



UNFORGOTTEN FORCES

Supporting Scotland's
Older Veterans

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With this issue: your
**Unforgotten Forces
Directory, and your
social opportunities guide**

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Diversity in
the Forces

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The magic
of Men's
Sheds

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Boost your
spiritual
wellbeing

MAGAZINE

ISSUE TWO: SPRING 2021

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The Unforgotten Forces magazine is for older veterans living in Scotland, their families, and carers.

We welcome reader feedback: you can contact us by phone, email or in writing. You can also use the details below to let us know if you no longer wish to receive the magazine.

Email: veteransproject@agescotland.org.uk

Telephone: **0333 323 2400**

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160 Causewayside
Edinburgh EH9 1PR

Unforgotten Forces is a partnership of military and civilian charities, led and co-ordinated by Age Scotland, that have joined forces to boost the health and wellbeing of veterans in Scotland age 65 and older. This magazine is funded by a grant from the Scottish Government. Age Scotland aims to ensure information is accurate at time of production and cannot be held liable for any errors or omissions.

ISSN 2635-1242 (print)

ISSN 2635-1250 (online)

Age Scotland, part of the Age Network, is an independent charity dedicated to improving the later lives of everyone on the ageing journey, within a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland. Registration Number: 153343 Charity Number SC010100. Registered Office: Causewayside House, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR.

Foreword

Welcome to Unforgotten Forces magazine.

Spring is here, and with it the prospect of an easing in pandemic restrictions. Unforgotten Forces partner charities, who last year swiftly adapted in response to Covid-19, are again adjusting their support to meet older veterans' needs as lock-down lifts. Inside this issue is your **Unforgotten Forces Directory** which provides information on what they offer and on how to contact them.

2021 brought an arrival and a departure to Unforgotten Forces. We are delighted to welcome the Scottish Men's Sheds Association to the partnership. You can find out what Scotland's local Men's Sheds offer older ex-servicemen on page 6. Sadly, we also say farewell to the RNID Hearing Forces service, which has provided vital support to older veterans with hearing loss since 2017. This decision to stop Hearing Forces was taken by RNID following a review of its UK-wide services. The Unforgotten Forces partnership is looking at what might be done in the longer term to fill this gap. For now, the 2021 edition of **Combatting Sight and Hearing Loss**, a free advice guide from Age Scotland, Sight Scotland Veterans and RNID, tells you about currently available support for sensory loss.

One of the most devastating consequences of Covid-19 has been the closure of community groups, including veterans' clubs, and restrictions on meeting others face to face. Now, at long last we look forward with more optimism to reunions and opportunities for new friendships. With this magazine is a copy of Age Scotland's **Social Opportunities for Older Veterans in Scotland** guide. The guide will be updated regularly, so please get in touch at any time for the latest edition, or to tell us about social opportunities that should be included.

For free postal copies of any of the publications mentioned above call **0800 12 44 222** (the Age Scotland helpline) or email publications@agescotland.org.uk.

Doug Anthony, Unforgotten Forces Co-ordinator

Unforgotten stories

Unforgotten Forces partner charities are committed to working together so that older veterans get the help they need, without hassle. Here are stories of real veterans who have benefited.

Hope beyond hospital

Army veteran John, who is in his late 60s, spent nine weeks in hospital last autumn after contracting Covid-19. Because of complications linked to his type 2 diabetes, he became a double amputee. "I felt angry and thought: why me?" he says.

Kenny, who is a welfare officer for the Defence Medical Welfare Service, met John just before he was discharged. "He was understandably very worried about his new circumstances, and what it meant for his future", says Kenny.

Kenny knew that charities working together in partnership would provide the best support for John. "I contacted BLESMA, a charity for limbless veterans. They arranged ramps at John's home to help him to get in and out. Fares4Free, which helps veterans with transport problems, took him to and from his hospital prosthetics appointments." Kenny has arranged for Occupational Therapy to fully adapt John's home for his disability in Spring 2021.

Kenny spotted that John was on a low income, so pulled in help from the Armed Services Advice Project. They supported John to apply for benefits he was entitled to, and consequently he's getting more money. No less important than this practical support has been the emotional support Kenny has provided. "My aim is to be there with empathy and a listening ear for John's frustrations and concerns" says Kenny.

