were to show the transition from St Dunstan's to Blind Veterans UK. It is an honour that the bowl is on display at the Llandudno centre and it was a great honour to meet The Countess of Wessex and to be invited to make a fountain pen for her to sign the visitors' book and to be invited by the Countess to stand beside her as she signed it. Thank you Blind Veterans UK and thank you to our Patron The Countess of Wessex."



Picture: The visitors' book signed by our Patron HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO when she used the fountain pen that was made in her honour by blind veteran Bill Mooney.



Picture: From left to right Blind Veterans UK Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, President Colin Williamson, our Patron HRH The Countess of Wessex, Nicky Shaw Director of Operations (West), Steve Boswell Llandudno centre Manager and Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Clwyd, Mr Henry Fetherstonhauge OBE.



Picture: Our Patron HRH The Countess of Wessex with our President Colin Williamson when The Countess officially opened the Life Skills Centre at Llandudno. The plaque reads Blind Veterans UK Life Skills Centre opened by HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO Patron 28 February 2017.

Colin Williamson completes his inaugural Presidential duty.

"It's never too late in life to be the person you never thought you could be."

Those words were spoken by Colin Williamson as he spoke to the Review on the day of his inaugural engagement as President of Blind Veterans UK. Colin was appointed as President in March when Ray Hazan OBE stood down as President after 14 years of exceptional service to the charity.

Speaking to the Review an hour before the arrival of the Countess of Wessex at the Llandudno centre to officially open its Life Skills Centre, Colin said: "It's a great privilege to have been appointed as President of Blind Veterans UK and I feel extremely humbled. It wasn't something that I expected and to me it clearly demonstrates that it's never too late in life to be the person that you never thought you could be. I never really expected to reach such dizzy heights and I would like to give my thanks to Ray Hazan as he is an exceptional and inspirational man. Had it not been for Ray I don't think that I would be at the stage I am now, as Ray has given me so much help, advice and support and I respect and look up to him. I also have a lot of respect for Gerry Jones who gave me advice that I took on-board and the late Harry Beevers. To be President of this amazing charity is the supreme accolade.

"I'm at the Llandudno centre today to represent the 4,500 beneficiaries of the charity as the figurehead of the membership. I hope that during the course of the day I get to meet some of our younger veterans who are attending today as they speak about and demonstrate the training they have received through the Life Skills programme. I'll try and encourage them to put their names down for Project Gemini and hopefully get them on-board for 2018. Of course I'll also be speaking with our older blind veterans, as one of the duties of the President is to gauge through the membership how the charity is performing, so it's a very good opportunity for me today.

"I was fortunate to attend the Centenary Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in 2015, when, as part of Project Gemini, our transatlantic peer to peer support programme, I had the honour to introduce some of our younger blind veterans to the Countess. I'm looking forward to renewing the acquaintance as the Countess officially opens our Life Skills Centre. It's a great facility and having spoken to working age members who have undergone training here and

looked around the facilities I'm sure she will be really impressed."

When asked about his service history, Colin who became a blind veteran in 2003 said: "I was always interested in all things related to the Army and I started as an Army Cadet as a boy of 12 when I joined the local Cadet unit, which was a Royal Artillery Unit. They had a 25 pounder gun that was used in the desert campaign in the Second World War, which was the one that my dad had trained on when he was a member of the Territorial Army before the outbreak of the war. So I was an Army Cadet from the age of 12 to 15 and I left school at that time and joined the Junior Leader's Regiment Royal Artillery, which was based at Bramcote near Nuneaton in Warwickshire. I spent two years at Bramcote and was then posted to my parent Regiment, 25 Field Regiment Royal Artillery in Munsterlager in Germany. During my time with the Regiment I did two tours of Northern Ireland, one in 1975 and another four month tour in 1977. At both times we were stationed in Belfast City centre, which was quite a hairy time over there, but exciting for a young lad of 18. It was what I wanted to do, I wanted to be a soldier and that was proper soldiering.

"As the Regiment was due to be disbanded at the end of the Cold War I decided to leave the Regiment and looked to transfer to 7 Para, the Parachute Regiment of the Royal Artillery. Unfortunately because of an accident when I broke my left ankle I wasn't deemed fit enough to go through the rigors of P Company. So I left the Army and joined the TA and at that time was fortunate enough to secure a job with GPO Telecommunications, now British Telecom. I stayed with the TA until 1989, but stayed with British Telecom until 2007. I was made redundant by British Telecom when, because of an incident, I suffered some serious skull fractures to the right hand side of the skull and the loss of vision in the right eye and the loss of central vision in the left eye.

"I knew of St Dunstan's as before the incident I had been a volunteer for the charity, working mainly on the Cadet Challenge project, which I eventually took over as a member of staff. I was introduced to the charity by a colleague at British Telecom as his brother in law lived on the medical floor at the Brighton centre. He'd lived there for a number of years and he still lives there. The charity employed me as a member of staff in 2007 and I'm fortunate to still be there some 10 years later. My role is quite varied as it started off with the Cadet Challenge and now I do work for the Corporate Relations team, the No One Alone campaign team. I also work on the Review and really enjoy doing the interviews, as it's always an honour to sit with our blind veterans and hear the

stories of the old and bold. I also have the greatest of respect for the younger guys who were injured in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Readers of Review will also know Colin for his outstanding work on Project Gemini. Working with Louise Timms, Sports and Recreation Manager at the Brighton centre and Simon Brown, a high profile blind veteran who was injured in Iraq and is now part of the No One Alone campaign team, Colin established Project Gemini in 2011.

