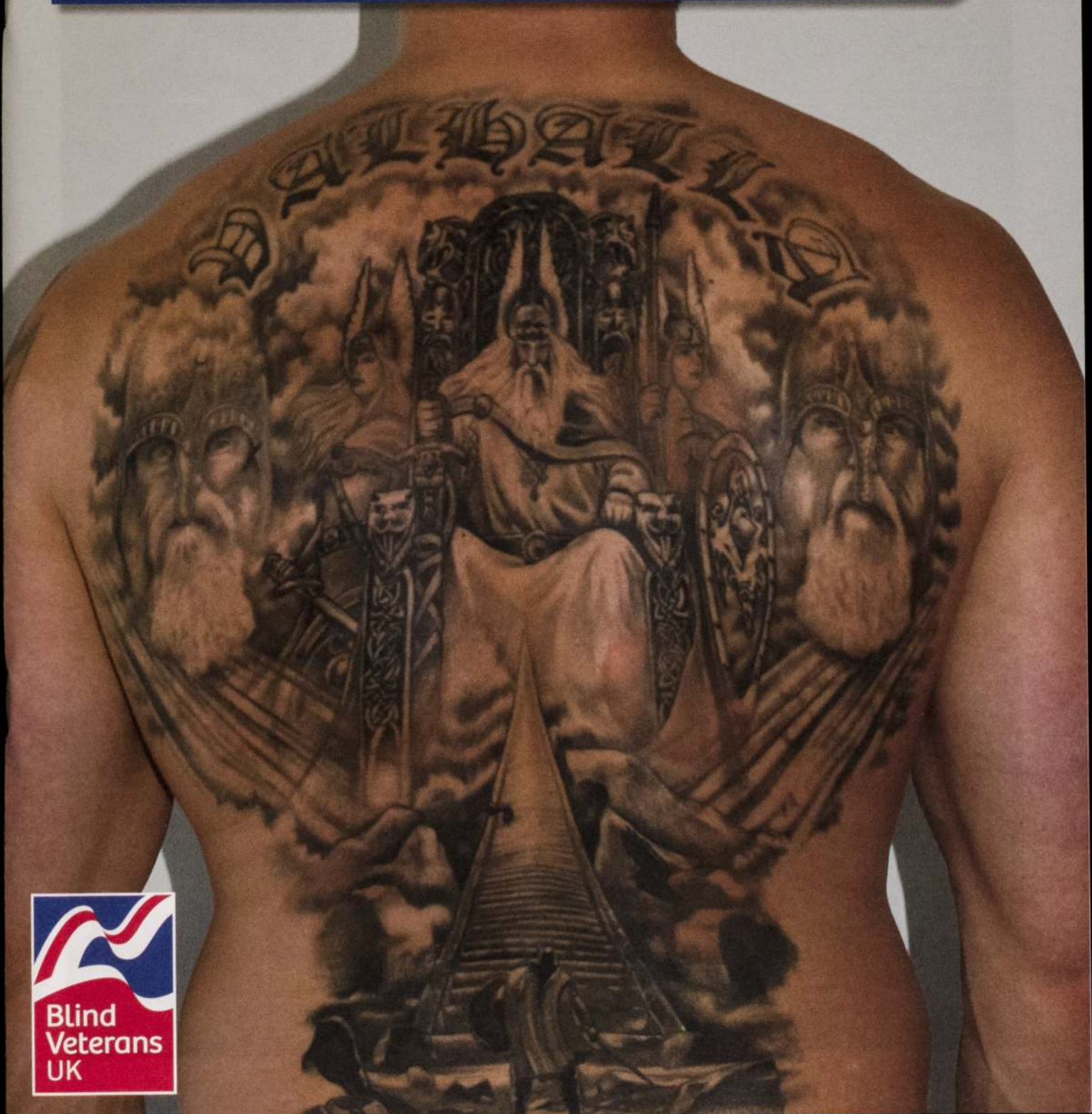


August 2017

# Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915





**On the cover:** Working age blind veteran Billy Drinkwater shows his tribute in honour of his friends who were killed in Afghanistan. Photo Jenny Barley.

**Pages 2 & 3:** Our Patron, Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO and Constance Halford-Thompson in our Hampton Court Palace Show Garden. Photos Phil Meech.

**Back page:** HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO with blind veterans Lewis Trinder and Darren Blanks.



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### Patron Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO.

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### Contact telephone numbers.

**The Brighton centre** 01273 307811.

**The Llandudno centre** 01492 868700.

**Harcourt Street (HQ)** 020 7723 3392.

**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 number 0800 389 7979.

## Blind Veterans UK Calendar

### Activities from the Brighton centre.

#### August.

Transport Week 6th to 12th.

Archery Club (second) 13th to 19th.

Activities Week 20th to 26th.

Widows' Week 27th August to 2nd September.

#### September.

History Week 10th to 16th.

Fishing Week 17th to 23rd.

Adrenaline Weekend 29th September to 2nd October.

#### October/November.

Amateur Radio Club 1st to 7th. Technology Week (second) 8th to 14th.

Bowling Fortnight (first) 15th to 28th.

Driving Week 29th October to 4th November.

#### December.

Turkey & Tinsel Week 10th to 16th December.

### Activities from the Llandudno centre.

#### August.

Water Week 13th to 19th.

#### September.

Archery Week 3rd to 9th.

Photography Week 17th to 23rd.

Walking Week 24th to 30th.

#### October.

History Week 22nd to 28th October.

#### November.

Military Week 5th to 13th November.

#### December.

Sewing Week 3rd to 9th December.

### 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.

# From the Chairman.

## Your message from Tim Davis.

The message that flows through this edition of Review is one of community and hope. The importance of the community of Blind Veterans UK continues as you meet up at Reunions and Lunch Clubs and for training at our centres and where you live. The community teams are now firmly embedded and work is progressing well for the blind veterans who represent working age members in each of the five regions.

'It's all about community,' our show garden at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show was enjoyed by everyone who visited and it was awarded a Gold Medal. Our Patron Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex enjoyed speaking with blind veterans Lewis Trinder and Darren Blanks and thought the garden thoroughly deserved the Gold Medal. The items that you created with volunteers and staff in the workshops at the Brighton and Llandudno centres proved hugely popular as they were eagerly snapped up. The garden was visited by thousands of people during the week bringing our work to the attention of a new audience.

Continuing the theme of community Diana Buckley has written into the Review about her late father Robin Buckley GM, a Second World War St Dunstaner who became our head of PR. Again, this shows the importance of the community and family of Blind Veterans UK.

The message of hope comes from working age blind veteran Billy Drinkwater and from Grace Bitten, a new blind veteran. Grace writes of overcoming her initial fear of going to the Brighton centre and how once there she embraced the training that was offered and how her life has changed because of this.

In this month edition, you will be moved as you read of two memorials, one modern and the second historic. The first is a tattoo that Billy Drinkwater has on his back in memory of his friends who were killed in Afghanistan. It is a deeply permanent tribute that he speaks of and of his philosophy for the way he leads his life today. As it is an important tribute we have broken with tradition and it is our cover image this month.

The second is an article that was written by two First World War blinded veterans, Frederick Richardson and Henry Gransby, after they attended the unveiling of the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres on 24th July 1927. It was published in the August 1927 Review and you can read their account and the account of Amelia Richardson as she sees the names of her three brothers who were killed in the former Salient.

I trust that you are enjoying the summer and everything that Blind Veterans UK has to offer.



**Picture:** Blind veteran John Taylor with Kath Jones-Romain from the Brighton centre's Art & Craft Workshop explore the garden. **Photo:** Lou Partridge.

## **Billy Drinkwater pays tribute to his fallen Vikings. By Catherine Goodier.**

Vikings were given courage in battle by their belief in a glorious afterlife. They fought to their death in the conviction they might reach Valhalla, and as they stood at the bottom of the steps and looked up at mighty Odin, the god of poetry and battle, that he would grant them entry. This belief shaped the way the Vikings lived their lives, faced their death and honoured their fallen. To honour the fallen, his fellow Vikings, his friends and comrades who were killed in Afghanistan, Billy Drinkwater, a blind veteran who served as a Corporal in 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment, bears a permanent tribute to the men who breathed their last on the blood soaked ground of Afghanistan.

Respected by those he served with, Billy was a career soldier, who during ten years of Service was recognised for his skill and leadership. On 31st January 2010 the life he knew came to an end when, in Nadi Ali, he was wounded in an IED explosion in the post 9/11 war. To move on from that day of death he had to leave his past behind, forget the person he was, and draw on every ounce of his strength to look inside himself to find who he could become. With support from his family and friends, and seven years after he heard that first message of hope from Martin Shail at our Brighton centre, Billy continues his journey to build a new life. As a reminder to look to the future, and as a tribute to his friends who didn't make it home, he has a tattoo on his back that he speaks of in this interview.

Asked how his story began, Billy told the Review, "I became a member of Blind Veterans UK in March 2010 shortly after I was injured in Afghanistan. I joined the Army because of 9/11 as I watched it happen when I was only 15, and thought of all the innocent people who were killed in that attack, and how their loved ones would never see them again. At that time I didn't have a clue about the Army, all I knew was that my grandad had served in it. That day, 9/11, just flicked a switch in me and a week later I went to the Army careers office and joined up. Like I said, I didn't have a clue about the different sections of the Army, and the Regiment I joined was the one that the guy who opened the door in the careers office belonged to. It just turned out that he was in the infantry in the Royal Anglian Regiment, and that's how my story started.

"I enjoyed a ten year career when I got to the rank of Corporal. I was a badge

sniper. I was thriving. I loved it. I did a tour of Iraq. Two tours of Afghanistan, and each tour I did I progressed to the next rank. I was a Private in Iraq, then I went to a Lance Corporal on the first tour of Afghanistan, and then, on the near fatal tour, my last tour, I was a Corporal and a Section Commander. I loved the job and was more gutted about losing the job than the injury. Ultimately, although you don't die, you still lose your life because you lose your job and everything you've done for the last ten years. All that effort, all that promotion, all that hard graft, all that blood, sweat and tears. You lose a lot of yourself and you're cut off from everyone, and obviously on top of everything you have a life-changing injury to deal with. It's a lot to take in and to me the injury is the least of it."