"Without the support of Unforgotten Forces partners I would have been lost and potentially in a very dark place indeed," says John. "Now, I'm looking to embrace my new challenges. I'm thinking about re-applying to the DVLA for my driving licence. I'm looking forward to getting outdoors regularly again, something I really enjoy."

Contact Fares4Free for help getting to and from vital appointments, groups, and clubs.
Call David Gibson on **07708 299 399** / www.fares4free.org

Contact Defence Medical Welfare Service for support during a period of NHS treatment if you live in Fife, Edinburgh, Borders, Lanarkshire or in the Vale of Leven area.
0800 999 3697 / email referrals@dmws.org.uk

Contact the Armed Services Advice Project for veterans' information and advice, with one-to-one case-worker support available in many areas.
0808 800 1007 / www.adviceasap.org.uk

More to see and hear

For former RAF National Serviceman Frank, who is in his early 90s, the impact of his gradually deteriorating sight and hearing peaked last September when his driving licence was removed. He lost not only independence, but also his confidence. And with his nearest family a niece in England, he was quite isolated. Being a "stubborn and independent person" Frank was determined to cope on his own, but he was losing ability to do that rapidly.

A friend asked the local Royal British Legion Branch for help, which in turn contacted Tony Hooman, Veterans Community Support Coordinator at Legion Scotland. Tony says: “We realised Frank’s hearing loss and physical distancing rules would make conversation difficult, so I asked a close friend of his to join our first meeting, which really helped.” That friend sorted out an appointment with the local Health Centre for Frank to get his earwax removed. “This immediately helped,” says Tony, “and through that Frank was put on the waiting list for the local NHS Audiology Department to fix his hearing aid.”

Tony contacted Sight Scotland Veterans outreach worker Dawn Smith. Dawn said: “We’ve supplied Frank with kit including a task light and a back-lit magnifier for reading, a talking clock, a contrast mat on which he can see cups and plates more easily, a thick pen and signature guide, and a liquid level indicator to alert him if he’s overfilling a cup. Little things, but collectively they can make a big difference.

“As pandemic restrictions allow, we can take him on local guided walks to boost his confidence. When it reopens, our Linburn Activity Centre near Edinburgh will be there for him to enjoy fun activities and great food, with complementary transport there and back.”

Tony says: “I received a letter from the Secretary at Frank’s Royal British Legion branch thanking Unforgotten Forces for our quick response and the difference it has made to Frank’s life. He’s regained confidence and is enjoying better sight and hearing.”

Contact Sight Scotland Veterans for support to live well with sight loss and enjoy a range of social opportunities. **0800 035 6409 / sightscotlandveterans.org.uk**

Contact Legion Scotland Veterans’ Community Support Service

for social support and re-connection with your local community if you have lost touch.

Call Tommy Douglas on **0131 550 1560** / email **support@legionscotland.org.uk**

Regaining buoyancy

Peter joined the Navy age 18, latterly becoming a photographer with the Fleet Air Arm. “It was a fantastic 22 years,” says Peter. “The highlight was receiving a medal for my role in a major incident on HMS Bulwark, but that incident proved my downfall in later years.”

A breakdown when in his mid-50s ended Peter’s post-service teaching career. “I had been in the care of the NHS for almost four years when a psychologist referred me to Combat Stress,” he says. Peter believes the six weeks he spent at Combat Stress’ Holybush House centre in Ayrshire saved his life. “I learned so much about myself, and life just got better and better. The follow-up care was also brilliant.” He found the peer support and comradeship invaluable, as “civilians have no idea what goes on in the military.”

Peter did well for 10 years, but recently had a setback. “I recognised the symptoms and went to my GP, who referred me back to Combat Stress.” Now he is again feeling positive and looking forward. “Mary, my Combat Stress Occupational Therapist, has helped me to formulate a project about helping other veterans, and that’s giving me an ambition and a goal. It’s been a wonderful experience.”

“I wish Combat Stress had been available to me earlier in life,” says Peter. “In the Navy my physical injuries were treated professionally, but my mental wellbeing wasn’t addressed.”