"I do a lot of work with Project Gemini, which is the annual peer to peer support exchange programme between Blind Veterans UK, the Blinded Veterans of America and now St Dunstan's South Africa. It's something I'm very proud of as it brings together veterans from three continents and it's the only exchange programme of its kind in the world that serves blind and vision impaired veterans. Its objectives were to provide peer to peer support to blind veterans to bring them together to share experiences and talk about their war stories and about their recovery. Its remit is also to learn about changes in adaptive technology that could assist in their lives and in the lives of their fellow blind and vision impaired veterans. Project Gemini has met those objectives and it's something that I'm really proud of and passionate about.

"One example is when South African St Dunstaner Peter Hall came across to England in 2015 for Project Gemini. He was wearing a prosthetic leg that dated from the Second World War as it was the only one that was in his size in South Africa. It was a really bulky leg and he couldn't bend it and it wasn't at all comfortable as it was chaffing on his stump. I thought that as so many veterans have modern titanium legs there must be some legs that are nearly new that were sitting in a warehouse somewhere as they were no longer needed. I thought if we could get hold of one of those legs and send it to South Africa it could change Peter's life. With help from the Blinded Veterans Association I managed to obtain a leg which was couriered free of charge from San Antonio to South Africa and delivered to Pete. I was fortunate to visit South Africa in 2016 to attend St Dunstan's annual reunion when I got the chance to meet up with Pete and he said that the new leg had absolutely transformed his life. He can get around and it's like walking on air. That was fantastic.

"As it's also about finding the people who are at the cutting edge of technology, this year during Project Gemini we will hold a seminar and we've invited three speakers from the US who are at the top of their field of expertise. There

will be talks about traumatic brain injury, PTSD and talks that show how the rehabilitation services have impacted on peoples' lives from the Second World War to the present day.

"It's an opportunity for neuro surgeons and ophthalmologists, trauma surgeons, blind veterans and our staff to get together and discuss how to treat traumatic injury and the aftercare of penetrating eye injuries and traumatic brain injuries. It will really put us back in the spotlight and I think that research is the way forward. Through Project Gemini we advocate more research, not just into the treatment of sight loss in combat situations, but also to look at treatment for macular degeneration and other eye conditions. As everybody knows macular degeneration is probably one of the most common causes of sight loss throughout the world and we hope in the future to do research into that. It will be great to bring so many experts together."

The Review caught up with Colin after the Royal visit when he said: "It's been a super day. The Countess of Wessex engaged with everyone and was really interested in everyone she met and in the work at the Llandudno centre. We're very lucky to have her as our Patron. The organisation behind today's visit was faultless and as Steve Boswell said the staff did an exceptional job to ensure everything ran smoothly. I watched the demonstrations and listened to the younger members as they spoke about the positive impact the Life Skills Centre had made to them. It was an exceptional day and an honour to have been here as President of our incredible charity."



Blind Veterans UK Calendar

Activities from the Brighton centre.

April.

Riding Week 16th to 22nd.

Masonic Weekend 21st to 24th.

Technology Week (first) 23rd to 30th.

May.

Photography Week 1st to 6th.

Jurassic Coast Walk 7th to 13th.

Women's Military Service Week 14th to 20th.

June.

Archery Club (first) 4th to 10th.

July.

Ex-PoW Week 2nd to 8th.

Homes & Gardens Week 16th to 22nd.

Activities from the Llandudno centre.

April.

Music Week 9th to 15th.

May/June.

Wood Week 14th to 20th May.

Horse Riding Week 28th May to 3rd June.

June.

Sea Fishing Week 18th to 24th June.

Potting & Planting Week 25th June to 1st July.

July/August.

Adventure Week 2nd to 8th July.

Recreation Taster Week 16th to 22nd July.

Cycling Week 30th July to 5th August.

To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Brighton centre.

For further information and to book your place at the Brighton centre please telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500.

To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Llandudno centre.

For further information or to book your place please telephone: 01492 864590.

Blind Veterans UK Masonic Group Cymru. By W. Bro. Clive Jones.

From the 5th to the 11th of February a new chapter opened for our charity and our Masonic Group. After three years of organising, and the ups and downs that go with it, myself and fellow blind veterans Brethren visited the Llandudno centre for our inaugural Welsh Masonic Week.

During the week members of Blind Veterans UK's Masonic Group were hosted by the Worshipful Master and Brethren of the Saint Tudno Lodge No 755 when we had a fantastic meeting. I had the honour to give a 15 minute lecture on St. Dunstan's, its formation and the change of name to Blind Veterans UK. I spoke of the part that the Bind Veterans UK Masonic Group plays within the charity as one of their specialist member groups.

"Earlier in the day we had visited the Masonic Museum in Llandudno when we were treated to a very informative tour of the museum and given interesting talks about the many items within it. Many other items were discussed and arranged for next year and the week ended with a wonderful meal in the Llandudno centre's magnificent dining room that's affectionately referred to as 'Hogwarts'. Over dinner blind veterans from our Masonic Group, 30 members from the Lodge, and many very special guests enjoyed an evening of good company and fine dining.



Picture: During a fine dining experience at the Llandudno centre W.Bro Clive Jones presented V.W.Bro Allan Powell and Margaret Powell with their gifts in appreciation of a magnificent meeting.

"During the meal two presentations were made. The first to V.W.Bro Allan Powell, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master for the Masonic Province of North Wales and the second to W.Bro Gerald Jones, the Worshipful Master of Saint Tudno Lodge No 755. They were presented with an identical block and gavel that showed the Blind Veterans UK crest on the front that I had commissioned as a memento of our first Masonic Group meeting in North Wales, Their respective ladies, Margaret and Ceirnwen, were presented with bouquets of flowers.



Picture: W.Bro Clive Jones, who organised Blind Veterans UK's inaugural Masonic Group meeting at the Llandudno centre is shown with W.Bro Gerald Jones and Ceirnwen Jones.