Speaking of how he found strength Billy continued, "At the time I was injured family support was very, very important and with my friends their support was everything. The first and best hope I was given was when I walked into the Brighton centre and met Martin Shail. It was that first day when you meet people who have lived their life with total blindness for the last 20 years or more and you hear that message of hope. That first time at the Brighton centre was life changing. I walked in with my head down and without any motivation and interest in life, as I'd just lost everything that was important, everything I cared about, but that first night changed everything. It changed my perception about the future and showed endless possibilities. It was all thanks to Martin Shail, as he was outstanding. It was fantastic to see him operate and how he lived his daily life. Martin gave me hope that there was still life and I had a chance. To go there and see the staff in action and the outstanding work they do really put me on the path to rebuild my life. It was still hard to accept that I would no longer be the person I was before, but I knew that I could start work to get my life back."

Returning to that life changing day in Afghanistan. "It was the 31st January 2010 and we were in Nadi Ali, an area in South East Helmand Province. It was dark as we were moving into position in the early hours of the morning to stay overnight. I was with my front man, Kennett Facal, who was also injured and is now also a blind veteran. Ken and I were really close friends before we were injured and even more so since. Basically, on that day we found a device, we confirmed it, marked it, and it went off in our faces, which resulted in us sustaining life threatening injuries at the time, and then life changing injuries. I lost my right eye and at the time I was blinded in my left eye. I was blind for six weeks. I lost hearing, sense of smell, had facial scarring and broke a bone in

my hand. But what I lost after that was a lot more than I lost in Afghan in the explosion.

"I knew then and there on the spot that I'd lost my job. I knew it and I was raging. I got back up on my feet, I couldn't see, and I just knew that I'd lost my job and my life. I remember how in that rage I threw my weapon down, took my body armour off and threw it on the ground, took my day sack off and thought — please don't get shot. In intensive care I had a bit of hope when I was told that I had a fighting chance of keeping my job, but that turned out to be a hallucination because of the meds. I'd lost my shooting eye and the fact was that I was no longer viable for deployment."

To keep him moving forward, and as a tribute to his friends, Billy has a permanent reminder on his back. "As my Regiment is known as the Vikings I wanted to get a tattoo that represented what we'd done and to show Valhalla where Vikings go when they are killed on the battlefield. The first thing was to get the Valhalla text and then I waited for eight years until I found the right artist and the right artwork. I went to a local tattooist and told him the legend, told him what I was about and what I wanted to achieve, and he came up with this design. I wanted to show a Viking asking to enter Valhalla, and as soon as I saw his design knew that it was the right design and I wanted it done immediately. He did it in four back to back sessions that each lasted for six hours. People ask about the pain, but for what it means it was no pain, as it's to honour my friends who didn't come back.

"At the bottom of the tattoo is a Viking who has been killed in battle and he is shown standing at the bottom of the stairs to Valhalla and at the top of the stairs is Odin on his throne, as only Odin can grant him entry to Valhalla. It's a tribute to every man that we lost when we were away and this is the very least I could do for them. As it's on my back I can never fully see it and that reminds me not to look back, but to look to the future. I know it's there and if I try to look at it all the time then I can't see what's coming towards me. I use that as a metaphor as I know that it's my past and I can't live in it. I know that my friends are looking down on me, willing me to where I want to go, and that when I make mistakes they help. I must live the best life I can, for myself and for those who are important to me, and for those who aren't here anymore, and to be grateful for everything I have."

Billy is now at the beginning of what could be his next career. "Since January this year I've been talking in schools and doing workshops where I speak about beating adversity through resilience, as that's something that I know about, and it's been very enlightening speaking to children and seeing their reactions. The natural progression is that with another veteran I've been invited by Camp International to Borneo with a group of school children aged from 16 to 18 to do humanitarian and wildlife conservation work in the jungle. I'm really looking forward to it as it's all totally new and it's going to be challenging and rewarding at the same time. We don't know what to expect as this is a pilot project so I'll tell you about it when I'm back! As Camp International is worldwide it would be great to keep working with them as a mentor and go around the world from camp to camp, as to help people can only be good. As there will also be downtime in Bornea it will be a good place to clear my head and clarify what I want to do, and importantly, what I don't want to do. In my talks in schools I always encourage the children to take time out to travel and see the world and make it theirs, as you only get one life and there's a lot to do. Now that I'm doing this work I understand how much satisfaction Martin Shail must have got from his work at the Brighton centre."

In closing Billy gave his message to anyone who was nervous about taking that initial visit to the Brighton or Llandudno centres or to embrace the training in their community. "To any blind veterans who are new to the charity I would say that whoever you are and whatever age you are, wherever you've come from, and whatever happened to you, Blind Veterans UK is a family and the charity is here to support you. It's here to give hope and training, for you and for your family, as they need to learn how to adapt to your new needs. There's so much this charity can do for you, but obviously you must help yourself as well and embrace the training and opportunities. There's nothing to lose and all you have to do is to try your best. Talking to people who are in the same boat as you and who understand really helps and it helps for your family to have other families to talk to.

"When Blind Veterans UK first contacted me I was in the ward in hospital as I'd just come out of intensive care. I won't lie, the first time they came to see me in hospital I told them to go away, as I was still in denial and didn't think I needed them. I thought that my sight would get better. It wasn't until two weeks later when I started to walk into walls and couldn't really cope that I realised I needed help. I phoned the charity and Simon Brown, a veteran who was blinded in

Iraq, and Julie Shales from the Sheffield centre came back to see me. I was still pessimistic and thought they wouldn't be able to do anything but I decided to go straight from six weeks in hospital to the Brighton centre without even going home. And that's when the next chapter of my life started."

We're sure you'll join us in wishing Billy the greatest of success in Borneo as he makes a positive difference to those he mentors.



**Picture:** Billy Drinkwater gives his support to raise awareness of Blind Veterans UK.

## Armed Forces Day at the Brighton centre. By Ray Hazan OBE.

Brighton & Hove Armed Forces Day brought the biggest attendance our centre has seen for many a year. Armed Forces Day was a calendar 'must' and thanks to the Brighton Fundraising Team for organising such a day. Special thanks to Audi of Brighton, who sponsored the day.

The day was launched by the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mr Peter Field, with the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment Military Band and guest Bugler who announced a two minute silence with the Last Post.

The arena was packed with fantastic acts throughout the day including dance displays, an Air Cadets Field Gun Display and a tri service cadet Kitcar challenge. The Air Cadets were the overall winners of the Kitcar challenge and were presented their cup by Johnny Ball.

Static displays and market stalls featuring military charities, local businesses and crafters kept the crowd busy and interested. At least the rain held off but unfortunately The Princess of Wales Royal Regiment Parachute Display team, who were due to 'drop in' for lunch had to cancel due to strong winds. It was a fun day giving the opportunity for the public, veterans and families to show their support for those Service people who risk their lives on our behalf.

An enormous expression of thanks to those who made the day such a success.

Blind veteran Cyril Tasker enjoyed the day with his wife Jean and an interview with Cyril features on the following pages.

## **We all have our stories. D-Day veteran Cyril Tasker. By Catherine Goodier.**

"Strangely enough as we went over in the Horsa glider I was frightened, but I didn't think about death, as I somehow knew I would make it through. I was frightened of what I was going into, but I didn't get the feelings of fear until after the war. We had a taste of what it would be like before we landed as the Germans were shooting at us and the bullets were coming through the shell of the glider. Fortunately, we were lucky that no one was hit. As time went on I became more concerned as I saw soldiers walking along and then they just stopped in their tracks and crumpled. They'd been hit and you had to run to them as best you could with the fear that you might be shot. You could be sitting or standing, not realising that you were being watched, and suddenly a bullet goes into the tree that you're standing next to. Or you were standing in the door to a shed and suddenly the bullets started to hit the shed. Crumbs you were on the floor straight away. It's only then you realised how close the Germans were."

Landing on 6th June 1944 with the 6th Airborne Division, Cyril Tasker made it safely through the war, but mention to him 'You were right in the thick of the fighting' and all he will say is 'Cor crumbs', before he moves on. A lorry driver before the war, as he was too young to enlist, Cyril initially joined the Civil Defence Volunteers before the Royal Army Service Corps in April 1942. He was initially based at Bulford Barracks in Salisbury, transferred to Carlisle for driver training, and then posted to Northern Ireland. In 1943, he was told to report to Salisbury where preparations were underway for D-Day.

"Suddenly I was in the Airborne Division and we were preparing for D-Day, although of course none of us knew at that time. During training, I was given the choice to be a parachutist or glider trooper and I chose to go in with the gliders. We trained to load the gliders with two jeeps, two trailers and troops. It was — get the jeeps in, get the troops in, get the jeeps out, get the troops out, on it went as we prepared for D-Day, although we still didn't know about D-Day. We transferred from our Barracks to a transit camp near Southampton and still nothing was said, we didn't even know the exact location of the camp. Then suddenly one morning a soldier came around and said, 'Right then you chaps, get ready, we're going'. We didn't know where, they just put us in a three-tonne truck, pulled the shutters across so that we couldn't see out, and as there was

a guard on the truck you couldn't peep out. Then suddenly we arrived and stepped out into a field that was full of gliders.

"The jeeps and trailers had already been brought up and we put them into the gliders and once they were loaded up we were told, "You're off". We took off as a plane towed us as of course we didn't have an engine in the glider. We started to go over the Channel and about ten miles from the coast they cast us off and we were in this glider at about 40,000 or 50,000 feet to give us a chance to get in without crashing. We finished up about ten miles inland, but as we flew over we knew absolutely nothing about where we were going, nothing about what was expected of us and what we had to do. We hadn't been told anything in case the Germans captured us and we told them everything.

