

SITREP

WEDNESDAY

26 January 2022

Issue#2

Welcome To SITREP EDITION 2

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TOP STORIES

VCN PRESENTED WITH MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ERS SILVER AWARD 2021

An enormous Congratulations to the VCN Team, for achieving the Silver Award in the 2021 Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.



"We are thrilled to have been awarded the ERS Silver Award. This is a significant achievement for our Charity which is not yet one year old. I hope that our success will encourage other small charities to apply for their Silver Award, as succeeding may not be out of reach just because you might be a newly formed Charity." - Dr Gill Le Page - VCN Service Director.

Dr Gill Le Page, VCN Service Director & Johanna Hrycak (JJ), Armed Forces Covenant Project Manager for Milton Keynes & Bedford Borough Council looked absolutely fabulous for attending the Silver EMERS Awards Dinner.

We are so proud of all the hard work that has been put into VCN and are absolutely delighted to be recognised. An enormous congratulations, it was truly well deserved

VCN ATTENDS THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION CENTENARY AWARDS

An enormous Congratulations to Dr Gill Le Page for receiving the Centenary Award 2021 and for becoming a Partner of the



Royal British Legion! This award was presented to Dr Gill Le Page by JJ Hrycak on the second day of the Armed Forces Mental Health Training in July of this year. This award recognises outstanding contribution to the Armed Forces and Veterans' Community and we couldn't be prouder of Dr. Gill for achieving this well-deserved award.

"Over the past two years, Gillian has worked to establish her brainchild, the Veterans Community Network (VCN), a charity covering Milton Keynes, Northampton and Bedford. She trains and oversees 'peer mentors' to assist veterans who may be homeless or struggle with mental-health or addiction issues and collaborates with the RBL and local authorities to ensure the best support. Through her experience and incredible commitment, she quickly and effectively secures excellent outcomes for these vulnerable people". - Royal British Legion.

The Veterans Community Network were very proud to have been invited to the Royal British Legion Centenary service at Westminster Abbey. We were truly honored to have had the opportunity to attend such a wonderful service.

ARMISTICE SERVICE OF REMEMBERANCE DAY

The VCN Team proudly paid their respects on Armistice Day. Thank you to those who invited us to attend your events, it was an honour to pay our respects with you.



MKUH Armistice Service of Remembrance - "Very proud to have gone to the MKUH Armistice Service of Remembrance today with veteran Michael. Truly an honour and a privilege. We will remember them". - Dr Gill Le Page.

"As well as Michael and Dr Gill Le Page supporting an event at MK Hospital, we had around 150 serving veterans/reservists/cadets at the MK Rose Armistice ceremony. We will remember them" - JJ

MK Rose Campbell Park - "Armistice Day.

Lest we forget!
Paying my respects at the MK



Rose, Campbell Park" – Tina

VCN REPRESENTED AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL FESTIVAL OF REMEMBERANCE

VCN were delighted to have been represented

by Tina Caitlin & Terry Baines at the Festival of Remembrance hosted by the Royal British Legion. We



hope you both had a wonderful time and thank you for sharing the experience with us!

MK DONS VS CAMBRIDGE REMEMBERANCE DAY FOOTBALL MATCH

VCN would like to thank the team at MK DONS SET, the RBL, Veterans & Reservists, Sea & Royal Marine Cadets and everyone else involved in organising the Remembrance Day Football Match on Saturday 13th November 2021.

We are very grateful for all the donations we received through our charity collection, an incredible £609.36. All money raised locally benefits our local Veterans, Reservists & Family Members. A great day and a fantastic turn out from our local military community.



REMEMBERANCE DAY

VCN would like to take the opportunity to thank Terry Baines for purchasing a wreath on behalf of VCN. This was laid at Leighton Buzzard on Sunday 14th November 2021.



SOCIAL ACTIVITIES & VETERANS SUPPORTING VETERANS

TEA AND BANTER

VCN were invited by Mark, of MK DONS Set to hold our first face to face Tea & Banter session of 2021 at MK DONS Football Stadium.



Everyone felt so welcome

and enjoyed themselves so much so, we held our next T&B session there too.

"A big thank you to MK Dons SET for your hospitality at our face-to-face tea and banter. Great quiz and delicious cakes!" - Tina, VCN Social Activities Co-Ordinator.