"I would like to give great thanks Steve Baxendale and all members of TNS Catering as they were fantastic throughout and the food and service was faultless. A wonderful week was had by all blind veterans who attended and we are all keenly looking forward to our meeting next year. I would also like to thank W.Bro Billy Miller and Stan Morgans for their company, help and support over the week. I look forward to seeing all members of our Masonic Group at our Brighton centre weekend from the 21st to 24th April."

If you are a Mason and would like to join Blind Veterans UK's Masonic Group please do get in touch with W. Bro Clive Jones, the Chairman and Secretary of the Masonic Group. There are meetings at the Brighton centre and you can register with Clive to take part in next year's meeting at our Llandudno centre. Please contact Clive on mobile 07854 800256 or by email at

dragoneye67@sky.com

Blind tattooist opens tattoo parlour in the Brighton centre. By Lirpa Loof.

It seems that everyone you meet of a certain age is sporting some form of 'body ink', or tattoo as we used to refer to the age old custom of having ink or dye permanently injected into the dermis, which lies just underneath the outer layer of a person's skin. The word Tattoo comes from the Tahitian 'Tatu' which means 'to mark something' and it is believed that tattooing has existed since 12,000 years B.C.

One would think that to become a reputable Tattooist you would require at least some useful vision but that's not the case with Blind Veterans UK working age member Lily Prada-Foo from Tunbridge Wells. Lily was a member of the Royal Naval Reserve during the 1970s, an era which saw the majority of the ships male crew sporting colourful tattoos of various designs and sizes. "I always loved tattoos, they tell the story of one's journey, not only the physical journeys that mariners the world over take but also the journey of one's life, illustrating a record of important events, experiences, achievements and status. Many of the sailors wore their tattoos like badges of rank, for instance someone sporting an anchor tattoo had reached the rank of Boatswain or Chief, or a rope around the wrist represents a sailor who was or is a deckhand, a Hula girl meant that he had visited Hawaii and a dragon meant that he had sailed in Asia; I thought that they were fascinating."

So much so that Lily has opened up her own tattoo parlour at the Brighton centre where she will tattoo members two afternoons a week, starting from the 1st April. Despite being totally blind, Lily assures The Review that it won't impact on her ability to produce colourful, detailed and interesting designs. "I intend to start off by offering our members a full range of tattoos then eventually I'd like to move on to piercing and other body art. I want to create modern and unique designs that suit the 21st century and if anyone would like a free tattoo then please contact me at the Brighton centre, just ask for the Blind Tattooist and they'll know who you mean!"

Thanks Lily and good luck with your new venture!

Ron Russell's American Quiz.

1. What is unique about the US \$1 bill?
2. Which is the highest point on the Statue of Liberty? Is it the Tablet, The Crown or the Torch?
3. Which Californian City has the largest population?
4. Which US President in 1933 introduced legislation that was known as the New Deal.
5. Which American Actress starred with Anthony Hopkins in the film Silence of the Lamb?
6. What is the capitol of Rhode Island?
7. What is the origin of the word "Bucks" when referring to US Dollars?
8. Who was the first American President to appear on TV?
9. Which US Agency has the motto 'For the benefit of all'?
10. Which US President was defeated by F. D. Roosevelt in the 1932 Election?
11. Which American Band had a top ten hit with Keep the Faith?
12. In which state of the USA can Miami Beach & Palm Beach be found?
13. Burt Lancaster & Clint Eastwood were both fictional inmates of which notorious prison?
14. Yellowstone National Park sits on top of an active volcano. Is this true or false?
15. Which US State is called The Diamond State?
16. What was the name of America's first canine movie star?

Answers on page 40.

Join the Brighton Radio Play Society.



Picture: The Brighton Radio Play Society from left to right John Taylor, Howard Cutter, Louise Partridge, Bernard Parker, Dawn Kozoboli, Chris Kirk, Sue Kaulsi, Sybil Henderson, Catherine Goodier (guest), Paul Twilley, Mabel Aitcheson, John Isaacs and Barbara Summers.

Each Friday between 2pm to 3.30pm something quite magical happens in The Stables at the Brighton centre as it is the time that the Brighton Radio Play Society meet. For the past two years this very special group has met to put on their own radio plays and in this month's edition of the Talking Review we have included an excerpt from their latest, *Sunken Ships*, an episode from the series, *Dangerous Assignments*. If you would like to get involved with the Brighton Radio Play Society please telephone the centre on 01273 307811.

The Brighton Radio Play Society was the brainchild of Chris Kirk, Bookings and Transport Manager and Louise Partridge, Art & Craft Supervisor at the Brighton centre, who joined with blind veteran John Taylor.

If you have a passion for radio plays and for acting do join them on Friday as they are a friendly and welcoming bunch. There is no need to memorise

your lines as under the superb direction of Chris Kirk or Paul Twilley, Transport Service Supervisor, they will feed you your lines and the motivation for your character. Volunteers Dawn Kozoboli and Barbara Summers are there to sit with you and say your lines, which you then repeat, of course adding your own personal take on your character.

As soon as the Brighton Radio Play Society has finished recording (name) they will start on JB Priestley's classic *An Inspector Calls*. We thoroughly recommended getting involved as they're a great group and there is plenty of laughter to be enjoyed and new friends to be met. There is no need for previous radio or acting experience, you just need to enjoy drama and comedy, have a good sense of humour and a desire to get involved.

The Society use professional recording and editing equipment and the quality of the recordings could easily transfer to any professional radio station for broadcast. Sue Kaulsi, Bookings Co-ordinator, is the sound technician and producer who spends hours editing the recordings and painstakingly adding suitable sound effects. The effect that Sue created in their recent adaptation of the much loved sitcom, *Are You Being Served*, as an octopus was plucked from a tank of water, was truly inspired!