"We had two pilots who landed the glider in amongst so many other gliders. It took the wing off our glider and then we couldn't get the jeeps and trailers out because they'd blocked the door. We blew the tail off to get them out the back and there was firing going on all around. The Parachute Regiments were further up trying to restrain the Germans, but as shells were coming in we dug in for the night. We dug our jeeps in first and put them in on the slant so their radiators were below ground. If shrapnel went through the radiator you've lost the jeep and they always said that it was easier to replace a man than a jeep. The next morning came and we still had no idea where we had to go, and although I wasn't in charge, but as there were two jeeps and two trailers, I told the boys what to do and I took my jeep and three men and the other chap took his jeep and three men. I drove towards Ranville as we knew that British troops had taken it the night before. As we went in I saw a soldier on the lawn of a bungalow, in what we later found out had been taken over by the 6th Airborne Division as its headquarters. I didn't know that at the time and pulled up at the gateway, walked up the drive, and there was a ditch on the side, and I saw a soldier. He had a revolver on his hip and I thought, he's somebody important. As he came towards me he said, 'You're lost soldier' and I looked at him and it was General Gale, who was in charge of the Division. I saluted as I said 'Yes Sir', and then, all of a sudden, he pushed me into the ditch. I thought, what am I doing in here? And he's on top of me. A few minutes later we got out and he said, 'You haven't been in action before have you soldier'. I said 'No Sir' and he said it was a mortar bomb that landed where we were standing and that having been in action before he could tell the whistle of the mortar bomb and knew that it would be close, and that's why he had pushed me into the ditch.



"When he saw me in 1954 in Ranville at the CWGC's Cemetery he said, 'I've seen you before. Where was it?' I told him that it was in Normandy when he pushed me into the ditch and he said, 'Oh my goodness I've often wondered if you were still alive.'

"We found out from him where we had to go and it was to make ammo dumps and petrol dumps in a farm about half a mile from what is now Pegasus Bridge, but at the time was River Caen Canal Bridge. Everything came by air as planes dropped supplies by parachute and we had to go and collect them in jeeps and trailers. All the time the Germans were firing airburst shells over the top of us that killed some of our men, but we built the ammo dumps. One of the fields was full of dead cows and horses and the cows that hadn't been killed were bellowing their heads off. As the boys knew that I had worked on a farm for a bit they said, 'You've got farm experience haven't you Cyril?' I said yes as my uncle had a farm and that's where I learnt to milk cows. They said 'Go out and milk those cows. We'll watch out for the shelling.' I walked out into the field and the cows didn't move. If you approach a cow in a field it will shy away, but these ones stood absolutely still, as though something good was going to happen to them. Well it did because I milked them onto the grass, except when the boys ran out with their Billy cans.

"Anyway, we built up the ammo dumps and the petrol dumps and of course the Germans got to know where they were and Messerschmitts would come over and machine gun us and then they'd fly around and you knew they were taking photographs. They'd send them back and then within a few minutes you're being shelled again. We were constantly shelled there and they blew our dump up once and we rebuilt it. We had to look after our circumference and guards would go backwards and forwards all the time. I went out one evening with my Sten gun, through the woods walking backwards and looking from side to side, and suddenly, boom, I'd bumped into something. I turned around and it was a German who was doing the same. I thought, oh dear I'm supposed to shoot him and he's supposed to shoot me. We stood there with our Sten guns in our hands and I could see that he was older than me, and thought, what am I going to do? Then in broken English he said 'I'm fed up with this war. I'd rather be at home with my wife and children'. And from then on, we relaxed. He shook my hand and we spoke for about five minutes. I thought, how am I going to get away from him? Is he going to shoot me in the back? Am I going to shoot him in the back? He obviously trusted me more than I trusted him and suddenly he

said, 'I'm going' and he walked away. I obviously couldn't tell anyone about that until I came out of the Army as I'd have been court martialled and put in prison. It was just one of those things, I couldn't do it.

"That was still in Normandy where we had 25lb guns on the banks of the River Orne and they were shooting over the top of us to the Germans. We had the roar from that and then the shells coming the other way and it was really upsetting, but we got through it. I mean the noise from those guns going off and then you hear the whistle from the shell go over the top and you think, I hope they don't drop down on top of us. Now that I'm able to speak about it I could talk for hours as all sorts of things happened. Fun things. Frightening things. I mean when you're walking through Normandy and you suddenly walk through an open patch of wooden land and there are Germans hanging in the trees and they're dead, you know blown up by shells, and they just finished up in the trees that haunts you. We buried our boys when we could but it wasn't always possible. We had trenching tools on our kit and if you were with your mates we could dig a little trench and lay them in it and put some turf on the top, but sometimes you just had to leave them there.

"We were there for four and a half to five months and as the beech head widened we were going through towards Paris. We were probably about half way to Paris when suddenly we were told to go back to the beeches, to Mulberry Harbour, to go home for a rest. We went back and stayed at Minstead in the New Forest in a big house that was right in the village. That was just before Christmas 1944 and we met the children from that area in the village hall and promised them a party at Christmas. Then, the day before Christmas, we got a call to report to the Port of London Authority to go to Belgium as Rundstedt had broken through the Ardennes. We were gone on Christmas Day, but as there were a few men left behind they gave the kiddies a party.

"We went over to Belgium, met up with some Americans, went up through the Ardennes, took the Ardennes and then coming away from the Ardennes, went into Gendbrugge in Belgium and took Gendbrugge. A couple of days after we'd taken it we were still there and as the forward troops had moved on that gave us a rest period of about three days. I made some lifelong friends at that time when our unit was looking for somewhere to sleep, as a Belgian lady came out of her house with her husband and their four year old son, and asked one of our Officers if she could have three soldiers to sleep with her. When she later found

out what she'd said she couldn't believe it. I was one of those soldiers and we stayed with her for three days."

After the War, the family would come and visit Cyril and his wife Jean and their family in Lewes and they would go to Belgium.

Returning to the bitter battles and the courageous Allies, "The Americans were so good as going up through the Ardennes they would throw their lives away. They outnumbered us 20 to one and if there was something to be taken they'd say, 'Alright we'll take it.' They gave their lives away for us. We took Gendbrugge and went all the way through Holland and Germany to meet up with the Russians on the Baltic coast at Vismar. All sorts of things happened on the way up through Germany. We'd taken one village and we had a quiet period when we were able to rest so we found a village hall in Barem. We went in and there was a man and woman inside, like caretakers I suppose, and they offered us bottles of drink. Our Captain spoke German and he listened to them, and all of a sudden he shouted 'Don't touch that boys!' and when they tested it they found poison. The couple were taken away by the Military Police. When it was time for us to go forward we drove up through another small town and as we went in German nuns came out with trays of tea and coffee. We thought 'oh no not again' but somebody sipped a drink and they said it was alright. The nuns looked on amazed as they obviously didn't know what had happened to us before.

"We stayed at a farm for one night and there were two young girls on the farm who were about 16 or 17 years old and when we spoke to them they said, 'We'll give you all this money if you don't touch us.' They spoke quite good English and I assured them that no-one would have touched them and they were safe. The next morning, we moved on from that area, but it was upsetting they had thought that. That was towards the end of 1944 as we went through Germany. As we carried on through we came to an isolated part that we'd taken and suddenly there were about 20 Germans holding their rifles, just standing in the street. As we went up to them we thought, we're in trouble here, but they threw their rifles onto the road and said, 'We want to be taken prisoner.' Apart from the couple who tried to poison us as we went through Germany we didn't have any trouble, the majority either kept quiet or were a bit amiable. I think they were glad it was all over."

"There were good bits and bad bits. A lot of bad bits. The good bits were that I became friends with the people I served with. Not always for an awfully long time as you get shunted around and you're parted, but like the time when the boys told me to milk the cows we were all mates. Another lifelong friend was Jock Wilson, a Scotsman who carried his bagpipes everywhere. When it went nice and quiet Jock would get his bagpipes and he'd march up and down as he played and that really raised our morale. Jock stopped with us most of the places we went through the war and we became great friends and he said, 'If ever you get married Cyril come up to my place in Scotland for a honeymoon'. And that's what Jean and I did and he played the bagpipes for us. I lost lots of mates as we couldn't just dive into the ground every time a shell or a mortar came over. They would explode all over the place and once as I spoke with a young chap who was about 20, the age I was then, there were so many explosions and all of a sudden his eyes closed and his mouth stopped moving. He slumped down and I could see that he'd taken a mortar shell in his back. He was standing in front of me and he saved my life. I've thought of him a lot and he's one of the people I thought of when I received the Legion d'honneur. I think of that all the time. It's stayed with me.

"We carried on through Germany and met up with the Russians at the Baltic coast at Vismar. We were at Bismarck with the Russians when we heard that the war was ending and the mood was fantastic with everybody dancing. After that we came home and were told that we would go to Japan and we were kitted out in jungle green. The war ended just a few days later when they dropped the atom bomb and we were given khaki drill kit and sent to Palestine."

Although still unable to speak of his war time experiences Cyril returned to Normandy in 1954. "Each time I return my mind goes back to 1944. For ten years after the war I couldn't sleep and people would ask questions and I just couldn't answer them. I can speak about it now and everyone you meet who fought in the war has a story to tell."

In 1954 Cyril was reunited with General Gale when he was chosen to carry the poppy ashes from Westminster Abbey for General Montgomery to scatter at a ceremony at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Cemetery at Ranville. "It was an honour to have been asked by the Airborne Association to be part of the ceremony and I sailed from Newhaven on the same boat as General Montgomery and General Gale. In Ranville we stood near the memorial

where the ceremony would take place and General Montgomery was very formal, but as I stood there with General Gale he asked where I lived and we had quite a conversation. I was amazed when he remembered me. As I handed the casket of ashes to General Montgomery for him to scatter everything went through my mind. I thought that it was an honour to have been asked and what it meant to people and to look around the war graves and see my chums who are buried there was incredibly moving as it was the first time I had seen their graves.