Contact Combat Stress for mental health and wellbeing support.
0800 138 1619 / www.combatstress.org.uk

Rainbow Forces

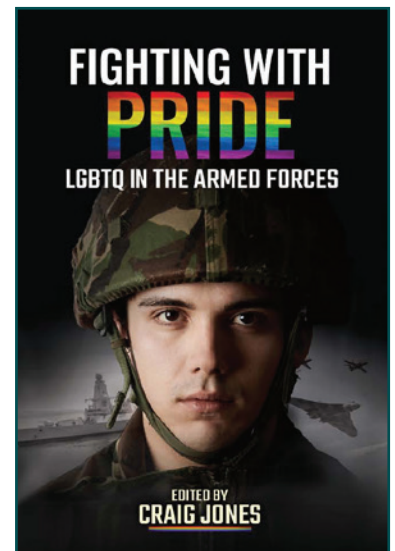
Caroline Paige and Craig Jones MBE explain how new charity **Fighting With Pride** is supporting **LGBT+ veterans** to rejoin the **Armed Forces** family.

21 years ago the ban on LGBT+ personnel serving in the Armed Forces was lifted, ending a prohibition that we today recognise as a shocking breach of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Fighting With Pride is championing a lonely and isolated group of veterans who were treated very badly in their service lives, and beyond, as a result of this cruel ban. Members of our Armed Forces who were thought to be LGBT+ were arrested, searched, and questioned, often for days, before being charged. After harrowing investigations, they were taken to military hospitals. At Court Martial, before being sent to military prison, some had medals ripped from their uniforms.

This continued to 1996, and the administrative dismissal of LGBT+ personnel until January 2000. These once proud service men and women were cast out of the Armed Forces family, and 'outed' to their own families and friends. They lost their homes and their financial stability. The annotation 'dismissed in disgrace' caused many a lifetime of employment issues.

Fighting With Pride was formed on the 20th anniversary of the lifting of the ban, and in these more enlightened times has been warmly welcomed by many veterans organisations in Scotland. We aim to work with them to ensure services that seek out, welcome, and support our LGBT+ veterans and plan this year to recruit a dedicated Support Worker for Scotland.



Above: Caroline and Craig with FWP Chair Patrick Lyster-Todd. Right: Fighting with Pride, an anthology of LGBT+ veterans' stories, is available in bookstores and as an e-book.

Caroline and Craig are Joint Chief Executives of Fighting with Pride. Caroline was formerly RAF phantom aircrew based at Leuchars and Craig, a Royal Navy Officer, served in minesweepers based in Rosyth and Faslane. Visit www.fightingwithpride.org.uk or call **07734 007224**.

Elaine's story

Elaine's career in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps was dramatically cut short in 1987 early in her first posting to Germany. She was summoned to the Matron's office. "Wearing a deeply pained and disgusted expression" the Matron accused her of making unwanted advances on fellow officers, allegations she denied. "My room was torn apart, searched from floorboards to ceiling by the Special Investigation Branch," says Elaine. After two long and harrowing interrogations and five months of investigations she was told she must resign her commission.

"My sense of loss has at times been visceral and it affects every part of my life," she says. "There will never, could never be, a career I might cherish as I had my time in the Corps."

Support for LGBT+ older veterans

Today's Armed Forces welcome diversity and actively recruit members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) community. Their belief is that society is best served by a military that reflects its diversity. Discrimination is forbidden, as are pressuring LGBT+ personnel to 'come out', and 'outing' them without consent. Here are some organisations offering community and support.

Royal British Legion

Recognising that LGBT+ personnel did not all have a positive experience within the military, The Royal British Legion created its first LGBT+ and Allies branch in 2018. It aims to recognise the contribution of LGBT+ people who have served in the military, and encourage them to seek support.

Both the Royal British Legion and its sister organisation Legion Scotland provide advice and support to their members on a wide range of topics, including money, pensions and benefits, care, independent living, employment and social support. The LGBT+ and Allies branch is open to serving and former members of the Armed Forces, and civilians, across the UK.

For more information or to become a member, visit their website www.britishlegion.org.uk, or contact them on **0808 802 8080**. You can also find them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/LGBTQrbl.

Support for the LGBT+ community

LGBT Health and Wellbeing provide a helpline offering emotional support and practical information to victims of LGBT hate crime. You can also report hate crime to them if you do not want to contact the police directly. Call them on **0300 123 2523**, Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 12pm and 9pm.

Galop's **LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline** provides practical and emotional support for LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse. Contact them on **0800 999 5428** (10am to 5pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and 10am to 8pm on Thursdays). Tuesday from 1pm to 5pm is a trans-specific service. For more information, see their website www.galop.org.uk.