Barbara Summers who volunteers at the Brighton centre and with the Radio Play Society said "I've volunteered for about three years and I love it as the blind veterans and the staff are great and its a wonderful place. I heard about the charity through someone at St George's Church in Kemptown as he volunteers at the Brighton centre and he told me to get involved. So I went for an interview and it's been great to meet so many different people. I was interested in volunteering with the Radio Play Society as I love drama and it's an interesting thing to do. Getting to know the guys and gals who go is just such fun."

As you are very aware volunteers like Barbara and Dawn make all the difference to the lives of blind veterans. At the Brighton centre in February 2017 volunteers gifted 1192 hours over 375 visits in four weeks. From 1st to 7th June we will celebrate the work of our wonderful volunteers through Volunteers' Week.

We will bring you a further report on the Brighton Radio Play Society in the June Review.

America's entry into WWI. From The US Embassy London WWI #SidebySide Dispatches.

To commemorate America's April 1917 entry into WWI we have included information from the US Embassy London WWI #SidebySide Dispatches.

"It must be a peace without victory. Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last." President Woodrow Wilson 22nd January 1917.

'What took you so long?'

Yes, yes, we know. We had a feeling you might ask that. Much like The Great War itself, we took our time to join you in commemorating it. But as the saying goes, better late than never. And for as ever, context is everything.

In a 10 minute podcast in the Talking Review The Great War Channel explores what was going on in the United States prior to our entry into the War. The Mexican Revolution and economic considerations, all influenced the US position. Even though Congress did not authorize the U.S.'s military participation until 1917, Americans were already engaged in the war effort in a host of other ways. In this lecture, Dr. Christopher Capozzola explains how, contrary to popular belief, ordinary Americans were responding to the war effort as early as 1914.

So why should we continue to care?

For the U.S. and the UK in particular, the war was in many ways the start of the Special Relationship that we know today. U.S. and UK soldiers and ordinary citizens were fighting together, volunteering, donating and supporting each other #SidebySide from World War I onwards. Since this date, we have continued to train together, fight together and recover together, for the common goal of peace, prosperity and justice.

More U.S. citizens died in World War I than in the Vietnam and Korean wars combined. More than four million American families sent their sons and

daughters to serve in uniform during the Great War. 116,516 U.S. soldiers gave their lives in combat. Another 200,000 were wounded, a casualty rate far greater than in World War II. More than 350,000 African Americans served in the U.S. military, as did Native Americans. And, for the first time, women joined the ranks of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Henry Johnson was the first American to be awarded the Croix de Guerre, and President Roosevelt named him one of the "five bravest Americans" to serve in WWI. Born in Albany, New York, Private Johnson was a member of the all African-American 15th New York National Guard Regiment (later the 369th Infantry Regiment), also known as the Harlem Hellfighters. Private Johnson singlehandedly fought off a surprise night-time attack with only a knife to hand, preventing the capture of a wounded fellow soldier. Private Johnson's achievements were recognised officially for the first time in 2015 when President Obama awarded him with a posthumous medal of honour. At the time, racial discrimination in the U.S. Army prevented black soldiers from fighting alongside white troops. As Senator Charles E Schumer, campaigner for the honour noted, "The great thing about America is that we undo our injustices more than any other country."

As a charity we have always enjoyed a special relationship with American veterans from WWI, through to WWII when blinded soldiers trained with St Dunstaners at Church Stretton and right up to today through Project Gemini.



Picture: Named by President Roosevelt as one of the five bravest Americans, Private Henry Johnson was the first American to be awarded the Croix de Guerre.

You can read more about Henry Johnson and the Harlem Hellfighters at <https://www.army.mil>

Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

Invictus Games 2017.

If you are to take part in this year's Invictus Games please contact Catherine Goodier, Review editor, on telephone 020 7616 8367 or email

revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

Review Format changes.

If you would like to change the format you receive the Review in please telephone 020 7616 8367 stating your name, postcode and preferred format. Or email revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk You can have the Review in both print and audio. It is available as a large print magazine, in MP3CD, USB, email or Braille. It is also on the Sonata National Talking Newspaper website.

New pound coin to be introduced.

Angie Blake in the Cashier's Office at the Brighton centre has drawn our attention to the new 12 sided pound coin that was introduced on 28th March. Angie pointed out that as there is a six month circulation period when both coins can be used before 15th October 2017 the old pound coin will no longer be legal tender after that date and you will not be able to spend your pound coins or exchange them at your bank.

Bag your tickets for this year's Trooping the Colour.

If you would like to attend this year's Trooping the Colour and enjoy the impressive display of pageantry to celebrate the occasion of the Queen's Official Birthday please contact Abby Tarrant to be entered into the ballot.

Trooping the Colour will take place on Saturday 17th June. Each year it celebrates the official Birthday of the Sovereign and is carried out by her personal troops, the Household Division, on Horse Guards Parade, with the Queen herself attending and taking the salute.

You can contact Abby Tarrant on telephone 020 7616 8372 or email her at abby.tarrant@blindveterans.org.uk

Join Blind Veterans UK's Amateur Radio Club.

Would you like to become an amateur radio ham and communicate with people across the globe? Then please join us at the Brighton centre and Llandudno centres to learn how to operate the systems and create networks with support from long standing members of the group. It's a great opportunity to make new friends and learn new skills with your fellow blind veterans.

If you would like to join us please contact Ray Peart, Chairman Blind Veterans UK's Amateur Radio Society on 01452 533839 or email Raymond.Peart@btinternet.com The Amateur Radio Club will meet at the Llandudno centre from Monday 7th to 14th August and at the Brighton centre from 1st to 7th October.