**Picture:** Cyril Tasker with Field Marshal Montgomery, 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, KG, GCB, DSO, PC, DL and General Sir Richard "Windy" Gale GCB KBE DSO MC at the CWGC's cemetery at Ranville in 1954.

"I'm proud to have served and to have been a member of the 6th Airborne Division. Jean and I return to Normandy every year and she's now an honorary member. Each time we go back we meet with our old friends who include Madame Arlett who owns the Pegasus Café, and who I've known since she was just four years old.



**Picture:** Jean and Cyril Tasker. They met at a dance in Woodingdean, East Sussex, when Cyril was home on leave and Jean was Miss Woodingdean.

In finishing Cyril said, "I've known of St Dunstan's for most of my life as it was almost on our doorstep, but I never thought that one day I'd be a member of Blind Veterans UK. It's a great honour and the charity has really helped. I went to the Armed Forces Day at the Brighton centre and thought how lucky I was to be there as so many people from the war are lying in a grave somewhere. The double vision I have is a horrible thing and Jean has to constantly stop me when I think that I've put something on the draining board and it falls onto the floor, but we deal with it. Blind Veterans UK is great help to us."

## It's All About Community. A message from Chief Executive, Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

As the gates shut on the 2017 RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, it feels a little like the day after the last night of a wonderful show.

Our garden — 'It's All About Community' — was a resounding success and was loved by all who saw and experienced it. We estimated that an average of 4,000 people came onto the garden each day of the four public days, in addition to all those who visited on the three private viewing days. And thousands more enjoyed the garden from its perimeter. Everywhere you looked across the showground, Blind Veterans UK tote bags were in evidence draped over shoulders and catching the eye. And we had considerable media coverage: including prime-time television and national newspapers throughout the week. The reach that we have achieved through the week has been extraordinary.

People were attracted to us because the show garden was bold, impressive and simply outstanding in its construction. We were awarded a prestigious Gold Medal and the Best in Show for Construction Award. And they warmed to us because of the amazing support by you (and with your products selling like hot-cakes), and from volunteers and staff on the garden each day and because of the power of our message: to reach out to find those thousands of missing blind veterans in order that we can help them to rediscover their independence. Just as you have. It took two years of dedication to achieve this and I want to thank each and every member of the charity for all that you have done to assist. So many people have helped in so many impressive ways. The week demonstrated what we can do when we put our minds to it. And the huge potential that there is for us to raise awareness of and support for the charity.



**Picture from left to right:** Our Patron HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO with Chief Executive Nick Caplin CB and Andrew Fisher-Tomlin, one half of the award winning design team.

## And here's what you thought of your RHS Gold Medal Award Winning Show Garden.

The back page of this Review shows our Patron HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO with blind veterans Lewis Trinder and Darren Blanks in our show garden and the stunning willow that flowed through it. Designed by Andrew Fisher-Tomlin and Dan Bowyer the willow was used to represent a vine running through the garden to represent the strong community that is at the heart of our charity. It is a vine that embraced everyone to bring them together. Just as the family and community of Blind Veterans UK brings everyone together.

On the inside cover blind veteran Constance Halford-Thompson, a former WASB who served in Burma during the Second World War, is shown walking through the garden as around her the willow rises from the ground, embracing all who walk through its boughs. Describing the garden Constance said "Like most blind veterans I couldn't fully see it, but that didn't stop me appreciating and enjoying it. I had such fun and was so happy to have my grandson Max with me, as he is a keen gardener and we felt very privileged to be there. The people who created it are to be applauded and the items made in the craft workshop were super. Congratulations to everyone involved as it truly deserved the Gold Medal as the planting was perfection and the entire experience sublime."

Sue Eyles enjoyed the garden with her guide dog Zara as she did an excellent job volunteering and telling people about the charity that she is proud to belong to. "The garden was amazing and from all the comments it was enjoyed by everyone who visited it. It was great that the garden won an award as everyone worked so hard to create it. Hilary Fox and her team worked tirelessly yet still made sure that everyone was happy and hydrated. The team just got on with what needed to be done, always happy and always engaging with everyone. It was so nice to be able to chat to people and especially the two people who could now potentially become beneficiaries of such a wonderful charity."

Charlie Eastwood said "Jacqui and I were so pleased to have been given the honour to be on the garden as volunteers at the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. It is a memory that we will treasure. It was the perfect garden as there was so much to discover and you didn't need sight to be able to enjoy it. It must have taken so much hard work, but it definitely paid off."



**Picture:** Just part of our magnificent show garden.  
**Photo:** Phil Meech.

Two more people who enjoyed the garden were John and Elaine Cantwell who volunteered to help on the garden. They said, "It was a great pleasure and privilege to be a small part in this magnificent achievement on behalf of the charity. It was great to have been invited to greet members of the public and have the opportunity to speak to them about our great charity. It was brilliant to get to know both designers and creators of our magnificent garden and to have the opportunity to thank them as a member, for creating this great tribute to our charity and the work it carries out on our behalf. One thing became very clear talking to the public as they left, many had not known about the charity, but they left with an awareness and an understanding of Blind Veterans UK, which they will remember as they recall this beautiful garden. All the people involved with the garden over the time of the show were ambassadors for all members and Elaine and I were so proud to be a part of the team. Congratulations to all concerned."



**Picture:** Blind veterans, staff and volunteers from the Brighton centre took a day trip to enjoy the garden. They are shown relaxing in a shaded area of the garden that was designed with them in mind. Front of the picture is blind veteran Fred Tree and the Brighton centre's Sharman Collins. **Photo:** Lou Partridge, Art & Craft Supervisor, Brighton centre.



**Picture:** Sarah, Bethany and Kelly Ganfield enjoy the garden with Hilary Fox, Blind Veterans UK Member Services Manager.

To finish, Kath Jones-Romain on behalf of all the staff in the Brighton centre's Art & Craft Workshop said, "We would like to say a big thank you to all the amazing members, volunteers and staff who helped to make our fabulous array of objects for the garden. Over the last few months they dedicated hours of their time to making items that ranged from wooden bug houses and bird boxes, to sculpted Braille covered chickens and ceramic flower shaped bird baths that adorned the garden. The final results were amazing and we were really pleased to hear that all the objects were bought by those who visited the garden during the week. A very big thank you from everyone in the Brighton Workshop team."

## The 24th July 1927 Unveiling of the Menin Gate Memorial. From the August 1927 Review.

Ninety years after it first featured in the Review we bring you an account by Richardson and Gransby, two First World War blinded veterans, or as they were referred to at the time, St Dunstaners, of the unveiling of the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres on 24th July 1927.

Two St Dunstaners, namely HG Gransby and FG Richardson, have had the memorable experience of being present of the unveiling in July of the great Memorial Gate at Ypres. From both we have received the most interesting reports giving their impressions. It is to be regretted that exceptional pressure on our pages prevents the publication of these articles in full, but we are sure our readers will be interested in the extracts we give below. Ed.

"If ye break faith with us who die, we shall not sleep; though poppies grow in Flanders Fields."

Yes, indeed, poppies were growing all around on that Sunday in July, and evidences of a great and abiding faith were sensed by me as I stood in my allotted place at this most wonderful ceremony.

Although there were signs of some sorrow, there were yet more signs of pride — a great and glorious pride. There were mothers, wives, sisters and sweethearts come to do homage to their loved and remembered ones, and although a muffled sob came to my ears now and again, I was impressed by the extraordinary courage of these women. I had a taste of what to expect the day before the ceremony, when I can safely say I had to speak to hundreds of people. I could not tell you who they were except a crowd of them took us to dinner in the evening. I was not there to represent St Dunstan's — I went there with my wife who had three brothers killed in the Ypres Salient. Still, my wife and I felt proud when person after person asked if we were there to represent our beloved organisation. We had already been stopped by a lady who put her car at our disposal, and she drove us herself to such places as Hill 60 and Passchendaele. Only the press were allowed near the Gate on the Saturday, but my wife took me right inside the ropes and let me feel the names inscribed.

Next day a glorious sunny morning — a town teeming with people —

friends on all sides — every now and again a 'Hallo St Dunstan's' — people of every nationality shaking my hand. That was my first impression of 24th July 1927. Above all this the knowledge that here I had seen indeed the last of many old comrades and the last of my wife's brothers. But to come to the ceremony itself. Of course I could not see it, so I will leave it to Mrs Richardson to describe:

Mrs Amelia Richardson writes:

From 1917 to 1927 I have waited for this reunion. It was indeed a reunion to me as to many more women present at this ceremony, and although I have been present at other ceremonies relating to the war, none have left such an impression on my heart, as the opening of the Menin Gate. I, as the sister of three boys killed in the Salient, the youngest 15½, the eldest 24, have watched the growth of the Menin Gate for the past four years, and at last I have seen it unveiled to the world. I was filled with great pride to think that I was personally represented on that memorial and I was also filled with great sorrow — 'My brothers.' But I remembered that there was a greater sacrifice paid yet by some of our lads and looking to where my husband sat I tried to put away some of my sad thoughts. Then a touch on my shoulder — 'The British blinded soldier is wanted, let him pass.' We walked through the Menin Gate, and silently saluted the dead. Just then two ladies of King Albert's Court came along and took my husband and myself to His Majesty.

From this point Richardson continues and describes how he had to sign King Albert's Visitor's Book. The two ladies responsible for the presentation did not give their names, but said that no doubt they had tended many St Dunstaners, as they were nursing sisters in hospital at Ypres during the war.

Richardson concludes with a graphic description of their experiences for the rest of the day, which only limitations of space prevent printing.

