



UNFORGOTTEN FORCES

Supporting Scotland's
Older Veterans

Unforgotten Forces Newsletter No. 3 - Autumn 2018

Welcome to the Autumn 2018 edition of the Unforgotten Forces Newsletter. The project has been delivering a variety of services in Scotland now for almost 18 months and is very well established having clocked up over 5000 episodes of support for older veterans aged 65 and above. The assistance provided has included free services of many types such as help with tackling loneliness and social isolation, advice, transport, support with hearing and eyesight loss, handyman help in the home, music, art at Erskine's homes and many other activities at Erskine's Reid Macewan Centre, social support, holiday breaks, help in the NHS pathway and more besides! A key feature of the project is the close joint working between its various partner organisations with many of those helped receiving assistance for multiple needs from two or more partners. You can read all about some of this great work here and this edition of the newsletter includes the following features and news updates:

- **Hearing Forces Projects expands to Aberdeen**
- **Comradeship pilgrimage to the National Memorial Arboretum**
- **Break Away holidays for older veterans - what did the November holiday makers say?**
- **Unforgotten Forces' Partnership working comes to the rescue!**
- **A day at sea with the Royal Navy for older veterans**
- **Veterans' Mental Health - Dumfries & Galloway Citizens Advice Bureau Initiative.**
- **Nautilus - Support for Veterans of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Merchant Navy deployed in support of HM Forces.**

HEARING FORCES PROJECT EXPANDS TO ABERDEEN

Angela Paton, Hearing Forces Project Officer with Action on Hearing Loss Scotland, delivered the service's first drop-in support session in Aberdeen on Friday 19 October 2018 at the Gordon Highlanders Museum. The event was well promoted on the Hearing Forces social media, the Museum's website and social media and with the Unforgotten Forces partners in the area.



MSP Maureen Watt (centre) along with Angela Paton (right) and veterans using the service in Aberdeen.

Local MSP Maureen Watt MSP was invited along on the day to see the service in action. The event was very successful with 5 new older veterans attending and registering with the service.



Angela Paton, Hearing Forces, helps older veterans to adjust and use their hearing aids to best effect.

As is always the case, everyone turned up at the same time requiring Maureen Watt MSP to kindly assist with the completion of registration paperwork and help with the teas and coffees – thank you Maureen!

This however was not the biggest story of the event. It transpired that two of the veterans had not seen each other for 75 years - since 1943! Ronald Coull was one of two veterans brought along by Ingrid Penny of Unforgotten Forces partner Scottish War Blinded whilst James Glennie came along with his son and daughter-in-law. As well as getting their hearing aids maintained and support with their hearing loss, Ronnie and James were able to catch up and reminisce about their serving days during WW2!

Maureen Watt MSP was so impressed with what she saw that she subsequently lodged a very complimentary parliamentary motion about her visit which was supported by 14 other MSPs.



To find out more about Hearing Forces: telephone: 07388 227407 or email: Hearing.Forces@hearingloss.org.uk or [click here](#)

COMRADESHIP PILGRIMAGE TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

On 17th October 2018 a group of veterans gathered at New Haig House, Edinburgh to depart on a pilgrimage to The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. Legion Scotland's recently appointed Veterans Community Support Manager Tommy Douglas organised the trip and it wasn't difficult to fill the spaces from the many veterans he and his colleagues and partners had engaged with through the Unforgotten Forces project. The pilgrims included representatives from all three Services and they even embarked their very own Piper.



With a combined age of 2,090 years between them the 30 veterans did not know each other when they left, but by the time they reached the first 'check point' they had started to bond and the inter service rivalry had kicked in! Tommy, supported by Veterans Community Support Coordinators, used the journey to engage with the group and tell them more about the Unforgotten Forces project in support of older veterans. After arrival and checking into the hotel the group joined together for their evening meal before retiring and preparing for the following day.

