

SITREP

Edition 4

Welcome to SITREP Edition 4

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Industry & Supply Coffee Shop

By Sher George
3 June 2024

VCN held their first Coffee Morning at The Depot, Weedon Bec, which once belonged to the Royal Ordnance Corps and such a fascinating place to be it was. We had a great turn out with Veterans from the Army, Royal Navy, RAF and the Marines in attendance including a wonderful gentleman 90 years young who fought in Korea. Everyone was so friendly with amazing stories to tell. The owner of The Depot Coffee Shop, Neil and his manager Sarah made us most welcome so a big thank you to them.

The National Supporting Veterans Conference

By Dr Gill Le Page

12 July 2024

“Really proud to have been invited to speak at The National Supporting Veterans Conference today. A great opportunity to showcase what we do as a team but also the input we have from our beneficiaries.

When someone asks you if there is any reason why VCNs Core Values and service delivery model can't be rolled out nationally, we must be doing something right. A big thank you to all our Trustees, staff team and beneficiaries. You are what makes VCN so unique.”

Dr Gill Le Pages' presentation will be available to view on our website in due course. Keep an eye out on our Facebook page for updates.



Government
Events

In Memoriam of Terry Darlow

01 June 1931 - 29 May 2024

By Tina Griffiths

D-Day 80th Anniversary Garden Party

By Tina Griffiths

With additions by Emilie Le Page

8 June 2024

The Veterans Community Network would like to thank everyone who came along to the Veterans Garden Party in Bedford on the afternoon of Saturday 8th June 2024 to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. Hosted alongside the MS Society and the RBL, whom we would also like to thank for your support. Between us we raised £333. Thank you for your generosity, we could not continue our good work without you. The sun was shining, the U3A Ukulele band kept us entertained, there were burgers & sausages on the BBQ and plenty of cakes. It was a wonderful afternoon and everyone enjoyed themselves.



NO CASH? NO WORRIES!

The Veterans Community Network acknowledge times are changing and beneficiaries who attend our events may not have cash to make donations. Therefore, we are excited to announce that as well as cash donations, we are also able to now accept donations online via our JustGiving page. Simply scan the QR code below to be redirected to our page to make the online donations.



Alternatively, please visit:

<https://checkout.justgiving.com/c/3094665>

We are grateful for any donations of any amount and we would like to thank you for your continued support in order to keep up the good work we do for our Veterans Community.



STANDBY!

New location found for the Veterans Rendezvous Point

By Dr Gill Le Page

18 June 2024

It is with enormous sadness that due to circumstances outside of our control that the Veterans Community Network regretfully announce that we will no longer be operating the Veterans Rendezvous Point at the Cock and Pullet Ltd with immediate effect.

We would like to thank the Cock and Pullet Ltd for all their help and support over the past 18 months.

The Veterans Community Network are happy to announce that we have found a new location for the Veterans Rendezvous Point.

The address is as follows:
Springhill Farm,
High Street/Blenham Lane
(opposite Mill Lane),
Croughton,
Near. NN13 5LT.

If you would like to attend, the new site officially opened Thursday 27th June 2024. There is currently limited Parking on site, therefore, if you would like to attend, please contact gill@vcn.org.uk directly to make transportation arrangements.

Help Us Reach 350

The Veterans Community Network Facebook Page is currently at 304 members, we would love to reach our goal by next quarter. So, if you know of anyone in the Veterans Community who would benefit from our services, please share our Facebook Page:



[Veteran Community Network \(VCN\), Beds, MK, Northants](#)

Terry Darlow passed away in Bedford Hospital on 29th June 2024 aged 92.

Terry completed 2 years National Service with the Royal Engineers back in the 50's as well as serving 3 years with the TA. He was a member of the Royal British Legion, Clapham branch, and regularly attended the monthly VCN Veterans Drop-in and Brunch held at the North End Club in Bedford, where he was a well-known figure arriving on his mobility scooter.

Tina (VCN) met Terry in her role of Social Activities Coordinator & Older Veteran Engagement Lead in 2021 and in 2023 started visiting him at his home. He told her he trained as a compositor in the printing trade. When he left the army, Terry worked in the pub trade for Wells & Co Brewery and ran both the South End Hotel in Amptmill before managing The White Horse in Bedford with his wife. He then left the pub trade and became a prison officer until he retired. In his day, Terry used to play rugby for Bedford Athletics.

Terry would have been 93 on Saturday, 1st June, and when Tina visited him in hospital the week before he died she gave him a birthday card signed by members of the VCN Bedford Drop-in group who were all thinking of him and sending him their best wishes.

Terry will be missed at all the VCN social events held in Bedford as he not only looked forward to them but thoroughly enjoyed attending them.

All the team at VCN have met Terry at either the Christmas Drop-ins or annual Garden Party and would like to send our heartfelt condolences to Terry's son, Martin. Terry's funeral was held at Bedford Crematorium on Thursday 20th June and Tina was there to pay her respects on behalf of the VCN team.