Henry Gransby wrote: Nine o'clock Saturday morning saw my brother and myself at St Pancras station. Crowds were lining up to make the journey to Ypres. We had settled down to follow the crowd when suddenly one of the Messrs Cooks' officials asked the people to make way for us, and we were allowed on the platform before anyone else, excepting a disabled ex-soldier in an invalid chair. I have mentioned this as it was typical of the kindness shown to us by British and Belgians alike right through our journey. Arriving at Tilbury

about 11 o'clock we went on board and started to explore. Very soon we found a splendid collection of bunks waiting to be claimed. Promptly dumping our kits on a couple we waited events. Very soon down came a priceless group of 'old sweats' and needless to say it wasn't long before every bunk was claimed. We had a glorious time, for we felt that the boys had come together again. True, we didn't know them, but they were once our comrades and no introductions were necessary. On the whole we had a fairly decent night.

We arrived at Dunkirk about 6 o'clock Sunday morning and were marched into the Customs building. I must tell you about our adventures here, they were real funny. After having been marched in, the gendarmes locked all the doors. As time went on the old 'sweats' began to get fed up, especially as some had their womenfolk with them. So door after door was attacked and a tug of war commenced — a couple of gendarmes on the handles outside the doors and a couple of 'our side', cheered on by our supports and reserves. A deadlock however, was reached, so our staff friends altered their tactics and led the party out through a small door in the rear. It took time, but at last all were outside in the open air. You should have seen the gendarmes' faces when the parade marched past, leaving them still guarding the front doors. Still they were good sports and soon saw the funny side of things.

Having boarded the train we were suddenly brought up with a jerk when three faint whistles came from the Du Nord engine. How we all cheered! Old days — happy days. As the train went on we found ourselves getting into the old familiar areas. But what a change. New buildings everywhere; nature having also assisted by covering ugly gaps with grass and poppies. Next we rattled into 'Pop'. How old 'Pop' had altered; the ruins had been removed and smart houses and shops built up. Going on again the railway for a time followed the old 'Pop — Ypres' road. How quiet the boys in the carriage are now — nobody speaking. But the long white road speaks to us — the clatter of limbers — the rumbling of guns the march of countless feet and the chums that are always here. At last we arrived at Ypres, but what an Ypres! Gone the place as we knew it — splendid shops and hotels everywhere. Now we must push on, already the crowds are making towards Menin Gate. Getting a good position, we were much impressed with the unveiling ceremony. Others more able have described it. All that we know is that the very depths of sadness must have been reached — the mothers bravely keeping back their tears, the fathers marching stiffly but with trembling lips, and the kiddies making it a picture too real to ever

forget. After the unveiling we went exploring round Ypres, and only those who revisit it can tell the sensation that this gives. We met the Rev Gibbs and Mrs Gibbs and had a pleasant little chat. The time went all too quickly, and about half past nine at night we went back to the Menin Gate. Very few were there then. In the distance an estaminet piano was playing. Looking across the ridge, the dusk was already hiding the farthest hills from view. It was a solemn few minutes for us. The crowds had departed and we had to hurry. Brother quoted Kipling's 'Captain and the Kings depart, still stands thine ancient sacrifice.' Then we turned and leaving the sacred spot commenced our long journey back, to remember for all time the unveiling of the Menin Gate Memorial.



**Picture:** We do not break faith we you who die. The 24th July 1927 unveiling of the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres. **Copyright:** Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). We would like to thank Peter Francis of the CWGC.



## Brighton, the return. By Grace Bittan.

Last time I wrote for the Review, I had completed my Induction Week and had arrived home with a large box of equipment, which I immediately unpacked. With gadgets I just plug them in and press every button until something happens. It was just like Christmas with paper and boxes everywhere. I soon learnt to work my new toys and found life much easier. My family couldn't believe that I had mastered the gadgets as up until now I had been very anti. But needs must. Now I am back at the Brighton centre for an IT course. So this time I am typing this myself. My life has changed completely in the last year and most of it for the better. Losing your sight is not an easy thing to get a grip on and I think I was very hard on myself. I didn't allow time to grieve for the loss and underestimated my anger, so I spent a great deal of time feeling sorry for myself. Which as we all know, is time consuming and tiring. So after my first visit I tried to put that all behind me and move on. With this in mind I wrote to my specialist in Moorfields and said that I wasn't going to come anymore. The condition that I have is unusual and wasn't responding to treatment so there seemed very little point in putting myself through hope and then disappointment every month. And I can now use all my energy in learning new skills as I want to remain independent for as long as possible.

### Day 1.

I meet Matt Holland who is going to be my computer teacher. We get on well and he is very patient with me. It feels very good to be back in front of a screen and the Guide system is very easy to understand. Quite self explanatory. First learn to switch it on! I seem to have got that after a brief tour around the system.

### Day 2.

Learning how to open up a document and letter. Have written something for the first time in over a year. Can't tell you how good that feels. For the first time in ages I feel in control. Now I can write poems, and my book and save it.

### Day 3.

Learnt how to do a spell check. Although I write a lot, I am terrible at spelling.

Then we move on to email's. Phone daughter and put in her email address. And then sent her my first one on this computer. Feels like I have re-entered the world.

### Day 4.

Getting up early to have a play on the computer. Repetition is the way to go. I need to do all the things over and over again so that it sinks in. Had a few emails to reply to. I think I have that under my belt now. Went on the web. This is going to take a lot of getting used to but it's just time and a little perseverance. Found that there are a few games installed. Went onto anagrams and then spent half an hour trying to get out of the game. But I got there in the end. That will teach me not to be so nosey!

### Day 5. Now it's Lucy who takes over. Guess I've worn Matt out!

My last day. I have enjoyed myself immensely, especially meeting new people and hearing their stories. It reminds me that I am not alone any more. Also the competition does us all good. Think that I am enjoying life more as the little things please me so much. Just sending an email reminded me that I have another form of connection with friends and family, besides the phone. Hopefully when I get home I can link up to Internet shopping so if I am unable to get out for any reason, I can order food in. The fact that I will be able to write stories has brought me near to tears as I hadn't realised how much it meant to me. Now the dark winter evenings won't be so long and lonely. I can't thank my tutors enough for their time, patience and understanding. Once again my life is going to change and I can't wait!

## Paul Jacobs GM.

Blinded on Afghanistan's frontline on 20th August 2009 Paul Jacobs GM (left) was presented with the Gallantry Medallists League commemorative coins from the League's President Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) JRT Balding MBE GM (right) during a ceremony at Windsor Castle.



## Daddy and St Dunstan's. By Diana Buckley.

Before working at St. Dunstan's, now Blind Veterans UK, Lieutenant Commander Robin Buckley G.M. was in the Royal Navy after leaving Dartmouth College in the early part of the last century. He lost his sight and became a St. Dunstaner following an accident in Crete in 1941; when the Army called for assistance from the Royal Navy, as a new type of Italian explosive motor boat had run ashore and onto the beach. As the serving Torpedo Officer, he offered to help and after taking out the firing mechanism, he drove the boat alongside his ship and in his on-board workshop he was blinded by the prototype's last firing mechanism blowing up in his face. For his actions he was awarded the George Medal, which he graciously accepted from the then Monarch, King George VI.

After his accident, he was then taken to Egypt, driving over bumpy hill roads to where he received treatment in Cairo. Then after recovering in South Africa, he was kept on by the Royal Navy at HMS Vernon in Portsmouth, where he taught all he knew, until technology moved on and the Navy made him Command's Schools Liaison Officer. I believe to this day, he was the only disabled person apart from Admiral Horatio Nelson, to be kept on as a serving Officer by the Royal Navy.

He met my mother at HMS Vernon where she worked as a Wren, but she had to give it up when they married, as he was a serving Officer. She never knew him sighted and after marrying, they had four children and moved to Emsworth in Hants where I was born. Then in 1954 he retired from the Navy and we moved to London, so that he could start his new job as Public Relations and Appeals Organiser for St. Dunstan's.

None of us knew a sighted father, so it was totally normal to me that he walked both ways to and from our home, to Hammersmith underground station with his white stick.

My mother didn't drive then, and anyway she had to stay at home to look after me, aged three and my three siblings (the eldest, twins Paul and Sylvia, plus Michael who was five and a half years older than me). It must have been a hard life for her, managing us all. In those days there were no washing machines, dryers, freezers, fridges, etc to make life easier, she had to do it all by hand, but I never heard her complain one little bit.

St. Dunstan's was like a second family to me and daddy talked so kindly about it. I got to hear all about the staff there and when he first started, we used to joke about the big stick his boss Mr Stamford used to beat him with if he was late. Oh yes, those were the good old days and of course we were only joking!

St. Dunstan's looked after all issues to do with our accommodation and never interfered with our family life, but had useful facilities for families to participate in. When we were moving to London, mummy nearly got a house in Fulham, but she chose Barnes instead. In those days, it was a very non u place to be. I remember in the 1960's, a taxi driver in Chelsea saying to me, "What, go over the river, all the way to Barnes?" It was a good home, big enough for all of us and looked after so well by Mr Bridger at St. Dunstan's.

Many of our friends were also children of daddy's St. Dunstaner friends and have stayed in touch over the years. I think Esmond Knight and Jock Roston were daddy's best friends. Even Ian Fraser, later Sir and then Lord Fraser of Lonsdale and Chairman of St. Dunstan's, was a good friend and my brother's godfather. I also remember going on holiday to Wales with the Roston family and we all got into terrible trouble playing hide and seek under the stairs and breaking the home owners' precious possessions that were hidden away there!

I remember St. Dunstan's having a wonderful holiday home for children, which gave parents a well earned break and we were packed off there for many summers. I loved it. Orange juice mid-morning, dormitories and lots of activities to do with helpers all day long are what I remember most. Plus, the windswept walks to the windmill on top of the hill at Rottingdean. I remember once having to hold onto a large boy's hand, as I nearly got blown away! They were joyous times and it was marvellous that St. Dunstan's had such a wonderful facility and everyone there had something in common — they were all blind.

Remembrance Sunday each year was a real outing for me, as I used to go with my parents to the local Cenotaph, where daddy would say those immortal lines "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old" and ending with "We will remember them".