DROP-IN HUB

Our first Bedford Drop-in Hub at the North End Club went really well. Thank you to all 26 attendees who came along, to Tina, VCNs' Social Activities Co-Ordinator and to the North End Mens' Social Club for having us.



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BRUNCH CLUBS

"Wow, what a fantastic turn out this morning for our 2nd VCN brunch, 26 attendees! Thanks to everyone who turned up and supported the event, it was great to see you all. Thank you to the north end club for allowing us to use their club to hold our monthly brunch and to Tracey and her team for the delicious breakfasts." - Tina, VCNs' Social Activities Co-Ordinator

FENCE PAINTING

Tina, VCN Social Activities Co-Ordinator - 'I'd like to say a huge thank you to the lovely Colin, who I met at our VCN Bedford Brunch on October 2nd, for kindly agreeing to drive over to MK to meet me this morning, and for volunteering to paint a new gate, fence panels and shed for Arthur, a 90 year old Veteran, who was recently referred to us'.



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GARDEN CLEARANCE AND HEDGEHOG RESCUE

"A big thank you to James and Michael for volunteering to help Gill and I to load a skip with rubbish and to dismantle and remove an old shed for an elderly Veteran. Little did we know what we



would find underneath it, and that we would end up taking part in a rescue mission this morning!" Tina, VCNs' Social Activities Co-Ordinator.

MEET THE TEAM

Tina Griffiths joined VCN in February 2021 and is our Social Activities Co-Ordinator. Tina works part-time and her role is to lead on two weekly virtual Tea and Banter sessions, held each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon to address social isolation during the Covid pandemic, as well as to lead the monthly face to face Bedford drop in hub on the 3rd Tuesday of each month and the Bedford Brunch Club on the first Saturday of the month, both held at The North End Club. Tina also provides one to one social support to veterans via weekly telephone calls and home visits and has organised volunteers from the veteran community to help clear and cut back an elderly Veteran's front and back garden and paint the fence and shed for another Veteran. Tina also attends monthly meetings with members of the VCN stakeholder group. Before starting this role, Tina underwent comprehensive training including Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Level 2, Safeguarding Children Level 2, Covid-19 Awareness, Domestic Violence, and Prevent. She recently completed a Level 2 Certificate in "Understanding Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Advocacy in The Workplace" endorsed by CACHE (Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education), which she studied in her own time, to better understand, and offer help to the Veterans she meets whilst working for VCN.



VIRTUAL TEA & BANTER

Every Tuesday & Thursday Afternoon

Feeling lonely? In need of some social interaction? Want to meet new people?

VCN hold two weekly "Virtual Tea & Banter" sessions, via Zoom, every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon offering the opportunity to meet and chat to new people and make new friends.

Our sessions are very informal, and our activities include talks on various subjects (some by members of the group).

Recent topics have included:

- The War Graves in France
- Astrology
- Mental Health Awareness
- The hobby of Photography
- The National Caribbean Monument Charity
- The Guernsey Occupation

Our activities also include picture, music, and general quizzes, as well as games such as Catch Phrase, Tension and A-Z (name 26 items in a certain category, one for each letter of the alphabet!)

Why not join us for a bit of banter in the comfort of your own home? Just use the links below to join in the fun.

Topic: VCN MK/Bedford **Tuesday** Virtual Tea & Banter (VTB) 14.00 hrs

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81761082058...>

Meeting ID: 817 6108 2058
Passcode: vcn

Topic: VCN MK/Bedford **Thursday** Virtual Tea & Banter (VTB) 14.30 hrs

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81893626385?pwd=R1FzZGdvN3FEVSt5T1RmQXErLzRRQT09>

Meeting ID: 818 9362 6385
Passcode: vcn

STORIES & EVENTS

LADY IN RED

Christine Barnwell (76), and Peter Hayman (80), both from Biggleswade, said "I do" at St. Andrews Church, at Muswell Hill, N10, on Saturday 17th July 2021.



Christine, who served with the Women's Royal Army Corp for 4 years in the 60's and who worked for the London Ambulance Service, met Peter at an event held by LASRA, the London Ambulance Service Retirement Association. Peter, a member of the TA for 22 years, served with the Royal Engineers in Canada, Kenya, Germany, Cyprus and the Channel Islands, whilst working for the London Ambulance Service. Guests at the wedding included 8 of Christine's 11 grandchildren, one of which was born just a few days beforehand, so was too young to attend.