The Army LGBT Network: Confidential advice and support on a range of issues, including coming out, health, bullying and harassment, housing, relationships and families. They organise social functions, conferences and networking events, and participate in several regional Pride marches. armylgbt.org.uk/veterans / www.facebook.com/ArmyLgbt.

The RAF LGBT Freedom Network works to ensure that the RAF LGBT community are supported, valued and empowered. www.facebook.com/raflgbtforum / Twitter [@RAF_LGBT](https://twitter.com/RAF_LGBT).

Royal Navy Compass: The sexual orientation and gender identity/expression network for the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Merchant Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary. www.facebook.com/RNCompass / Twitter [@RNCompass](https://twitter.com/RNCompass).

Age Scotland publishes free advice guides for older members of the LGBT+ community. To request postal copies email publications@agescotland.org.uk or call the Age Scotland helpline **0800 12 44 222**. The guides are also available on www.agescotland.org.uk.

The Magic of Sheds

There are almost 200 Men's Sheds across Scotland, from zero a decade ago. Can they offer a 'home-from-home' to older men in the ex-service community?

"A Men's Shed is a place where men gather to socially connect with a purpose. That brings camaraderie and connection to men who can sometimes self-isolate", says Jason Schroeder. Jason is founder and Chief Executive of the Scottish Men's Shed Association, a body set up to support and promote Men's Sheds.

"All kinds of mystical and wonderful things happened in Sheds," says Jason. "Sheds are made up of the interests of the men so there's nothing stereotypical about activities there. Men's Sheds morph as their memberships change over time. That's what makes them so exciting and sustainable."

The first Shed, in Australia, was specifically for veterans, many of whom were struggling after experiences in the Vietnam war. "It gave them a place to enjoy camaraderie, and trust, says Jason. "In Australia there are now many community Sheds open to all older men. In Scotland it's a little bit different. Sheds here are for any man age 18 or older who has time on his hands, for whatever reason."

Graham Reece, an RAF veteran, and member of the Forth Valley Men's Shed, believes Sheds have a special appeal to men in the ex-service community. "You will never have friends in civvy street like you had in the Forces, says Graham, but breaking that barrier down is Men's Sheds."

Graham doesn't like talking about his time in the Forces and knows "quite a few veterans who feel the same. But in the Forces, there's a special kind of humour that's great when you come out. If someone insults you, it means they like you! That barrack room humour, the ability to 'rip the piss', helps bring veterans together and helps you to belong in the group. And the friends you meet in the Shed are very much like your friends in the Forces. You're all really in the same boat, whether retired, a widower, stuck at home on your own."

Scottish Men's Shed Association Chair David Gardiner agrees. "Service men have their days fully planned and are surrounded by, and reliant on, others. After service, that structure and support groups is gone, and they can feel at a loss. But in Sheds they can again enjoy camaraderie, feel comfortable and useful, and enjoy a home from home."

Veterans that join Sheds are not given special treatment. "I respect their service," says David, "but when they join, they become part of, and a contributor to, the Shed, and that to me is far more important. The banter is phenomenal, and that cuts across everyone's background."

Such has been the experience of Stuart Paton. "Not many people knew I had served at first – initially I was just a Shedder," he says. Stuart went into the military straight from school. "I thought that structure, and discipline, was what adult life was. But then I went to college and found there was a bit of chaos in civilian life."

Stuart had a hidden mental illness resulting from brain damage at birth but had successfully enlisted despite it. "Looking back at my time in the military I think a lot of other guys were suffering from mental illness too, but you just get on with it, and the structure masks problems."

After leaving service he found it difficult to keep up his Forces friendships and his mental health declined. He made multiple suicide attempts, at one point nearly succeeding. "A supportive counsellor suggested the Shed. I didn't find it easy to take the first step, but when I eventually did, I found camaraderie there. Some men can't open-up around women, so that it's just for men makes for a better therapeutic effect. You're there, next to guys, and just talking. The Shed has done everything that the mental health professionals couldn't do for me. It's given me positivity. It's been a life saver."