I loved going there to celebrate the lives of those wonderful men and women who died for us; and yet it always has puzzled me, how people whose lives had been changed forever like St. Dunstaner's, never got a mention. They just had to go on!

Daddy liked walking and often I would go walking with him, saying "Duck", whenever he needed to. For instance, if a low bough was in his way. When more of the family went out, I was known as the DMD (dog mess detector), as I would walk in front and point out the obstacles! The law has changed now days and it is not such a big problem, especially for the blind.

In the beginning of the 1960's my father got Amber, his first guide dog and they went everywhere together. To St. Dunstan's together each day, walking to Hammersmith and then taking the tube to Edgware Road. Then at lunchtime, daddy used to take her out for a stroll and free run not far from work, in the church yard of St. Mary's at Paddington Green. It always amused me, because a hundred years or more, before it became a built up region, an uncle of his was vicar there.

After Amber a Labrador, came Deana a cross Labrador/Retriever, both greedy! One day in the pouring rain, dad came home from St. Dunstan's all the way from Edgware Road underground station, and the moment he walked in the door he said "What has she got in her mouth? It was raining too hard to stop and find out". Well, she had obviously dipped into someone's shopping on the train and helped herself to a whole wrapped chicken and the person didn't say anything!

Unlike other things people said on the tube. "What's a dog doing on a train in rush hour?" "He's blind." To which my father wanted to say "But he's not deaf!" Or when he was walking to the dentist from St. Dunstan's and got lost. So he stopped a man in the street to ask directions. The man bent down to the dog and said "You go first left, then second right " to which my father said "The brain's up here, you know; you're talking to the eyes!" He had so many classic recounts of things like that, which I found all perfectly normal, having grown up with blindness being part of everyday life.

All that he earned went towards our education (which he felt important) and one day after breakfast, a school Prefect told me there was a large photo of my father in the newspaper, so I went to the Common Room to see. And there he was large as life, sitting on the sofa at home with Amber; photographed by the Daily Telegraph after a school exeat, when he had refused to get off the bus to go home at Hammersmith because he had a dog with him. The Conductor wanted him off, as he was frightened of dogs and the bus had to go to the

garage. My father then managed to get the law changed to allow guide dogs on buses. So the law changing was all down to him and that was probably all due to his connections at St. Dunstan's!

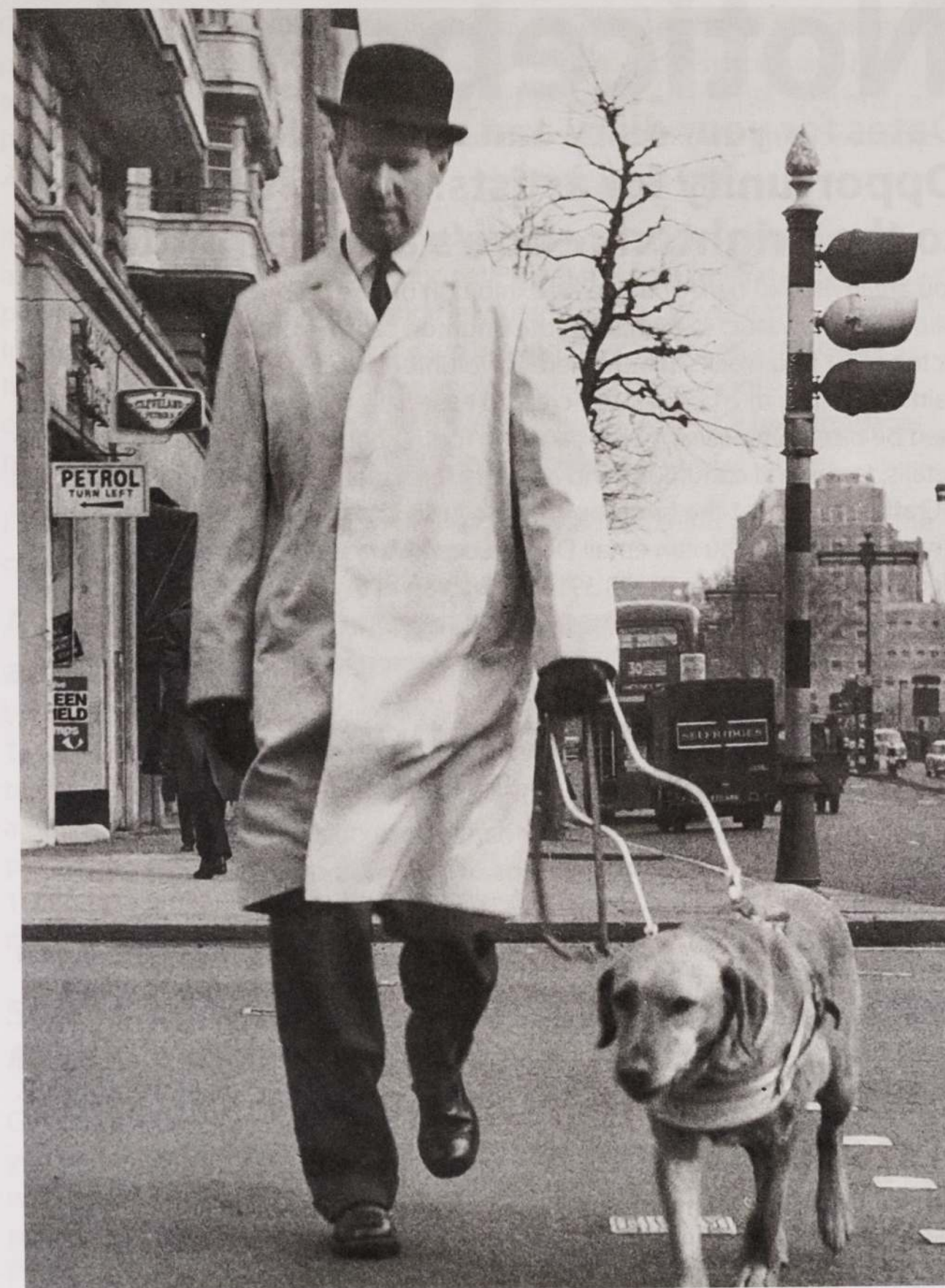
He was made President of the European War Blinded Organisation and went to Poland in that capacity, escorted by my mother. They returned the visit and the Polish came over here too, and after an official visit to Auschwitz daddy said that although he could not see Auschwitz, he could smell the death there.

Towards the end of his time at St. Dunstan's, I accompanied him to a few Reunions which he liked to go to. It was part of his job, but also St. Dunstan's was his life and as he was a very dedicated man, so going to reunions was not a chore for him and he enjoyed them.

He really liked and respected David Castleton as his assistant and knew the department would be left in a safe pair of hands after his departure. I even remember when your now retired President, Ray Hazan OBE began his time in the department: I must be getting old!

My only wish is my father had been better prepared for retirement, like he had been prepared for his life after being blinded. He loved St. Dunstan's and felt at a loose end after retiring. After all, St. Dunstan's had been simply wonderful to him; giving him all the tools and support he needed and making his life so worthwhile.

So I would like to thank St. Dunstan's for all they did for my father and giving his family a network to be part of, and now continuing to support others like my family, under the umbrella of Blind Veterans UK.



**Picture:** Robin Buckley GM during his commute with guide dog Amber.

# Noticeboard.

## Dates for your diary and useful information. Opportunity for artists. Submit your entry to the Brighton centre's art competition.

You are invited to participate in an exhibition on the theme of Animals — wildlife or domestic, to be held at the Brighton centre from Monday 9th October for two weeks. Blind veterans, volunteers and staff may enter one painting, which must have been created especially for the exhibition that will then be offered for sale by silent auction for the benefit of the charity. For more details, terms and conditions and an entry form please contact Dave Bryant, Art & Craft Instructor at the Brighton centre's Art & Craft Workshop in person, by e-mail, or phone. You can email Dave at [david.bryant@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:david.bryant@blindveterans.org.uk) or telephone him on 01273 391466. Or drop in to the Art & Craft Workshop and pick up a form. Please spread the word and encourage your fellow blind veterans, volunteers and staff who have an interest in painting to take part.

## 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](mailto:revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk) You can receive the Review in both print and audio. It is available as a large print magazine, in MP3CD, USB, email or Braille. It is also available to Sonata users through their National Talking Newspapers. If you receive the Review on a USB memory stick please return it in the padded wallet once you have listened to it. If you do not return the USB we are unable to send you the following month's edition as we are sure you will appreciate that new USBs are costly.

## Christmas bookings at the centres.

It seems somewhat strange to be talking about the Christmas period at the height of our summer. However, the centre bookings teams have received a number of calls from members asking about the arrangements for booking into one of the centres for Christmas and New Year. If you would like to put your name forward to stay in the centre over either Christmas or New Year please contact your Community Support Worker before the 30th August 2017.

This year the centre bookings team will not be able to take requests for Christmas or New Year stays directly. The community teams will then allocate places in each centre for Christmas or New Year. Once the spaces have been allocated, members who have been successful will be notified as soon after as possible. This year we are planning to contact members from 12th September 2017.

If you are offered a place but are unable to attend please let the centre know as soon as possible because we anticipate there will be a waiting list. From previous experience, Christmas and New Year stays can be an emotive subject. In previous years rumours have passed around the country that members have been given a place before the application process has closed. Both the community and centre teams would like to reassure everyone that no spaces have already been allocated for Christmas or New Year stays.

I hope you all enjoy the summer and look forward to seeing you in one of the centres soon.

## A call for you to nominate exceptional staff, teams and volunteers for an award.

We are delighted to announce that nominations for the Blind Veterans UK One Team Awards are now open! Our awards will recognise staff, volunteers and teams who have made an exceptional contribution to our charity. If you know a person or team who have gone above and beyond for Blind Veterans UK, please visit [blindveterans.org.uk/nominate](http://blindveterans.org.uk/nominate) and fill out the form by Friday 11th August 2017. You can also nominate via telephone or fill in a paper form by calling Alice Dibblin on 020 7616 8373.