Christine, Peter and their guests travelled to St Andrews on a red Route master bus. Christine wore a burgundy red dress and carried a bouquet of

silk flowers. She was given away by her middle son, John, and Maxine, one of her granddaughters, sang Ava Maria at the service. Peter's wedding ring, which Christine had made especially, has the cap badge of the Royal Engineers stamped on the front. The new Mr and Mrs Hayman went for a mini honeymoon in Bath where Christine celebrated her 77th birthday. VCN would like to congratulate the newly-weds and wish them both every happiness in this new chapter of their lives.

ANYONE FOR TEA?

On Saturday 24th July, VCN were delighted to host our first garden party, at Ruskin Court, Newport Pagnell, (who kindly allowed us to use their facilities).



Thanks to the many bakers who donated home-made cakes, we were able to offer a fantastic selection of tasty treats, plus tea and coffee. The weather remained dry despite the forecast of rain, and



refreshments were followed by an auction of some unique hand-made items, including a figurine of a soldier, two ceramic ready planted flowerpots, and a decorated bird feeder. Thanks to the generosity of all those who attended, we were delighted to raise £291.80, and look forward to hosting our second garden party next July.

ARMED FORCES DAY BREAKFAST

In honour of Armed Forces Day, a Breakfast was held at the Captain Ridleys Shooting Party Pub in Milton Keynes. A huge thank you to Simon Wilkinson, the RBL County President, who organised the event and arranged the attendance of the Mayor of



Milton Keynes who awarded Jack with the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' & live music from the RBL band. A truly wonderful day.

VCN CHRISTMAS FAYRES

An enormous thank you to everyone who attended our first VCN Christmas Fayres this year in Bedford & Newport Pagnell. We hope you all enjoyed yourselves and had a wonderful time. We raised an amazing £140 altogether from the sales of the Christmas decorations and received a generous £20 donation. Thank you all so much for your generosity.



Thank you to the North End Social Club & Ousebank House for being so



accommodating and providing us with delicious food, tea, coffee and mince pies. We look forward to hopefully doing it all again next year!

SITREP EDITION 1 CROSSWORD ANSWERS

S	A	M	A	E	R	B	B	E	N	A	A	
T	N	F	C	E	O	M	R	I	Y	O	T	
I	E	I	G	P	A	T	E	A	V	A	A	
N	C	N	L	F	M	I	P	E	F	L		
I	I	E	O	R	W	A	O	M	A	W	A	
G	R	D	R	O	B	R	S	I	L	E	S	
E	T	O	H	M	A	P	S	P	I	T	A	
O	H	C	A	P	Z	A	G	H	O	S	M	
L	I	J	O	U	B	R	A	C	U	H	A	
S	O	R	B	E	T	A	K	L	L	O	R	
P	K	E	S	A	C	I	L	E	G	N	A	
E	I	G	N	A	M	C	N	A	L	B	E	T

JUST FOR FUN...

What is Dr Gill so shocked about? Put your answer on our Facebook Group!



CHILLI BEEF HOTPOT FOR TWO

INGREDIENTS

- 700g potatoes (peeled and sliced 1cm thick)
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1 onion (peeled and finely chopped)
- Half teaspoon chilli powder
- 250g beef mince
- Half beef stock cube
- 1 can kidney beans (drained and rinsed)
- 1 can chopped tomatoes
- 25g melted butter

METHOD

Preheat oven to 220C/425F/Gas 7

Place sliced potatoes in a saucepan of water and bring to the boil. Leave to boil for 2 minutes, then drain. (Potatoes need to only be par-boiled)

Fry chopped onion in the oil until soft. Stir in chilli powder and beef mince and fry until meat is browned.

Remove pan from heat and crumble stock cube into meat mixture and stir until it dissolves.

Add kidney beans and tomatoes and stir. Put mixture in an oven proof dish.

Arrange sliced potatoes on top in rows slightly overlapping each other. Brush with the melted butter.

Bake in the oven for 1 hour (to finish cooking the potatoes) but check through the glass door before the hour is up to make sure potatoes do not burn.

Serve with vegetables of your choice.