Giving is as much a part of the magic of Sheds as taking. “I built raised planters for a disabled woman who wanted to garden,” says Stuart. “It’s about improving the community you live in. In the military you have a purpose, but in civilian life I’ve had jobs where you don’t feel that you are achieving anything. In the Shed you are achieving things, and that’s a massive part of the therapy.”

Bringing older and younger veterans together, like Graeme and Stuart, is another boon. “There’s a sharing of skills in both directions,” says Tim Green, Men’s Sheds Community Development Officer at Age Scotland. “It’s also great to have younger people in the wings who can in time take on leadership roles.” Jason agrees. “I see the veterans community as a very exciting ‘manscape’ of people with incredible skill sets. I want to see an influx of veterans that will stimulate the movement and support these trailblazing men in their 70s who had the guts and the can-do attitude to go up against it.”

Jason’s ambition is personal. “I did National Service in South Africa. My PTSD only came out six years after I mobbed out. Because you were a ‘tough guy’ you were just meant to hack it and get on with it. I wish the Sheds had existed then. I’d love to see the MOD giving leavers info about Men’s Sheds in their demob packs. It’s about prevention – before you get to the ‘black hole’, get yourself into the Shed and keep your spirits up.”

To find a Shed near you visit www.scottishmsa.org.uk, email admin@scottishmsa.org.uk or call Scottish Men’s Shed Association administrator Sue Salter on **07465 202 834**.

Why and how to boost your spiritual wellbeing

In Douglas Adams' book 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy' the meaning of life, the universe and everything is '42'. In real life answers aren't so neat. Yet pursuing them could be vital for your health and wellbeing.

Spirituality has been defined as 'that which gives zest, energy, meaning and identity to your life, in relation to other people and the wider world.' "Faith is that trust we put in something outside of ourselves. For Christians, that trust is in God, but for others it can be in all sorts of things," says Reverend Phil Patterson. Phil, an Army chaplain for two decades, is founder of Veterans Chaplaincy Scotland, an organisation offering pastoral support to veterans regardless of their belief. "To be a whole person you need to have health in body, mind and spirit," says Phil. There are lots of physical and mental health therapies, but we often overlook the spiritual side of life."

Spiritual care can help veterans living with 'moral injury'. The NHS describes this as 'the psychological distress which results from actions, or the lack of them, which violate someone's moral or ethical code', something that can arise on deployment. "The symptoms are similar to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," says Phil. "But may be less immediate, and ebb and flow through life. When someone is stressed or feels angry or betrayed by something in the world, moral injuries can resurface." COVID has reopened moral wounds. "I've spoken to veterans recently who have been reminded of events that happened 40-50 years ago, because the same emotions and the same morals are being compromised by the world situation today," says Phil.

Recent studies have found that where the moral context of a veterans' trauma is addressed, mental health treatments can be more effective. Spiritual conversations may be easier for veterans who "often have to come terms with life and death issues," but nonetheless talking can be hard. "Society has privatised faith, and people sometimes feel they need permission to talk about it. With a Chaplain, veterans can open-up: because we've been through similar experiences and speak their language. A joy for me in lockdown has been speaking to World War 2, National Service and Afghan veterans and finding that their stories are the same – because the issues faced, the emotions and the morals are the same."

For older veterans who did not face adversity in service, spiritual support can still be beneficial. "Later life can bring big changes, and more time to reflect on the spiritual side of life," say Richard Baker. Richard is a trustee of Faith in Older People, a charity working to boost the spiritual wellbeing of older people. He also works for Sight Scotland Veterans, which supports veterans with sight loss. "Faith means a lot to many of our members," he says. "And as people age, we need to meet their spiritual needs, in the community or in residential care. Faith can help you find resolve, strength and solace."

National Serviceman and Sight Scotland Veterans member Tom illustrates that. "I thoroughly enjoyed my service. I met some lads from Paisley – we could speak to each other about everything and anything," he says. Tom became a Christian age 58 and faith has helped him and his wife through the pandemic. "I've downloaded the Bible and readings onto my phone and tablet, so they are with me at all times," he says. "Prayer helps us, as does giving thanks: after meals and at the end of the day."

The pandemic has had a huge impact on Sight Scotland Veterans members. "Many have less social contact, and their confidence has been hit by challenges such as social distancing street layouts," says Richard. There's a fear that if you can't meet with faith groups, you will be cut off. But charities can help older veterans link-up with faith communities – they just need to ask."