Day two started with a hearty breakfast and then 'The Pilgrims' were inspected before boarding the coach for the short transfer to the Arboretum. Everyone looked the part and the weather was perfect with the sun shining brightly. On arrival the group were met by a former Wren, one of the 300 volunteers who work at the Arboretum, for an informative briefing before the group headed to the Millennium Chapel of Peace and Forgiveness for the 11am service which included a solemn and poignant Act of Remembrance.



The rest of the day was spent visiting the many wonderful memorials including the imposing Armed Forces Memorial where Tommy Douglas coordinated the groups very own service, which included a period of silence, wreath laying and piping. The gathering attracted other visitors, and during the silence you could have heard a pin drop! Famous Scottish pipe tunes such as Flowers of the Forrest and Black Bear filled the air and the Arboretum became a part of Scotland for the duration!

The National Memorial Arboretum means so much to so many people but one fact we were able to take away, is that those who paid the ultimate sacrifice will never be forgotten. Lest We Forget

For more information about Legion Scotland's Veterans Community Support service call 0131 550 1586, e mail: support@legionscotland.org.uk or [click here](#)



Royal British Legion Scotland: at the heart of the Scottish veterans community

BREAK AWAY HOLIDAYS - WHAT DID THE NOVEMBER HOLIDAY MAKERS SAY?

Poppyscotland's Break Away Service is in full swing with approximately 100 older veterans and their spouses, partners or carers having enjoyed a holiday break so far. The feedback has been excellent with many of those benefitting saying that they were delighted with their holidays.

Mrs & Mrs Kelso recently returned from their break at Crathie Cottages in a peaceful location by the River Dee with an amazing view through the trees to Balmoral Castle! They commented “.....this week away has made such a difference to our life. My husband was so relaxed that he did not suffer from any of his mini strokes. It was a fantastic week, fantastic place and we had a lovely week away. Everyone commented on how well I looked when I came home.”

Mr & Mrs Allardyce also had a break at Crathie Cottages and said that the place was perfect. ‘Both of us had a lovely, relaxing time away from the day to day routine. The staff were amazing and nothing was too much for them’.



Mr & Mrs May went to Centre Parcs said that they had a fantastic time. ‘We enjoyed the peace and quiet watching the wildlife. It was lovely just to get away on a holiday.’

Ms McPake used her break to visit Arran with her dog where she said that she was treated like a VIP stating that the trip created so many happy memories that she didn’t want to come back and plans another trip there if she wins the pools! She said “I do appreciate everything and thanks so much. If I could knit a holiday I would knit this one!”



To find out more about the Break Away service for older veterans call 0131 550 1557 or email:

breakaway@poppyscotland.org.uk or [click here](#)

UNFORGOTTEN FORCES’ PARTNERSHIP WORKING COMES TO THE RESCUE!

One of Poppyscotland’s older veteran Break Away clients who is 96 told recently told how the Unforgotten Forces partnership came to her aid unexpectedly when she had a fall in her home while answering the door to a courier. When her volunteer befriender from Legion Scotland telephoned coincidentally at that very moment to say he was on his way to visit he got a shock when the distressed courier answered and ask him to rush over straight away to help! On arrival he responded well

and was able to keep the lady calm and re-assured until professional help arrived. Now recovering well, Mrs Sim told Poppyscotland staff how much she looks forward to the visits from Legion Scotland's volunteers befrienders throughout the month. She said that they are a great support to her as she is unable to get out and feels lonely and isolated in her flat. However, she said 'I never expected them to take on the role of super-hero!'

A DAY AT SEA WITH THE ROYAL NAVY FOR OLDER VETERANS

Erskine Reid Macewen Activity Centre veterans recently enjoyed a trip down the River Clyde courtesy of the Senior Service! The Faslane Patrol Boat Squadron hosted a group of nine people from the centre and HM Ships TRACKER and RAIDER took them on a waterborne tour. For one veteran, 92 year old Barney Roberts, the trip was particularly poignant. One of the last times Barney stood on the deck of one of Her Majesty's Ships on the Clyde was in 1945 when he was part of a convoy of 70 ships bound for North Africa. HMS RAIDER's LET(ME) David Gibson said: "It was a real pleasure to host these



