



UNFORGOTTEN FORCES

Supporting Scotland's Older Veterans

Unforgotten Forces Project Newsletter No. 1 - Spring 2018

*Dear All,
Welcome to the first edition of the Unforgotten Forces Newsletter. The project has now been running for almost nine months since July 2017 and has already reached and supported well over 1300 older veterans across Scotland providing free support and services of all sorts including tackling loneliness and social isolation, advice, transport, assistance with hearing and eyesight loss, handyman help in the home, music and art at the Erskine Home and Activity Centre, comradeship, holiday breaks, help in the NHS pathway and more besides!*



Another Unforgotten Forces happy customer! Fares4Free transports Malcolm McDonald, a veteran of the Territorial Army, to the Veterans Club at Kings Church in Motherwell for "soup, cakes and banter"!

Don't know about the Unforgotten Forces Project - so what's it all about?

Unforgotten Forces is collaboration between 15 of the leading organisations supporting older veterans and their families in Scotland and is led by Poppyscotland. The project commenced on 1st July 2017 and is already providing valuable support of various types to older veterans across Scotland. Over the next three years the Unforgotten Forces consortium will continue to deliver a range of new services, as well as enhancements to existing services, in areas including advice, access to healthcare, tackling loneliness and social isolation, helping with hearing and sight loss, respite and creative activities and events for those in care settings. The consortium has been awarded £4 million of LIBOR funding from the Aged Veterans Fund to undertake this ambitious project.

The benefit is that these organisations now work closely and collaboratively together as a partnership such that any older veteran referred to any one of them is automatically considered for the range of all services available from all of them. Where appropriate and with the permission of the veteran, they are seamlessly cross-referred for simultaneous support across the Partnership. Glen MacDonald, the project's Coordinator at Poppyscotland puts it like this: "Unforgotten Forces has enabled these organisations to work together far more closely to help older veterans. As a result we now have a much more "joined up" approach getting staff of different organisations connected to each other both nationally at a management level as well as locally at the coal face. All this has resulted in far better cooperation, cross referral and mutual multi-disciplinary support for those older veterans who need support. As we used to say in the military – it's a Force Multiplier!" (The DMWS Case Study below on Page 6 is a perfect example of this!)

Unforgotten Forces Project Launched by the Scottish Veterans Commissioner

Scottish Veterans Commissioner Eric Fraser formally launched the Unforgotten Forces project at a special event at the Legion Scotland Club in Grangemouth on Wed 18th Oct 2017 attended by almost 100 individuals from numerous 3rd Sector military and non military charities plus statutory organisations which support military veterans across Scotland.

Speaking at the launch, which featured a fine performance by a singer Colin Bryce & pianist Gina Baker from Music in Hospitals & Care, one of the Unforgotten Forces partners, Mr Fraser said: "The Unforgotten Forces project is a very welcome collaboration between several organisations that provides real support on many of the issues faced by our older veterans today, such as health, isolation and loneliness.



Scottish Veterans Commissioner Eric Fraser speaks at the launch of the Unforgotten Forces Project

"I know from experience that in serving with the Armed Forces you become part of a large family; leaving that cocoon can be daunting in both the short and long term. I hope many of the projects that will be funded can help bridge that gap by providing both practical and emotional help to those that need it. It is a privilege to launch Unforgotten Forces and I wish the project, the organisations behind it and the veterans it will serve every success for the future."

Another high-profile supporter of Unforgotten Forces is the star of BBC comedy Still Game, James Martin, who visited the Erskine

Glasgow Nursing Home to help publicise the project. James, who spent seven years in the Royal Navy having joined up in 1949, said: "It's great to see that there is proper and lasting help in place for our older veterans. The funding that has led to the formation of Unforgotten Forces will prove vital as we do the utmost to look after those who served our country with such pride, bravery and distinction."

Right: James Martin meets older veterans at the Erskine Glasgow Nursing Home to help publicise the launch of Unforgotten Forces.



So which organisations are in the Partnership and what do they do?