Photo: Mikhail Nilov on Pexels

The phone can be a spiritual lifeline. “I’ve prayed with veterans, conducted services and said regimental prayer – all by phone,” says Phil. “That people really want this has been a revelation.” Veterans’ Chaplaincy Scotland aims to partner charities, churches, and others to reach veterans individually and in their groups. “You can speak to us informally and in confidence about things like shame, guilt and forgiveness.”

Spirituality needn’t be religious. For John Arthur, it’s yoga that has helped him in life. “I had a problem with drink and drugs before joining the Army that got worse during and after. Around age 40 I got support to recover, went to University, then worked in the charity sector training doctors, police and others to understand addiction and recovery.” Seven years ago, his family doctor suggested yoga for his chronic back-pain. “It hit my brain and my spirit instantly. I practiced daily and went to as many classes as I could.” Yoga helped John through a series of personal tragedies. “I buried myself in yoga, travelling the world to learn as much as I could. I want more men involved - too often it’s seen as a middle class ‘yummy mummies’ thing, and it is absolutely not that.”

Back home he found himself thrown into teaching yoga. “The feedback, including from veterans, has been great. The breathing techniques help with stress, as does meditation - which isn’t about clearing your mind but about getting in touch with yourself right now.” John teaches down to earth community yoga. “It’s serious but not sombre – we have a laugh!”

Yoga originated in eastern religion, but John is a humanist and his yoga secular. Nonetheless it has a spiritual side. “It raises the spirits. It helps get you out your own head, to see the beauty around and to feel awe.” It’s also social. “I feel very privileged and blessed to have found yoga, and it’s yet another community I feel I belong to.”

Contact Veterans’ Chaplaincy Scotland: 07521 638 848 / email vcs@wpcscotland.co.uk

Mobilizing against loneliness

While Covid-19 has driven us apart, Legion Scotland's Community Support Service has provided a social lifeline says **Elliot Thomson**.

COVID-19 has been a huge challenge for all, but those who were already lonely have felt the pressure grow. This is a familiar news story. Yet we hear little of the many neighbourly acts of kindness. I have been humbled and inspired by Legion Scotland's Support Volunteers, who have worked tirelessly to bring some cheer to veterans, and their families. Here are some stories to illustrate the difference we have made.

Sharon approached Legion Scotland four years ago, looking for some social support. She craved female company, so I matched her with volunteer Tracey. They hit it off immediately. Sharon wasn't very mobile and couldn't get out and about much, but Tracey helped to change that. She visited often. They would go on outings, normally finishing the day in an eatery. Sharon has found the lockdown testing and felt very lonely at times. But she and Tracey have both benefited from their many phone calls and video chats, even cooking together and swapping tips. They are now planning where they will visit, and where they will eat, when it's safe to do so. But top of their list is a simple meeting over a cuppa, and no doubt a very long chat.

Our partner charity DMWS had supported Harry through a period of NHS treatment, and suggested to him that Legion Scotland could help him enjoy companionship. When I met him, we struck up a good friendship immediately. I would visit often, and we would recall tall tales about our military service and laugh about most of them. He had some marvellous stories about his time in the Royal Navy during WWII - I could have listened to him all day. During lockdown I would call him often and we would pick up where we had left off, but he always ended the phone call saying he looked forward to my next visit, as he was not a huge fan of the telephone. I always wanted to take Harry out, but he wanted to sit and chat, and was comfortable with that. His family have been in touch on several occasions and have said the visits and chats have been enormously positive for Harry as he talks about them and looks forward to the next. It is amazing the impact a cuppa and a wee chat can have.



Introducing Legion Scotland's Community Support Service

The Community Support Service can help you enjoy regular companionship and re-connect with your community if you feel lonely or isolated. Team members introduced here are assisted by an army of friendly volunteer home visitors.



Tommy Douglas, Veterans Community Support Manager

Tommy leads the team at Legion Scotland delivering daily support to veterans in need.



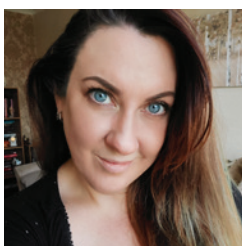
Sally Orr Ewing, Veterans Community Support Administrator

Sally handles administration for the team. Both her parents served in the Army.