## Spaces still available on the Brighton centre's Adrenaline Weekend. 29th September to 2nd October.

Get set for a buzzing weekend that's packed full of extreme activities to keep you on your toes. You need to be willing to conquer any fears you may have with heights or water, as activities could involve either or both of these! This fast paced weekend has previously involved quad biking, hair raising rides at Thorpe Park and skiing. This year we're looking for new activities at activity centres around the Brighton area to push your limits. For further information please contact the Sports & Rec department on 01273 391463 or email: [sports&rec@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:sports&rec@blindveterans.org.uk)

# Family News.

## Birthdays:

**Stefan Ciesla** who celebrated his 105th on 18th August.

**Walter Sharp** who celebrated his 103rd on 7th August.

**Huw Williams** who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 24th August.

**Marjorie Wakeford** who celebrated her 101st birthday on 4th August.

## Anniversaries:

### Platinum 70 years married.

**'Bob' & Nancy Knight** of Newton-Le-Willows, Merseyside on 9th August.

**Michael & Sybil Hansen** of Lancaster, Lancashire on 16th August.

**'Ray' & Nora Draper** of Torrington, Devon on 30th August.

**Leslie & Eunice Ward** of Poulton-Le-Fylde, Lancashire on 30th August.

### Blue Sapphire 65 years married.

**Maurice & Rhoda Bell** of Carlisle, Cumbria on 9th July.

**John & Sheila Gilmour** of York, North Yorkshire on 2nd August.

**Fred & Nora Jefferies** of Tring, Hertfordshire on 9th August.

**Bas & Phil Rowland** of Swindon, Wiltshire on 9th August.

**Raymond & Peggy Leveson** of Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire on 16th August.

**'Emlyn' & Gwen Davies** of Penmaenmawr, Gwynedd on 25th August.

**'Ted' & Betty Neville** of North Walsham, Norfolk on 30th August.

### Diamond 60 years married.

**Fred & May Bull** of Banbury, Oxfordshire on 3rd August.

**John & Marion Luther** of Chepstow, Gwent on 3rd August.

**Leonard & Betty O'Connor** of Liverpool, Merseyside on 3rd August.

**Maurice & Winifred Robinson** of Bolton, Greater Manchester on 3rd August.

**James & Muriel Kirkup** of Consett, County Durham on 10th August.

**Derrick & Chris Taylor** of Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire on 17th August.

**William 'Billy' & Shirley Stammers** of Bexleyheath, Kent on 24th August.

**Brian & Vi Taylor** of Peacehaven, East Sussex on 24th August.

### Silver 25 years married.

**'Bill' & Mary Smith** of Bexhill-On-Sea, East Sussex on 18th 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.**

**Edna Bradley** who died on 16th June 2017. She was the widow of Albert Bradley.

**Doris Brook** who died on 27th June 2017. She was the wife of Roy Brook.

**Dorothy Cadd** who died on 26th June 2017. She was the wife of Alfred Cadd.

**Dorothy Clark** who died on 11th June 2017. She was the wife of Alan Clark.

**Dorothy Coutts** who died on 14th June 2017. She was the widow of the late Arthur Coutts.

**Joyce 'Joy' Duncombe** who died on 16th May 2017. She was the wife of Ronald Duncombe.

**Winifred 'Win' Dunn** who died on 4th June 2017. She was the wife of Christopher Dunn.

**Margaret Knowles** who died on 5th June 2017. She was the wife of Jim Knowles.

**Maureen Ludlam** who died on 12th May 2017. She was the widow of the late John Ludlam.

**May Mills** who died on 18th May 2017. She was the wife of Leonard Mills.

**Yvonne Moxham** who died in 2017. She was the wife of Michael Moxham.

**Marjorie Orrell** who died on 10th June 2017. She was the widow of the late Robert Orrell.

**Barbara Parker** who died on 11th June 2017. She was the wife of Kenneth Parker.

**Edward Shepherd** who died on 6th April 2017. He was the husband of Valerie Shepherd.

**Margaret Smith** who died on 21st June 2017. She was the widow of the late Leslie Smith.

**Annie 'Ann' Tookey** who died on 20th May 2017. She was the wife of Anthony Tookey.

**Florence 'Margery' Wills** who died on 13th June 2017. She was the widow of the late Digby Wills.

**Violet Wilson** who died on 1st June 2017. She was the wife of William Wilson.

**Kathleen 'Kathie' Wood** who died on 14th June 2017. She was the wife of Leslie Wood.

# Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

**Lilieth 'Leigh' Anderson** of Whitefield, Manchester served in the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1972 to 1979.

**Arthur 'Billy' Archer** of Scarborough, North Yorkshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1953 to 1960.

**John Barbour** of Edinburgh served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1975.

**Royston 'Roy' Beard** of Hucclecote, Gloucester served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1946 to 1958.

**Pearl Bright née Turner** of Salisbury, Wiltshire served in the Voluntary Aid Detachment from 1942 to 1947.

**James Bullock** of Romsey, Hampshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1948 to 1952.

**Vincent 'Bob' Burns** of Penwortham, Preston served in the Cameron Highlanders from 1941 to 1948.

**Derek Chamberlain** of Street, Somerset served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1946 to 1948.

**James 'Jim' Cox** of Chesterfield, Derbyshire served in the General Service Corps, Army Catering Corps and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1946 to 1948.

**Ronald 'Ron' Davis** of Chichester, West Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1974.

**Mryddyn Davies** of Ferndale, Mid Glamorgan served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1942 to 1947.

**Stanley 'Stan' Davies** of Telford, Shropshire served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1947 to 1959.

**Ronald Dodkins** of Harpenden, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1939 to 1959.

**Albert Doran** of Ashley Green, Widnes served in the Lancashire Fusiliers from 1948 to 1950.

**David Egley** of Rotherham, South Yorkshire served in the Yorkshire Volunteers from 1984 to 1990.

**John Elliott** of Baschurch, Shrewsbury served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.

**Brian Eskriett** of Skipton, North Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

**Lindon Fiddler** of Preston, Lancashire served in the Loyal Regiment and the King's Own Regiment from 1952 to 1958.

**Peter Gardner** of Bradford-On-Avon, Wiltshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1958 to 1974.

**Jim Gill** of Chesterfield, Derbyshire served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1947.

**William 'Ray' Gilson** of Keynsham, Bristol served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1947 to 1959.

**Richard Gordon-Steward** of Helston, Cornwall served in the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers from 1953 to 1964.

**Harvey Grainger** of Peterculter, Aberdeenshire served in the Royal Signals from 1954 to 1956.

**Peter Grey** of Heaton, Newcastle Upon Tyne served in the Royal Artillery from 1958 to 1961.

**Basil 'Tony' Hare** of Hinckley, Leicestershire served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

**Malcolm 'Mal' Haywood-Lloyd** of Dawlish, Devon served in the Royal Air Force from 1969 to 1991.

**George Holland** of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1945.

**Peter Horn** of Cwmbran, Gwent served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1941 to 1959.

**Arthur Hughes** of Llanfairfechan, Gwynedd served in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1949 to 1954.

**Colin Humphreys** of Colchester, Essex served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1960 to 1961.

**Herbert 'Herb' Johnson** of Northwich, Cheshire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1945 to 1948.

**Gwynfor Jones** of Caernarfon, Gwynedd served in the Royal Artillery from 1955 to 1961.

**Thomas Jones** of Conwy, Gwynedd served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

**Vernon Kendall** of Southport, Merseyside served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1946.

**James Kidd** of Little Berkhamsted, Hertford served in the Royal Engineers from 1953 to 1960.

**David Kirkpatrick** of Knutsford, Cheshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1957 to 1970.

**Raju Limbu** of Basingstoke, Hampshire served in the Queen's Gurkha Engineers from 1980 to 1995.

**Robert Lucas** of Deal, Kent served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1942 to 1945.

**Malcolm McLeod** of Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire served in the Royal Military Police from 1959 to 1961.

**John McOwan** of Peebles served in the Royal Artillery, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1939 to 1946.

**Alexander 'Alex' Mills** of Horsham, West Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.



**Anthony Mooney** of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1951 to 1957.

**Emlyn Mort** of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan served in the Royal Air Force in 1947.

**Frederic Morton** of Kilgetty, Dyfed served in the Border Regiment and the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1959.

**Kenneth Nelson** of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1992.

**Raymond O'Brien** of Wallsend, Tyne And Wear served in the Parachute Regiment and the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers from 1953 to 1966.

**Owen Owens** of Llandudno, Gwynedd served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1940 to 1959.

**Ivor Parry** of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1955.

**Peggy Pawson** of Hove, East Sussex served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 to 1946.

**Godfrey 'Phil' Phillips** of Chesterfield, Derbyshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1959.

**David Pollard** of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd served in the Royal Signals from 1948 to 1960.

**Cyril Pryor** of Wells, Somerset served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949.

**John Relleen** of Ashurst, Southampton served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1939 to 1959.

**Joseph 'Ray' Rees** of Aberystwyth, Dyfed served in the Royal Signals from 1953 to 1955.

**Roy Richards** of Maesteg, Mid Glamorgan served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1951 to 1953.

**Keith Riley** of Northampton, Northamptonshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

**Donald 'Don' Rimmer** of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Royal Engineers from 1956 to 1958.

**Francis Robbins** of Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Artillery from 1953 to 1955.

**Stanley Roberts** of Blackrod, Bolton served in the East Lancashire Regiment from 1950 to 1952.

**David Robertson-Campbell** of Ipswich, Suffolk served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1950 to 1964.

**Thomas Rowbotham** of Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1954 to 1964.

**Peter Saunter** of Brighton, East Sussex served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1946 to 1952.

**Robert 'Bob' Shale** of Birchington, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1957.

**Raymond 'Peter' Smith** of Lewisham, London served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1952.

**Donald 'Don' Somerville** of St. Austell, Cornwall served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**John 'Jack' Stacey** of Maidstone, Kent served in the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946.