Short descriptions of the contribution each Unforgotten Forces partner makes for older veterans plus news from some of them are spread through this Newsletter and the first one is as follows:



Our service provides support to older veterans, their families and/or carers on issues surrounding their hearing loss or tinnitus and offers a pathway of support alleviating concerns over their hearing loss. For more information click here:

Action for Hearing Loss Scotland

Email: hearing.forces@hearingloss.org.uk Call: 0141 341 5330

Action on Hearing Loss launches its "Hearing Forces" Service



Above: Veterans Elizabeth Mitchell & William Smith at the AOHL Unforgotten Forces "Hearing Forces" launch at Edinburgh Castle in December.

Hearing Forces is a Scotland-wide service provided by Action on Hearing Loss. They offer advice & support to veterans aged 65 or over, their families & carers with hearing loss or tinnitus.

Hearing loss is a common health issue in the armed forces. Many veterans have been exposed to loud noise from gun fire, engines and other machinery, and explosives. The 2014 'Lost Voices' report, collated by the Royal British Legion with support from Action on Hearing Loss, found that veterans under the age of 75 are around three and a half times more likely to experience hearing loss the general population. They offer:

- Hearing aid maintenance and support
- Information and advice
- Advice on useful equipment to improve every day life (e.g. amplified Telephones, personal listeners)
- Support both before and after hearing aids have been fitted
- Peer-support groups
- Referrals to other Unforgotten Forces partners, Action on Hearing
- Loss Scotland services and other helpful organisations
- The opportunity to volunteer.



Our service provides information, friendship and advice through our helpline 0800 12 44 222: including on issues such as care, benefits, housing, legal issues, veterans' rights and services. Our community development work involves training member groups and linking to opportunities and digital inclusion. We are also engaged in Policy and influencing work. For more information click here: [Age Scotland](#)
Call our Helpline: 0800 12 44 222
Contact us through our [online enquiry form](#).



The Erskine Activity Centre provides daily activities to older veterans living at home within Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire to benefit veterans affected by loneliness and social isolation. Activities include cookery, woodwork, art, music, computing, and exercise. Transport and refreshments are provided. Contact Debs Dickson, Erskine Reid Macewen Activity Centre Manager
Tel: 0141 814 4535
E Mail: debra.dickson@erskine.org.uk



The ILM Highland Veterans' Handyperson service provides small repairs/handyperson work to the homes of older veterans. We provide maintenance, telecare, home security and safety measures that will enable the veteran to have more confidence in their home. The project is based in Alness north of Inverness and covers the Highland and Moray areas. For more information click here: [ILM Highland](#)
Call: 01349 884774
E-mail: handyperson@ilmhighland.co.uk

ILH Highland is based at Alness just north of Inverness and proudly launched their Highland Veterans Handyperson Service at a special event in November. Their newly appointed Veterans Handyperson, Alec Pole, has already been very active in the Moray, Nairn and Inverness areas, meeting and liaising with various organisations such as Legion Scotland, Age Scotland and Regimental Associations etc. Since then there has been a great deal of interest in this new service, good working relations have been forged with other Unforgotten Forces partners working in the north of Scotland such as Action on Hearing Loss and Scottish War Blinded and as a result many older veterans have already been referred and received free assistance with various types of home maintenance.

The type of jobs that can be done include: fitting handrails, locks, smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors/alarms, fitting security chains and door peepholes for added security, changing light bulbs and tap washers and moving furniture within homes.



A man with a van! The Highland Veterans Handyperson, Alec Pole, along with his ILM Highland colleagues Claire Weaver (left) and Monica Thomson (right).



Advising Older Veterans: The Armed Services Advice Project provides information, advice and support to the Armed Forces community, through Citizens Advice Bureaux. We work with organisations supporting older people, reaching out to older veterans, and work to help people access the support they need. For more information click here:

[Armed Services Advice Project – Citizens Advice Bureaux](#)

Call: 0808 800 1007

To find your regional contact please [click here](#).

Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian recently welcomed local organisations to a launch event in Livingston for the Unforgotten Forces service, promoting both the wider services on offer via the



Claire Williams, Armed Services Advice Project Coordinator. explains the service at the launch event.