Tony Hooman, Support Co-ordinator for Edinburgh, Lothian, and Borders

Tony served with the Royal Corps of Transport and was Royal British Legion Scotland member for 35 years before joining the team.



Emily Clark, Support Co-ordinator for the Highlands and Islands and Grampian

Emily has supported veterans for more than seven years, having previously worked in criminal justice and social care. "Colleagues, volunteers and the veterans we support are a huge inspiration and motivation: I'm very lucky to work with such wonderful people every day."



Peter Kerr, Support Co-ordinator for Angus, Perth and Kinross, Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Fife

Peter has 22 years' service in the Corps of the Royal

Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and has worked for Legion Scotland since 2014. "I've met some great characters, some sadly passed, and look forward to meeting new veterans in future. Its great to see veterans thrive with our support."



Elliot Thomson, Support Co-ordinator for Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway

Elliot served for 27 years in the Royal Military Police, latterly as the Corps Regimental Sergeant Major. "I was always very passionate about the welfare of my Soldier's and enjoy transferring that focus to supporting my fellow veterans."

FIND OUT MORE

Call Tommy Douglas on
0131 550 1560

Or email
support@legionscotland.org.uk

THE KNOWLEDGE

The Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly. The promise has been made by national and local government, and public bodies including the NHS, with many businesses, charities and communities also pledging to play their part.



Currently the Armed Forces Covenant places no legal obligations on any organisation, but that may be about to change. An Armed Forces Bill has been introduced in the Westminster parliament that, if enacted, will enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant in law. The Bill aims to increase awareness among public bodies of the unique nature of military service, improve the level of service for members of the armed forces community in the areas of healthcare, housing, and education.

Find out more about the Armed Forces Covenant at www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk. Each Council and NHS Board in Scotland has a Veterans Champion who has volunteered to promote the Armed Forces Covenant within their organisation. Contact your local Council or NHS for details.

Poppyscotland Welfare Support Service

Each year, Poppyscotland's Welfare Services help many veterans and their families aged 65 and over, with support being delivered to over 100 clients through their Welfare Centres in Ayrshire and Inverness, through their tailored support and funding services as well as their Welfare Support Service. Individuals have been awarded grants for mobility home adaptations along with household items, mobility vehicles and other essential items, with over £50,000 being awarded to relieve financial distress. The Welfare Centres and Support Service work with individuals on alleviating social isolation and assisting with independent living.

RAF veterans John and Marcia had experienced worsening health in recent years but, thanks to support from Poppyscotland's Ayrshire Welfare Centre team, things are looking up. "I had absolutely no idea Poppyscotland could help veterans like us," says Marcia. "Now, I can say that it's incredible the work they do to help people – it's amazing!". Marcia's advice to fellow veterans is: "The help from Poppyscotland is there – you just have to tap into it and then it will all open up in front of you."

If you're in need of support or for further information on any of Poppyscotland's Welfare Services, please call **0131 550 1557** or email GetHelp@poppyscotland.org.uk.



John and Marcia





Free Will Writing Service

Age Scotland, the national charity for older people, has launched a Will writing service in partnership with Solicitors for Older People Scotland. This offers people over the age of 50 the opportunity to make a new Will or amend their existing Will for free with Solicitors for Older People Scotland, a group of Scottish law firms dedicated to providing legal services to older people in a caring and sensitive way.

“Many people may put off making a will as it’s not the most pleasant subject to think about” says Age Scotland Chief Executive Brian Sloan. “But planning ahead can save unnecessary distress at an already difficult time.”

Visit www.age.scot/FreeWillService or call Age Scotland on **0333 323 2400** to find out more.

Paying for your TV licence

The Simple Payment Plan from TV Licensing is for anyone who has difficulty paying for their TV Licence. Once you’re accepted onto the plan you choose from either a fortnightly or monthly payment plan depending on what suits you. Stick to your payment plan and payments will average out at around £3 a week. You can choose either automatic payments, for example using Direct Debit, or manual payments. Unlike a standard payment plan, if you miss a monthly payment with the Simple Payment Plan, you won’t have to pay double the following month to catch up, but instead, the missed payment will be spread out over the remaining payment dates.

When you call, an advisor will take you through the process and answer your questions. To find out more and sign-up, call **0300 555 0510** or visit tvl.co.uk/sppme, using the reference DCHAR2.

Could you be due a share of the missing £88 million?