In 2018 they will meet from 7th until 13th October at the Brighton centre.



Sign up for fun events organised by the Llandudno centre.

Victoria Beech, Regional Fundraiser at the Llandudno centre has set up some super events that you may like to get involved with.

Murder Mysteries: The Llandudno team will hold a number of Murder Mysteries in their region, with themes that range from the 1920's to the 1950's. If you'd like to take part there are spaces on the 12th May Murder Mystery at Chateau Rhianfa, Anglesey.

Secret Garden: The Llandudno team will work in partnership with Chateau Rhianfa to stage a Secret Garden event to raise funds and keep local youngsters entertained during the school holidays. Families can enjoy such activities as planting and potting, a nature trail, storytelling and art activities. There will be craft stalls and animals in the outdoor market area. The event is scheduled to take place on 30th and 31st May. Entry for children is £4, free for accompanying adults. Contact the team on 01492 864574 for more information.

Commando Challenge: The Llandudno Team will rest this year's Garden Party to attend The National Armed Forces Days in North Wales on 17th June and in Liverpool 25th June. In its place the team will work with Commando X to stage a Commando Challenge Day, complete with obstacle course, cargo nets, tyre challenges, climbing wall and bush tucker challenge. The event, which will also include markets, military and charity stands, will take place at the Llandudno Centre on 22nd July. Follow the Blind Veterans UK Wales Facebook page or contact the team on 01492 864574 to keep up to date.

If you or someone you know is interested in putting on a fundraising event in your community why not get in touch with Victoria Beech on 01492 864574.

How to contact the Review Editor.

As feedback from you is vital to ensure we are including articles that you wish to read if you have an article you would like to send to the Review or a suggestion for an article, or perhaps you want to send in a Service joke or a photo, please phone Catherine Goodier, Review Editor on 020 7616 8267. You could also email her at revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk or write to Catherine Goodier, Blind Veterans UK, 12 - 14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

When you phone if Catherine is not in her office to take your call please do leave a message on her answer phone.

Roundabouts to Ausfahrts! Support Blind Veterans UK's Intrepid Duo as they drive through 24 countries in 5 days.

Nathan Muirhead, Chief of Staff, and Chris Kirk, Head of Transport will take to the road to raise money for Blind Veterans UK. On 8th May they will set off from Brighton on a trip that will see them pass through 24 countries in just five days. By the end of the first day they hope to reach the tip of Italy before heading as far south as Greece. They will return through Romania and Poland, arriving back at Brighton on 12th May.

Nathan, the Charity's Chief of Staff says "We expect to be driving around 16 hours a day and spending the rest of the time with our roll mats in the back of the car! It will be a gruelling yet fantastic experience to cover 24 countries over such a short timeframe. Travelling with our Head of Transport provides much confidence so I expect to be in good hands should something go wrong with our car!"

Any support, no matter how small, would be gratefully received. To donate or follow Nathan and Chris's journey, visit justgiving.com/europechallenge You can also donate by sending a cheque to Nathan Muirhead, Europe Challenge, Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London, W1H 4HD.

All the best boys and we'll bring news in the Review on your return.



Family News.

Congratulations to:

Bill Smith whose first great grandson Lincoln was born on the 10th March to his granddaughter Jade and her partner Jae. Lincoln is a younger brother for Bill's great granddaughter Robynn who is eight years old and Bill informs us that she is thrilled with her new baby brother.

Birthdays:

Dick Tetlow who celebrated his 105th birthday on 20th April.

James Herbert who celebrated his 104th birthday on 13th April.

Trevor Wigmore who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 10th April.

Eric Foster who celebrated his 101st birthday on 4th April.

Frederick Tree who celebrated his 101st birthday on 25th April.

Ronald Foreman who celebrated his 101st birthday on 26th April.

Anniversaries:



Picture: A beautiful Ron & Jean Payton on their wedding day on 22nd March 1952.

Ron and Jean celebrated their Blue Sapphire wedding anniversary on 22nd March.

Platinum 70 years married.

Ron & Hazel Cross of Gosport, Hampshire on 7th April.

Patrick & Helen Feeney of Southwick, West Sussex on 11th April.

George & Sheila Hedges of Southampton, Hampshire on 12th April.

Tom & Amy Bryden of Rowlands Gill, Tyne & Wear on 27th April.

Blue Sapphire 65 years married.

George & Winifred Banner of Doncaster, South Yorkshire on 12th April.

Arthur & Vera Beckett of Calcot, Reading on 26th April.

Brian & Shirley Turner of Goole, East Yorkshire on 8th March.

Ron & Jean Payton of Honiton, Devon on 22nd March.

Diamond Yellow 60 years married.

Leonard & Dorothy Wright of Ilkeston, Derbyshire on 13th April.

George & Betty Heyworth of St. Agnes, Cornwall on 2nd April.

John & Pat Morris of Kesgrave, Ipswich on 6th April.

Leonard & Dorothy Wright of Ilkeston, Derbyshire on 13th April.

John & Sandra Isaccs of Worthing, West Sussex on 14th April.

Bob & Margaret Walker of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd on 22nd April.

Alan & Mary Silvester of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire on 27th April.

Raymond & Rose Edge of Wirral, Merseyside on 30th April.

Golden 50 years married.

John & Liz McMullan of Denny, Stirlingshire on 1st April.

Bill & Sylvia Rose of Crawley, West Sussex on 1st April.

Ruby 40 years married.

Bert & Alice Hayes of Longridge, Preston on 23rd April.

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

Ilse Lore 'Laura' Andrews who died on 13th March 2017. She was the wife of Eric Andrews.