Unforgotten Forces partners and the support they are able to offer to older veterans through the Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP). The ASAP advisers in the Livingston bureau cover the whole of Edinburgh and the Lothians, providing specialist advice, information and support on topics including benefits, debt, access to housing and charitable support, helping people make applications, complete forms

and much more besides. ASAP advisers will see people in the bureau, and for those

unable to travel to a bureau, can also arrange to visit them at home. Face to face support from ASAP is available through bureaux in ten regions across Scotland: Aberdeen and +- Aberdeenshire; Argyll and Bute; +-Edinburgh and the Lothians; Falkirk; Fife; Inverness, Moray and Nairn; Lanarkshire; Renfrewshire; Stirling, Clackmannanshire; Tayside. They also have a Freephone helpline 0808 800 1007, covering all of Scotland.



DMWS deliver a holistic medical welfare service, providing emotional and practical support for older veterans, their families and carers, in health care pathways. We enable early supported referrals to appropriate local support and services thereby improving recovery, wellbeing, discharge planning, independent living, and reducing social isolation. For more information click here: [Defence Medical Welfare Service \(DMWS\)](#)
Call Andy Riach on 07377 722641 Email; ariach@dmws.org.uk

Unforgotten Forces - Working Together Successfully to Support Older Veterans



Ken and his wife Gina

When 65 year old veteran Ken lost his eyesight temporarily, he and his wife Gina found help from several organisations, including the Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS), within the Unforgotten Forces Project. Ken served in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers for 4.5 years before he left the service in 1977. After his army career Ken and his wife Gina successfully ran their own pub. Unfortunately, Gina developed Myelopathy, a degenerative neurological condition related to the spinal cord, when she had an accident in 2008 which

leaves her in a lot of pain. Her condition means that she uses a mobility scooter and is partly dependent on Ken to help her around the house. Despite the help, Gina had several falls and there is a need for house adaptations to make it safer.

A few months ago Ken had to go to hospital for routine treatment to help with his deteriorating eyesight (Macular Degeneration). Unexpectedly, Ken lost his eyesight temporarily after the treatment. Gina contacted SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, to find out what kind of support is available to them. SSAFA advised Gina to contact Fares4Free, a charity that encourages taxi drivers to give up to 4 of their fares every month to help veterans, so that she could visit Ken in hospital. SSAFA also provided some future transport funding if they needed to return to hospital. Fares4Free referred Gina to the Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS).

The DMWS Welfare Officer Emma, a veteran herself, soon established a good rapport with Ken. Her early assessment of the couple's wellbeing needs found that Ken was understandably frustrated about his recent medical treatment which meant he could no longer drive and go out, making him feel isolated and depressed. His illness had a direct effect on his wife Gina, who started to feel stressed and upset.

How did DMWS Welfare Officer Emma help?

- She provided emotional support to both Ken and Gina by offering an impartial listening ear which helped them cope with their stress and feeling of uncertainty
- Emma then suggested a few befriending services and breakfast clubs for Ken to join to help him feel less isolated
- Gina contacted the community connector upon Emma's suggestion, to find suitable support groups to improve her mental wellbeing
- On a practical side Emma has been dealing with the council to arrange an occupational therapy assessment of the house. She attended the assessment and feasibility study with the council. Adaptations to the property will be made by the end of the summer to help Gina to move around the house safer and independently.
- Emma also liaised with the council to get specialist equipment including a step and a grab rail for the bedside to assist her getting in and out of bed.



Gina now feels happier and safer at home. The house adaptations will reduce the risk of falls and hospital admissions. She said: "I feel guilty when Ken stayed at home instead of going out, to be here when I need him. The house adaptations will give us both some independence back."

To help with their recovery DMWS are also delighted that Fares4Free referred the couple to Poppyscotland's Break Away service which has given them funds towards a holiday plus spending money.

Fares4Free, SSAFA, Poppyscotland and our welfare officer Emma have made a real difference to the Cox family. Ken said: ***“I don’t know what I would have done without Emma from DMWS and the Unforgotten Forces project. If it wasn’t for the initial contact with SSAFA, we would not have had any support. I hope more people will hear about the project to receive this fantastic support.”***



Legion Scotland’s community support & comradeship service is effective for combating loneliness & isolation. Veterans become engaged with the community through befriending & comradeship activities that are tailored to meet their needs. The focus of comradeship events is to get veterans to mix with fellow veterans. For more information click here: [Legion Scotland](#)
Call 0131 550 1560 or [click here](#) to complete an online form.