**Vivian Stamp** of Yeovil, Somerset served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1949 to 1954.

**Ernest 'Ernie' Stokes** of Christchurch, Dorset served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Tank Regiment from 1947 to 1959.

**John Stokes** of Clevedon, Avon served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1948 to 1950.

**Betty Storey** née Connell of Brighton, East Sussex served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1946.

**Ernest 'Ted' Swift** of Rotherham, South Yorkshire served in the General Service Corps and the 13th/18th Royal Hussars.

**John Tillyer** of Buckfastleigh, Devon served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1954.

**John 'Peter' Trenholm** of Altrincham, Cheshire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1957 to 1962.

**Neil Tudor** of Oswestry, Shropshire served in the Royal Navy from 1959 to 1968.

**Dean Twaite** of Tredegar, Gwent served in the Royal Corps of Transport from 1975 to 1984.

**Dennis Tyldsley** of Harwood, Bolton served in the Royal Navy from 1950 to 1957.

**Vincent Waller** of East Boldon, Tyne And Wear served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1960.

**William Whelan** of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

**Michael 'Mike' Wilkinson** of North Shields, Tyne And Wear served in the Royal Air Force from 1958 to 1970.

**Anne Williams née Bates** of Pevensey, East Sussex served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1953.

**Winifred Williams** of Poulton-Le-Fylde, Lancashire served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1944 to 1947.

**Robert Wood** of Darwen, Lancashire served in the Queen's Lancashire Regiment from 1972 to 1978.

**Philip 'Len' Young** of Spalding, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1973.

# 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.**

**Raymond 'Ray' Allard** of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk died on 8th June 2017, aged 94. From 1942 he served in the UK, Northern Ireland and Egypt with the Royal Army Service Corps until discharged as a Sergeant in 1947.

**George Allport** of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk died on 19th June 2017, aged 94. From 1942 until 1946 he served in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and the Royal Artillery, discharging as a Sergeant.

**Hilda Bates** of Scunthorpe, South Humberside died on 27th November 2016, aged 91. She served in England in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1944 to 1946.

**George Beavan** of Dagenham, Essex died on 4th July 2017, aged 79. He served in the UK in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1956 to 1961.

**Arthur 'Les' Brown** of Mexborough, South Yorkshire died on 17th June 2017, aged 91. He served in the Royal Navy in the USA, Australia, Singapore and Russia from 1943 until discharged as an Acting Petty Officer Radio Mechanic in 1946.

**Thomas 'Tom' Buckley** of Sunderland, Tyne And Wear died on 17th June 2017, aged 91. He served in the Royal Navy in the Far East from 1943 to 1946 until discharged as a Supply Assistant.

**William 'Bill' Burke** of Truro, Cornwall died on 1st June 2017, aged 87. He served in the Royal Navy from 1945 until 1969, leaving as a Chief Petty Officer.

**Peter Butterfield** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 13th January 2017, aged 77. He served in the Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment in Cyprus and Yemen from 1957 to 1960.

**Brendon Carroll** of Wroughton, Swindon died on 4th April 2017, aged 94. He served in the East Lancashire Regiment from 1942 in Europe and Palestine until demobilised as a Lieutenant in 1946.

**Robert 'Robbie' Clark** of Edgware, Middlesex died on 28th June 2017, aged 98. He served in the Royal Artillery in Crete and North Africa from 1936 to 1946 until demobilised as a Gunner.

**Stanley Clarke** of Camborne, Cornwall died on 30th June 2017, aged 88. He served in the Army Catering Corps in Germany from 1947 to 1955.

**George Clayton** of Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire died on 11th June 2017, aged 98. He served in the Royal Army Service Corps until discharged as a Company Quartermaster Sergeant in 1946.

**William 'Ray' Clegg** of Conwy, Gwynedd died on 26th May 2017, aged 85. He served in the Royal Air Force at RAF Spitalgate from 1952 to 1954.

**Glyndwr Davies** of Torquay, Devon died on 3rd June 2017, aged 99. He served in the East Surrey Regiment from 1939 to 1946. Captured in Singapore he was forced to work on the Burma Railway.

**Frank Doran** of Wigan, Lancashire died on 6th June 2017, aged 90. He served in the General Service Corps and the King's Regiment in the UK and India from 1944 to 1948.

**William Duddridge** of Earls Colne, Colchester died on 22nd May 2017, aged 87. He served in the Royal Artillery from 1948 to 1965 in BAOR, Cyprus and Gibraltar, discharging as a Bombardier.

**Vincent Ellis** of Flint, Flintshire died on 4th July 2017, aged 97. He served in Burma in the Royal Welch Fusiliers from 1940 to 1946, until demobilised as a Fusilier.

**John Fudge** of Bodmin, Cornwall died on 30th May 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946 until demobbed as a Leading Signaller. He was onboard the minesweeper HMS Vandyke, which was one of the first ships on to Omaha Beach on D-Day.

**John Gerrish** of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk died on 25th June 2017, aged 91. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1954, discharging as a Flight Lieutenant.

**Gilbert Green** of Swindon, Wiltshire died on 13th June 2017, aged 98. From 1938 until 1946 he served in the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery in South Africa, North Africa, India and the Middle East.

**Henry Hardy** of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire died on 25th June 2017, aged 98. He served in the Royal Artillery from 1937 until 1946 in the Western Desert, Greece, Crete, France, Germany, Sicily and Italy, discharging as a Gunner.

**Joan Howse** of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 12th June 2017, aged 96. She served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946 at Bletchley Park until discharged as a Sergeant.

**Bernard Izzard** of Ipswich, Suffolk died on 30th June 2017, aged 85. He served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Artillery in the UK and Germany from 1949 to 1967, leaving as a Trooper.

**Patrick Judge** of Harwich, Essex died on 28th June 2017, aged 85. He served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1950 to 1964 in Aldershot, leaving as a Lance Corporal.

**Norman Keable** of Burnley, Lancashire died on 24th June 2017, aged 89. He served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Engineers in Egypt and Libya from 1945 until 1948.

**Ronald March** of Norwich, Norfolk died on 22nd June 2017, aged 90. He served in the Royal Norfolk Regiment in the UK and Ireland from 1945 to 1948.

**John 'Mac' Mcloughlin** of Hove, East Sussex died on 9th June 2017, aged 93. He served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the Army Catering Corps from 1942 to 1953 in Libya, France, Belgium and Malta until discharged as a Corporal.

**Gerald Mellish** of Leigh-On-Sea, Essex died on 21st June 2017, aged 91. He served in the Royal Air Force, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and the Royal Norfolk Regiment from 1943 to 1947 in Germany, until demobbed as a First Lieutenant.

**Derek Morgan** of Letchworth Garden City, died on 7th June 2017, aged 86. He served in the UK and Zimbabwe in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force from 1949 to 1953, until discharged as a Pilot Officer.

**Iris Mullett** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 6th June 2017, aged 95. She served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in England from 1942 until 1946, discharging as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

**Roland Noble** of Telford, Shropshire died on 16th June 2017, aged 89. He served in the Royal Air Force in England from 1946 to 1948, discharging as an Aircraftman First Class.

**James 'Jim' Oxley** of Bexhill On Sea, East Sussex died on 22nd June 2017, aged 95. From 1935 he served in the Royal Artillery, the Argyll and Southerland Highlanders and the Lovat Scouts until 1965. He served in Egypt, Greece, Palestine, Austria and in the Italian campaign.

**Cyril 'George' Palfrey** of Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire died on 6th May 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946 in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, until discharged as an Acting Corporal.

**Geoffrey Parsons** of Trowbridge, Wiltshire died on 25th June 2017, aged 99. He joined the Royal Signals in 1937 and served in North Africa, France and Belgium, leaving as a Major in 1948.

**Vera Pooley neé Dunnett** of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on 12th June 2017, aged 98. She served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in the UK from 1942 to 1944.

**Leslie Powles** of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 6th July 2017, aged 92. He served in the Royal Navy in the Atlantic from 1943 to 1946 until discharged as an Able Seaman.

**George Richardson** of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 3rd June 2017, aged 95. He served in the Merchant Navy from 1942 to 1945.

**Randall 'Roy' Roberts** of Mold, Clwyd died on 28th June 2017, aged 89. He served in the Royal Air Force in the UK and Gibraltar from 1947 to 1952.

**George Robinson** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 26th June 2017, aged 89. He served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1946 to 1948 in France, Germany and Italy.

**Raymond Stanton** of Solihull, West Midlands died on 10th April 2017, aged 90. From 1943 he served in the Royal Navy in France, Sri Lanka and India, until discharged in 1946 as a Signaller.

**Joan Stilwell** of Herne Bay, Kent died on 28th May 2017, aged 85. She served in the Royal Air Force in England from 1950 until 1954 until discharged as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

**John Storey** of Rainham, Essex died on 26th May 2017, aged 89. He joined the General Service Corps in 1945 and served in the Royal Army Service Corps as a Driver in the UK, Palestine, Hong Kong, Cyprus and Egypt until 1957.

**Terrence Tanney** of Blyth, Northumberland died on 25th April 2017, aged 83. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.

**Ralph Taylor** of Warrington, Cheshire died on 5th June 2017, aged 86. He served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1948 to 1950.

**Jeffrey 'Jeff' Warn** of Barnard Castle, County Durham died on 22nd May 2017, aged 66. He served in the Royal Navy in Home Waters from 1967 to 1974.

**Ian Wells** of Lewes, East Sussex died on 1st July 2017, aged 95. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946 in the UK and Palestine, discharging as a Leading Aircraftman.

**Douglas 'Doug' White-Howles** of Colchester, Essex died on 25th June 2017, aged 96. He served in the Royal Air Force in the UK and India from 1941 to 1946, discharging as a Leading Aircraftman.

**Hetty Williams neé Moss** of Highbury, North London died on 5th June 2017, aged 93. She served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in England from 1943 to 1945.