Edna Bendle who died on 21st January 2017. She was the wife of Herbert Bendle.

Freda Brooksbank who died on 23rd February 2017. She was the wife of George Brooksbank.

Mary Burnett who died on 8th March 2017. She was the widow of the late William Burnett.

Edna Cox who died on 16th October 2016. She was the wife of Alan Cox.

June Coy who died on 6th February 2017. She was the wife of Dennis Coy.

Mary Finnigan who died on 6th February 2017. She was the wife of Brian Finnigan.

Susan Fox who died on 24th February 2017. She was the wife of Neil Fox.

Violet 'Vi' Haden who died on 8th February 2017. She was the wife of Henry Haden.

Georgina Kell who died on 5th February 2017. She was the widow of the late Douglas Kell.

Dorothy McGlasson who died on 1st February 2017. She was the wife of William McGlasson.

Rose Mills who died on 27th February 2017. She was the wife of Edward Mills.

Joyce Mott who died on 22nd February 2017. She was the wife of John Mott.

Muriel Northeast who died on 3rd March 2017. She was the wife of William Northeast.

Ula 'Jane' Taylor who died on 6th March 2017. She was the widow of the late Alfred Taylor.

Answers to Ron Russell's American Quiz from page 29.

1. The picture of George Washington is facing to the left. In the original portrait he is facing to the right.

2. The Torch.

3. San Diego.

4. FD Roosevelt.

5. Jodie Foster.

6. Providence.

7. In the 1700's and 1800's buckskins were traded for goods instead of money.

8. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

9. NASA. 10. Herbert Hoover. 11. Bon Jovi.

12. Florida. 13. Alcatraz 14. It is True. 15. Delaware.

16. Rin Tin Tin. He was born in Germany, rescued from the trenches as a pup and brought to the USA by Lee Duncan a WWI pilot. His first film was Where the North Begins in 1925. Rin Tin Tin made 25 films and at the height of his success he was earning approx \$5,000,000.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

James 'Jim' Archibald of Pathhead, Midlothian served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1954.

Alwyn Askew of Matlock, Derbyshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1954.

Francis Belfit of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Signals from 1943 to 1947.

John Bishop of Wotton Under Edge, Gloucestershire served in the General Service Corps and Gloucester Regiment from 1944 to 1959.

George Blake of Amlwch, Gwynedd served in the Essex Regiment from 1945 to 1948.

James Blake of Portsmouth served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1972.

Hugh Blissett of Market Harborough, Leicestershire served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1982.

Cyril Bond of Mapperley, Nottingham served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Engineers from 1944 to 1948.

Anthony Brittain of Sevenoaks, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1961 to 1978.

Victor Brooks of Brackley, Northamptonshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Benjamin Burrows of Llandudno, Gwynedd served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

George 'Terry' Carney of Poole, Dorset served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1956 to 1964.

Christopher 'Chris' Clarry of Carlisle served in the Royal Corps of Transport from 1980 to 1985.

Bernard Coupe of Blackburn, Lancashire served in the Royal Artillery from 1959 to 1961.

Mark Cowan of Buckley, Clwyd served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

Frederick Curtis of New Milton, Hampshire served in the Royal Navy from 1946 to 1949.

John St Cyr of St. Helens, Merseyside served in the Army Catering Corps from 1950 to 1952.

Clifford 'Cliff' Dainty of Tithe Croft, Wolverhampton served in the Royal Engineers from 1939 to 1946.

John Davenport of Ipswich served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1978.

Derek 'Dai' Davies of Devizes, Wiltshire served in the Welsh Guards from 1955 to 1957.

Thomas Deakins of Hamilton, Lanarkshire served in the Scots Guards from 1956 to 1979.

Arthur Dodd of Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1946 to 1959.

Roy Eames of Potters Bar, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1956.

George Flynn of Creswell, Nottinghamshire served in the Worcester and Sherwood Foresters from 1970 to 1992.

Thomas 'Tommy' Gibson of Stanley, County Durham served in the Durham Light Infantry from 1953 to 1959.

David Grain of Wollaton, Nottingham served in the Royal Engineers from 1952 to 1956.

Edgar 'Eddy' Gray of Wigston, Leicestershire served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1948.

Charles Green of Poulton-Le-Fylde, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1947.

Patrick Hamilton of Plymouth served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1955.

John 'Ivan' Harrington of Fleet, Hampshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1954.

Jeffrey 'Jeff' Harris of Martock, Somerset served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1956.

Jack Hartley of Rothwell, Leeds served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Cyril Hawkins of Highbridge, Somerset Served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

John Holley of Winterbourne, Bristol served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1957.

Cara 'Dawn' Hurst née Pell of Hitchin, Hertfordshire served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1954.

John Jones of Holywell, Clwyd served in the Royal Engineers and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1951 to 1954.

Maureen Keating of Worthing, West Sussex served in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps from 1963 to 1993.

Desmond 'Des' King of Andover, Hampshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1955.

Horace 'Ray' Kirby of Northallerton, North Yorkshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946.

Norman Knox of Marske-By-The-Sea, Redcar, Cleveland served in the Royal Field Artillery from 1943 to 1947.

Angus Lorimer of Loughborough, Leicestershire served in the Leicestershire Regiment in 1962.

Stanley Ludlow of Ormskirk, Lancashire served in the General Service Corps, Gloucestershire Regiment and the Royal Artillery from 1946 to 1948.

Anthony 'Tony' Lumley-Frank of Eaton Terrace, London served in the Queen's Royal Regiment from 1946 to 1948.

Barbara Mackellar née Hutton of Mount Pleasant, Cambridge served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1954 to 1958.

Patrick Mahony of Liverpool served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1958.