Fares4Free is a charity (SCIO) that coordinates and provides free transport by asking taxi drivers to give up to 4 fares per month to help us help Veterans access important services and combat loneliness and isolation. Our aim is to fight loneliness and isolation one mile at a time. For more information click here: [Fares4Free](#)
Contact David Gibson on 07708 299399 with a follow up e mail to: info@fares4free.org



The recent snowy weather did not stop David Gibson at Fares4Free providing essential travel for older veterans! Well done David!

Fares4 Free has certainly hit the ground running since the start of the Unforgotten Forces Project. Having begun with a target of providing 500 free trips to older veterans for

essential transport in the first six months, this was exceeded and no fewer than 517 trips were made by David and those other taxi firms who work with him donating some free trips for older veterans each month. Beyond that Fares4Free provide a much wider service than is suggested by just those figures. In addition to driving veterans to and fro for essential travel, through getting to know his clients and understanding their circumstances wider needs, David also helps and supports them in many others way too – everything from just providing some company and banter in the car to referring them for additional support to other Unforgotten Forces partners. You only need to see how often Fares4Free crops up elsewhere in this newsletter to see that!



Luminate works with Erskine on an artist in residence programme in Erskine's care homes. Two artists collaborate with veterans and their spouses over a period of three years, to create works of art in different art forms which will be shared with the care homes' communities. For more information click here: [Luminate](#) Call: 0131 668 8066 Email: info@luminatescotland.org



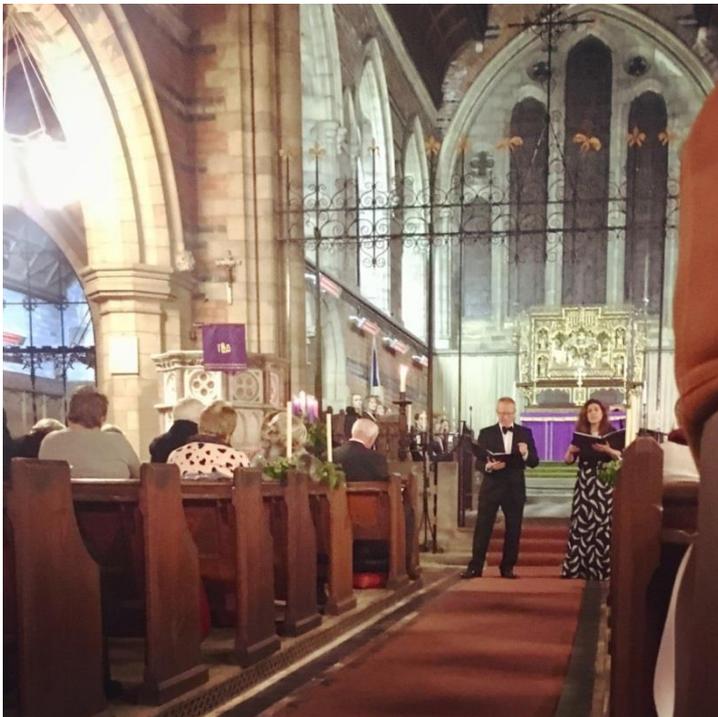
The Scottish Older People's Assembly (SOPA) exists to give a strong voice to older people about their concerns and experience of life, raises issues about age inequalities and identifies issues that worry the older population. It conveys messages direct to Scottish and UK Governments & supports policy that has a positive impact on later life and challenges. For more information click here: [Scottish Older People's Assembly](#)



Music in Hospitals & Care's project Play it Again SAV enables older veterans to design musical programmes full of their own personal choices. Professional musicians work with people living in care homes for veterans to co-produce playlists which will ultimately be played live for them to enrich their lives and enhance wellbeing. For more information click here: [Music in Hospitals & Care](#) Call: 0131 556 5848 Email: playitagainsav@mihc.org.uk

Music in Hospitals & Care (MiHC) ran a much enjoyed series of music sessions at Scottish War Blinded's Hawkhead Centre in Paisley throughout January. The sessions were led by MiHC's singer/guitarist John Davidson, and culminated in a quality performance from the members and staff involved at their Taste of Burns lunch on 24th January. The project brought together 19 veterans and staff to learn Burns and other well-loved Scottish songs and tunes, with several members picking up new vocal skills and learning musical instruments. Feedback from members afterwards told how they found sessions to be fun and educational. Additionally, they enjoyed taking ownership of the sessions resulting in a fantastic, inclusive musical extravaganza!