veterans on board and to share stories from the Second World War up to the present day." The trip came about when HMS TRACKER's Executive Officer, Chief Petty Officer Steve Bell, was in conversation with former shipmate Jason Fearnley. Jason runs the Veterans Woodwork Group for the Erskine Charity and thought it would be a good idea to take some veterans "doon the watter". Centre Manager Debs Dickson, who

accompanied the veterans during the trip, said "Our day out with the Faslane Patrol Boat Squadron was definitely a highlight. It was magical to witness World War Two Royal Navy veterans and currently serving personnel share their experiences within the military, even if the

veterans couldn't believe the luxury the shipmates experience on a modern warship."

Right: Veterans of Erskine's Reid Macewan Center with members of the ships' companies of HM Ships TRACKER and RAIDER at Faslane Naval Base.



For more information about Erskine's Reid Macewan Activity Centre for veterans
Telephone: 0141 814 4534, Email: debra.dickson@erskine.org.uk or [click here](#)

VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH - DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU INITIATIVE

In an effort to better equip Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Bureaux to support veterans suffering mental ill health, Citizens Advice Scotland's Armed Services Advice project (ASAP) recently arranged a Mental Health First Aid for the Armed Forces Community course for 14 members of their staff in conjunction with the Unforgotten Forces project. Staff and volunteers from across their network (Dumfries, Annan, Castle Douglas and Stranraer) attended the two day course along with the local Branch Secretary of our Unforgotten Forces partner SSAFA and a serving Warrant Officer from the Regular Army.

As well as giving them an insight into military culture, life and ethos, the course educated them about the main forms of mental ill health most commonly experienced by veterans, how to spot the signs of their onset, how to provide first aid help for those suffering, connect them with professional help and support them through recovery. A key aim of the course is also about helping to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness that can still sometimes be present amongst the Armed Forces community.

Jane Rutherford, ASAP Volunteer Support Officer, commented "Those attending benefitted hugely from their recent MHFA training. Comments at the end made it clear that everyone felt more informed and confident in identifying and helping people with a variety of mental health issues. In a bureau setting, where clients often find

themselves in crisis, this knowledge will prove invaluable and everyone was delighted to have been given the learning opportunity”.



Dumfries & Galloway Citizens Advice Bureaux staff get to grips with Mental Health First Aid training for the Armed Forces Community.

For more information about the Mental Health First Aid Armed Forces Community course [click here](#)



For more information about Armed Services Advice Project – Citizens’ Advice Bureaux Call: 0808 800 1007
To find your regional contact please [click here.](#)

NAUTILUS – SUPPORT FOR VETERANS OF THE ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY (RFA) AND MERCHANT NAVY

Although Nautilus is not a member of the Unforgotten Forces partnership, it is one we are linked with and their services are very much worth highlighting for older veterans of the RFA and Merchant Navy who have deployed at sea in support of HM Forces during their careers.

The service started in the Merseyside area in 2010 and, with the support of Seafarers UK, expanded to the Hull and Southampton areas in 2013 and in 2017 and now also exists in Glasgow. In a nutshell their caseworkers can ensure that retired seafarers and their dependants are accessing all the state benefits they are entitled to and they also provide advice on other sources of financial help as well as guidance on staying fit and healthy in retirement. They provide information to help clients access all the services they are entitled to and this might include applying for Nautilus Welfare Fund grants as well as helping clients find other organisations which provide independent living support. The Caseworker service is free and they visit clients in the privacy of their own homes. In 2017, the Caseworker service assisted more than 424 retired mariners and their dependants across the UK and secured a record

amount of £955,000 in benefits and grants for them.

Their Glasgow based caseworker in Scotland is Iain Lindsay and is he is available to visit eligible veterans in the Glasgow area and up to an hour's travel from Glasgow. He does however also support veterans elsewhere in Scotland by telephone, e mail and skype etc.

For more information about the services available from Nautilus e mail Iain at: ILindsay@nautilusint.org or Tel: 07927 569216 or [Click here.](#)



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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 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 (that's not me on the right by the way!), via:

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



We look forward to hearing from you!