Frederick 'Fred' Malone of Rotherham, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1957 to 1964.

Peter Marsh of Ipswich served in the Royal Air Force from 1968 to 1973.

James McNally of Liverpool served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1952.

Patrick McSweeney of Bromley, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Kenneth Milward of Dunmow, Essex served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947.

Roy Mitchell of Huddersfield served in the General Service Corps, Royal Engineers and the Duke of Wellington's Regiment from 1945 to 1955.

Denis Owens of Walton-Le-Dale, Preston served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Trevor Patchett of Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1951 to 1964.

Charles Pither of Bracknell, Berkshire served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1948.

James Quinn of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the King's Shropshire Light Infantry from 1956 to 1964.

Sidney Refoy of Worthing, West Sussex served in the Primary Training Wing and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1945 to 1948.

Douglas Rootham of Barrow-In-Furness, Cumbria served in the Army Catering Corps from 1952 to 1958.

Peter 'Pete' Round of Barnsley, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1965.

John Scott of Huyton, Liverpool served in the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1956.

June Simpson née Rhodes of Kidlington, Oxfordshire served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1943.

Leonard Stamp of Spennymoor, County Durham served in the Royal Military Police from 1960 to 1962.

Brian Stephens of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Edward Stewart of Jarrow, Tyne And Wear served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1946 to 1948.

Derek Talbot of Crewe served in the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm from 1947 to 1951.

Henry 'Harry' Thomas of Bristol served in the Royal Artillery from 1937 to 1946.

William 'David' Tomlinson of Batley, West Yorkshire served in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry from 1954 to 1959.

Leslie 'Mike' Uzzell of Kenilworth, Warwickshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.

William 'Bill' Ward of Castle Bromwich, Birmingham served in the General Service Corps and the Seaforth Highlanders from 1945 to 1948.

Edwin 'Ted' Watkins of Liphook, Hampshire served in the General Service Corps and the South Wales Borderers from 1946 to 1948.

David Wiles of Bath served in the Royal Signals from 1959 to 1961.

Fred Wilkinson of Eccles, Manchester served in the Lancashire Fusiliers, Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers from 1939 to 1946.

Gwyn William of Liverpool served in the Royal Air Force from 1944 to 1977.

Frank Wilson of Coventry served in the Royal Signals and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1947 to 1967.

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.

Alexander 'Alistair' Adamson of Edinburgh died on 1st February 2017, aged 84. He served in the Royal Army Educational Corps, Royal Scots Regiment, Cameronians and the Lowland Brigade from 1951 to 1957.

Gwynneth Aston née Humble of Blackpool, Lancashire died on 9th November 2014, aged 88. She served in the Auxiliary Territorial Reserves from 1944 to 1946.

Harry Ayres of West Malling, Kent died on 2nd January 2017, aged 90. He served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1947.

Reginald Bartley of Bexleyheath, Kent died on 20th January 2017, aged 88. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949.

Brenda Binns née Holmes of Doncaster, South Yorkshire died on 27th February 2017, aged 94. She served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1951.

Frank Bishop of Wokingham, Berkshire died on 6th January 2017, aged 98. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1973.

Charles Cawthorne of Swindon died on 14th February 2017, aged 92. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1974.

Hugh Cawthorne of Barnsley, South Yorkshire died on 9th February 2017, aged 89. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1949.

Gordon Clarke of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan died on 24th February 2017, aged 93. He served in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and the Royal Artillery from 1941 to 1946.

James Clarke of Barnet, London died on 21st January 2017, aged 86. He served in the Royal Navy in 1948.

David Cockayne of Brighton, East Sussex died on 3rd March 2017, aged 85. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1951.

John Cole of Luton, Bedfordshire died on 6th January 2017, aged 77. He served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1958 to 1964.

Bryan Collings of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 21st February 2017, aged 86. He served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1949 to 1951.

Arthur 'Archie' Cooledge of Rhyl, Clwyd died on 30th January 2017, aged 103. He served in the Royal Artillery and the King's Royal Rifle Corps from 1940 to 1946.

Thomas Cull of Derby, Derbyshire died on 26th February 2017, aged 93. He served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Norman Cutts of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 19th January 2017, aged 90. He served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1945 to 1948.

Raymond Davidson of Abingdon, Oxfordshire died on 9th March 2017, aged 87. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1951.

Nora 'Jo' Dawson née Foskett of Lewes, East Sussex died on 16th June 2016, aged 96. She served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1945.

Douglas 'Doug' Day of Highbridge, Somerset died on 11th February 2017, aged 92. He served in the Dorsetshire Regiment from 1942 to 1947.

Arthur Dixon of Stanley, County Durham died on 11th December 2016, aged 85. He served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1953 to 1955.

Ronald 'Ron' Drew of Bexhill On Sea, East Sussex died on 4th February 2017, aged 92. He served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

David Durrant of Beccles, Suffolk died on 26th February 2017, aged 91. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Kenneth 'Ken' Eckersley of Walton Le Dale, Preston died on 1st March 2017, aged 92. He served in the Royal Engineers from 1942 to 1947.

Stanley Elliott of Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire died on 24th February 2017, aged 92. He served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Signals from 1942 to 1947.

Robert 'Bob' Ellis of West Bromwich, West Midlands died on 7th February 2017, aged 87. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

William 'Bill' Errett of Guildford, Surrey died on 22nd January 2017, aged 95. He served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1941 to 1946.

Graham Evans of Boncath, Dyfed died on 21st February 2017, aged 74. He served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1960 to 1962.

Vera Everatt of Carmarthen, Dyfed died on 11th February 2017, aged 98. She served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1945.

Mary Foote née Gosden of Weybridge, Surrey died on 5th February 2017, aged 93. She served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1946.