Left: Singers of “Quartet Vocalise” from Music In Hospitals & Care perform at the SSAFA Forth Valley Branch “Christmas Cracker” Fundraising event in the Holy Trinity Church, Stirling in December to help publicise support available for older veteran through Unforgotten Forces.



Poppyscotland provides life-changing support to the serving and ex serving Armed Forces community. Our “Break Away” service provides bespoke holiday packages for older veterans and their families to counter loneliness and isolation and increase well-being. For more information click here: [Poppyscotland – Break Away Service](#) Call: 0131 550 1557 Email: breakaway@poppyscotland.org.uk

Poppyscotland recognises the boost a holiday can give to a person’s health and wellbeing. Their new Break Away service is aimed at those older veterans who would benefit from a holiday, whether they may be coping with ill health or bereavement, or for those who just need a change of scene and some new company. The Break Away service is available to veterans aged 65 years and older, with an accompanying spouse, partner or carer if they wish. The service runs throughout the year and breaks can be taken anywhere in the UK.



Since launching the service in Oct last year, 63 older veterans have already applied and been approved to receive a Break Away holiday. So far one couple have enjoyed a city break to London and taken in a West End show, another veteran has enjoyed the sights and made some long-lasting friends on a coach tour of the Scottish Highlands designed for solo travellers, while another beneficiary said he felt like “a new man” after enjoying a few days in Oban. The majority of our veterans are waiting until the warmer weather to go on their holiday and summer breaks have been booked as far away as Bournemouth and Jersey!



Teaming up with transport partner Fares4Free the Poppyscotland Break Away Coordinator is currently working to arrange an all expenses paid break to Gairloch for four WW2 Royal Navy veterans. These older veterans themselves saw service on the Arctic Convoys and will be travelling to Loch Ewe (from where the convoys sailed) to attend the annual commemoration near Gairloch to remember those sailors who lost their lives during service on the Arctic Convoys to Murmansk and Archangel in Russia.

If you would like to know more about the Break Away service or to make a referral, please visit the Unforgotten Forces website or contact the Breaks Coordinator on 0131 550 1589.

Applications are considered on the basis of welfare need and means, and you must be 65 years or older.



Scottish War Blinded (SWB) supports veterans with a visual impairment that impacts on their independence. The sight loss does not need to be as a result of their service. With two Activity Centres and Outreach Teams, SWB works throughout Scotland and provides specialist equipment and training to maintain independence, financial & practical help to improve quality of life & social opportunities. For more information click here: [Scottish War Blinded](#) Call 0800 035 6409 or click [here](#) to complete an online form.



SSAFA is the UK's oldest military charity with branches in all parts of Scotland. With an extensive network of Volunteer Caseworkers who visit referred veterans in their homes to assess their needs, SSAFA acts as a catalyst for coordinating financial & practical support. SSAFA's Branches will identify and refer older veterans to appropriate Unforgotten Forces Partners. For more information click here: [SSAFA](#)



UWS supports the service delivery of the project by undertaking an action-based academic evaluation of the experiences of both service providers and their client groups: quality and referrals between services, examples of good practice and areas where there may be gaps in the opportunity to develop the services further. For more information click here: [University of West of Scotland](#)



For further information about the services available for older veterans via the Unforgotten Forces project and how to make referrals for support and advice to any of the partner organisations please click on links to the partners' websites or use the contact details shown above or visit the Poppyscotland website via the following link:

<http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk/get-help/unforgotten-forces/>

For any general and policy related enquiries about the project, or if you would like copies of our hard copy leaflet, a face to face presentation for your clients and staff team, or wish any further information please contact the Unforgotten Forces Coordinator, Glen MacDonald, via:

E mail: g.macdonald@poppyscotland.org.uk or Tel: 07458 014362.

We look forward to hearing from you!



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FORCES**

Supporting Scotland's
Older Veterans