Analysis by Age Scotland has revealed that older people on low incomes missed out on £88 million in Council Tax Reduction support last year. The figures, confirmed by the Scottish Government, show that the average annual award for Council Tax Reduction in 2019-20 to people over 65 in Scotland was £716.56. It is estimated that at least 123,000 older households in Scotland are not claiming the Pension Credit they are entitled to which would make them eligible for full Council Tax Reduction.

Brian Sloan, Age Scotland’s Chief Executive says: “Social security is not just for older people on low income. If you have a disability or illness which means you need extra help, or care for someone, you could also be missing out.”

Who can help you find out if you are missing out

Age Scotland helpline: 0800 12 44 222

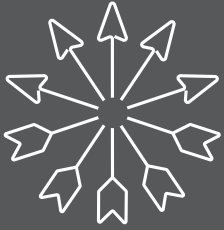
Free, impartial, and confidential later life information and advice on a range of topics including social security. The helpline can also provide free advice guides on benefits topics including Council Tax Reduction.

Visit www.age.scot/CheckInCashOut.

The Armed Service Advice Project: 0808 800 1007

Free, independent, and confidential advice, information, and support for the Armed Forces community, on a range of topics including social security. The service is open to those currently serving, families and veterans and can be accessed through a free national helpline, with one-to-one support available across 11 regions.

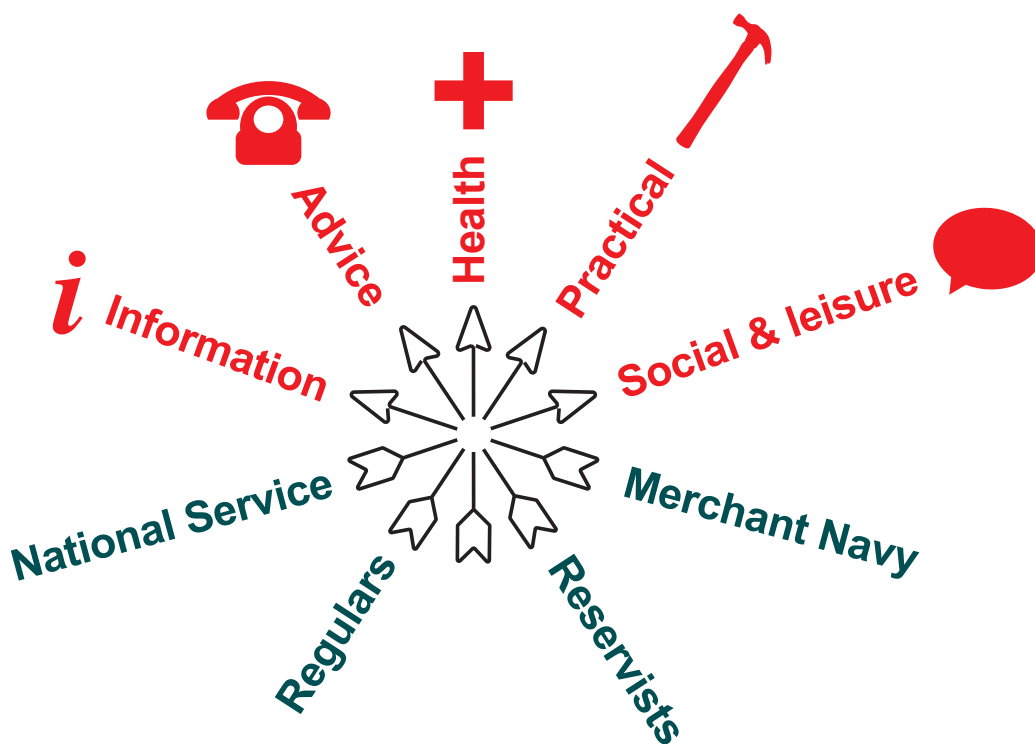
Visit www.adviceasap.org.uk



UNFORGOTTEN FORCES

Supporting Scotland's Older Veterans

If you are aged 60 or older, live in Scotland, and served in the British Armed Forces, Unforgotten Forces is your doorway to camaraderie and extra support, should you need it.



#UFForces



@UnforgottenForces

www.unforgottenforces.scot

0800 12 44 222

(The Age Scotland helpline can connect you with Unforgotten Forces services if you are unsure who to approach)