Martin Ford of Marylebone, London died on 2nd November 2016, aged 97. He served in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment from 1941 to 1947.

Charles 'Fos' Foskett of Bexleyheath, Kent died on 1st March 2017, aged 97. He served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1939 to 1946.

Phyllis Gasson neé Rivett of Yate, Bristol died on 1st February 2017, aged 96. She served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

Alan George of Solihull, West Midlands died on 2nd February 2017, aged 89. He served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1951.

George Gulliford of Seaham, County Durham died on 23rd February 2017, aged 96. He served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946.

Jack Hall of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne And Wear died on 20th January 2017, aged 83. He served in the Royal Air Force in 1954.

Maureen Hammond née Croston of Worthing, West Sussex died on 18th February 2017, aged 80. She served in the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1954 to 1956.

Paul Harvey of Burntwood, Staffordshire died on 9th February 2017, aged 80. He served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1950.

Kenneth 'Ken' Howells of Port Talbot, West Glamorgan died on 7th February 2017, aged 85. He served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1949 to 1950.

Ronnie Hyde of Rotherham, South Yorkshire died on 1st June 2016, aged 84. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

Ronald Jefferies of Trowbridge, Wiltshire died on 15th February 2017, aged 82. He served in the Wiltshire Regiment from 1954 to 1956.

Charles 'Peter' Jenkins of South Brent, Devon died on 8th February 2017, aged 93. He served in the Royal Engineers from 1941 to 1967.

William 'Bill' Johnston of Coventry, West Midlands died on 12th February 2017, aged 90. He served in the General Service Corps, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and the Army Air Corps from 1945 to 1948.

Melvin King of St. Sampson, Guernsey died on 19th February 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Navy from 1939 to 1979.

John Lancum of Chichester, West Sussex died on 11th February 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Derrick Launchbury of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 6th February 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1942 to 1947.

William 'Bill' Lawrence of Pershore, Worcestershire died on 18th February 2017, aged 92. He served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

James Martin of Alnwick, Northumberland died on 14th February 2017, aged 93. He served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1943 to 1947.

Eric 'Bill' Maskew of Shipley, West Yorkshire died on 11th February 2017, aged 92. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1945.

Eric Mawer of Colyton, Devon died on 12th February 2017, aged 90. He served in the Royal Marines from 1944 to 1947.

George McDonald of Leeds, Yorkshire died in December 2016, aged 79. He served in the West Yorkshire Regiment in 1955.

John McHale of Kingshurst, West Midlands died on 9th January 2017, aged 85. He served in the Parachute Regiment from 1950 to 1955.

Charles Meredith of Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire died on 5th February 2017, aged 90. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1944 to 1946.

Dorothy Miller of Norbury, London died on 7th January 2017, aged 94. She served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 to 1945.

Norman Mills of Brighton, East Sussex died on 15th February 2017, aged 86. He served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1948 to 1950.

George Mordaunt of Formby, Liverpool died in 2017, aged 90. He served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers from 1944 to 1946.

David Norsworthy of Taunton, Somerset died on 14th February 2017, aged 90. He served in the Grenadier Guards from 1944 to 1948.

Margaret Oxland née Craddock of Alresford, Hampshire died on 24th February 2017, aged 98. She served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

Reginald Pratt of Market Drayton, Shropshire died on 7th February 2017, aged 86. He served in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force and Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1957.

Reginald 'Reg' Raybould of Barrow In Furness, Cumbria died on 16th February 2017, aged 87. He served in the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1956.

Audrey Reekie née Edlington of Aberdeen died on 10th February 2017, aged 91. She served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1946 when she worked as a Code Breaker at Bletchley Park.

Joseph 'Joe' Richardson of Chorley, Lancashire died on 20th February 2017, aged 91. He served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1946.

Sidney Roberts of Ramsgate, Kent died on 15th February 2017, aged 100. He served in the Royal Artillery from 1934 to 1946.

Frank Russell of Barking, Essex died on 16th February 2017, aged 93. He served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1941 to 1947.

Kenneth 'Ken' Sabin of Redhill, Surrey died on 15th February 2017, aged 91. He served in the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1957.

Leslie Shurmer of Isle Of Skye died on 31st January 2017, aged 97. He served in the Essex Regiment, Corps of Military Police and the Parachute Regiment from 1938 to 1946.

Walter Sleight of Lincoln died on 26th February 2017, aged 95. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Derek Smith of Preston, Lancashire died on 24th February 2017, aged 84. He served in the Loyal Regiment from 1953 to 1959.

Ronald 'Ron' Smith of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 20th February 2017, aged 99. He served in the Coldstream Guards from 1939 to 1945.

Cuthbert 'Bert' Stephenson of Newcastle Upon Tyne died on 26th February 2017, aged 94. He served in the General Service Corps, Reconnaissance Corps and the Royal Armoured Corps from 1943 to 1947.

Geoffrey Stewart of Lancaster, died on 29th January 2017, aged 93. He served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1948.

Lewis Strong of Buckhurst Hill, Essex died on 6th February 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Artillery from 1942 to 1947.

Murray Talbot of Worthing, West Sussex died on 21st February 2017, aged 88. He served in the Royal Artillery, Army Air Corps and the Royal Engineers from 1948 to 1979.

Benjamin 'Ben' Thorne of Bury, Lancashire died on 1st January 2017, aged 84. He served in the Lancashire Fusiliers from 1950 to 1956.

Robert 'Bob' Walker of Lincoln, Lincolnshire died on 26th February 2017, aged 93. He served in the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1942 to 1947.

Brian Waltho of Burton On Trent, Staffordshire died on 24th February 2017, aged 84. He served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1951 to 1953.



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