Welcome to the Board!

The Veterans Community Network are delighted to formally introduce our new Trustees who came onto the board in June of 2024. We are very excited to have you all as additions to our existing Board of Trustees.

Aaron Clark



I am a highly experienced professional with a multi-expertise skill set from roles within mental health, training and delivery, programme management and supporting service leavers.

I possess a wealth of knowledge in wellbeing, mental health and leadership across several fields. I am a huge advocate for effective collaboration, holding a strong portfolio of clientele, including educational establishments, community groups and businesses/charities in both 3rd sector and commercial environments.

Being a Trustee at VCN is the perfect role for bringing together a combination of my passions and being a part of the decision making processes that ensure service users receive quality support through progressive and development provisions.

Paul Dunkley



As an introverted child, I grew up in Buckinghamshire from a working class ethnic minority background, unsure of what I wanted to do career wise and making poor life choices. By chance, I met the right person at the right time who guided me to where I am now.

I have had a successful career in the military. I joined the elite Royal Marines in 1986 and served for a distinguished 22 years. I left with the rank of Colour Sergeant. After my military career, I continued by working in the challenging custodial sector from 2010.

I enjoyed a fulfilling 10 years working as a Prison Officer in the courts and prison service environment. I eventually reached the rank of Supervising Officer. I have also intermittently worked in the security industry for nearly 40 years. I attain enormous pleasure in communicating and helping other people.

Throughout my adult life, I have constantly proved time and time again that with commitment, motivation, discipline, and enthusiasm, I can succeed at senior management level and above. I have demonstrated that you can achieve whatever goals and objectives you set yourself, no matter what barriers are placed in front of you.

I previously worked for 2 years with VCN as a Veteran Peer Mentor Worker until I retired. I found this work very rewarding and I feel privileged to be offered a role as a Volunteer Trustee within the organisation.

Looking ahead, I am so excited to still be part of the VCN organisation. I definitely believe that the work VCN accomplishes in supporting veterans, reservists and their families is truly commendable, and I genuinely want to continue being a part of it.

Gary Middleton



A career soldier, joining the Army Apprentices College Harrogate at 16 years of age and completing over 38 years' service in the Royal Corps of Signals attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Service life has provided the opportunity to serve in many locations around the world, including on operational deployments across the globe.

I hope to bring a wealth of knowledge and experience from the many varied roles held during my military career that will help maintain the strong reputation that the Veteran Community Network has already established.


I truly value the opportunity I now have to contribute towards the development of the Veteran Community Network's great work.

CALLING ALL VETERANS! HAVE YOUR SAY...

VETERANS' PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND WORKSHOP
HAVE YOUR SAY
HELP US MAKE CHANGES THE VETERAN COMMUNITY WANTS.
THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
Have your say - **YOU** can help change the system into something that works better for all!
This initiative was created by Veterans for Veterans - so hearing what matters to our service users and providers is essential for it to improve and succeed.
If you are interested in participating, please click the link below to complete an anonymous survey:
<https://vosuk.org/consultation-questions-veterans>
CLOSING DATE - 31 JULY 2024

COMPANY
of
MAKERS

Company of Makers exists to support Veterans who are struggling on 'Civvy Street', no matter how long ago they left the Armed Forces. They design and make products inspired by the British Military's influence on pop culture.
Think of Sergeant Peppers or the MOD's and the RAF roundel, then you'll be in the right ball park. From trench coats to duffle coats, khaki to navy blue, sailor collars to camouflage fabric. Military chic is everywhere, as influential as ever and as cool as ever.
The purpose behind all this creativity is to help fund making workshops for ex-Service personnel and their families who are struggling with life on civvy street.
Keep an eye on their Facebook page to see what's happening in the world of Podcasts, Talks, Workshops and Gamers.
Pat attended a talk in May by Nick Hewitt, author and naval historian on Normandy: The Sailor's Story and commented on how fantastic it was.
To find out more and sign up for the Company of Makers newsletter, please visit their website:  www.companyofmakers.com

Did you serve in the UK armed forces?
Are you a family member or carer of someone who served?

Help us guide how future services to the Veteran community are provided.
Scan the QR code to take part in the survey.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON FUTURE VETERANS' SERVICES

Or visit the website:
<https://positivebridge.media/index.php/vppp-east/vppp-feedback> THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST

HERTFORDSHIRE AND BEDFORDSHIRE
Veterans and your families, we want to hear from you! Your experiences and opinions are crucial in helping us improve the services available to you. Please take a moment to fill out our survey. It's quick, easy, and will make a big difference.
If you are interested in participating, please click the link below to complete the survey:
<https://positivebridge.media/index.php/vppp-east/vppp-feedback>
CLOSING DATE - 31 JULY 2024