



UNFORGOTTEN FORCES

Supporting Scotland's
Older Veterans

Photo by Joe Hepburn on Unsplash

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Age Scotland
2021 calendar

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MAGAZINE

ISSUE ONE: WINTER 2020

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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**

Write to: Veterans Project, Age Scotland
Causewayside House
160 Causewayside
Edinburgh EH9 1PR

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Foreword

Welcome to Unforgotten Forces magazine.

We hope you enjoy this first edition of our new magazine for Scotland's older veterans from the Unforgotten Forces partnership.

Inside you'll find stories about the work and difference made by Unforgotten Forces partner charities and other groups that support older veterans. You'll also find information about your rights and extra help available to you, as both an older person and a member of the armed forces community.

As the coronavirus outbreak continues, it has never been more vital to stay informed and connected. Whether you had a career in the armed forces, did national service, supported a British military operation with the merchant navy, or were a reservist, you are part of 'the tribe'. The same goes if you are a dependant family member of a veteran, a widow or widower.

The Unforgotten Forces partnership started in 2017, funded by HM Treasury using LIBOR banking fines. Over three years it provided more than 13,000 episodes of support to older veterans in Scotland. These episodes varied. There were free taxis journeys to vital appointments. Problem-solving advice by phone and in person. Supportive visits to veterans going through a period of hospital treatment. House calls from friendly volunteers to support socially isolated veterans to reconnect with their communities. Life-affirming creative arts and music-making experiences. And much, much more.

Some veterans we helped multiple times, often with several Unforgotten Forces charities working together. Each partner is committed to ensuring older veterans get the support they need without having to explain their situation repeatedly. On the back cover you'll find a directory of Unforgotten Forces services – whether you have a big issue or a small question, need help or simply want to expand your interests, give us a try.

The launch of this magazine coincides with a new phase for Unforgotten Forces. At the end of our initial grant, the Scottish Government stepped in to fund our work together until March 2023. And having led the partnership from the outset, Poppyscotland has passed the baton to Age Scotland, the national older people's charity. If you have any thoughts or questions about Unforgotten Forces or this magazine, please get in touch: contact details are on the inside front cover.

If your magazine arrived in the post, you should have received with it a complementary Age Scotland 2021 calendar. If you didn't, or your magazine arrived by email, call the **Age Scotland reception** on **0333 323 2400** and we'll send one to you. The calendar is chock-full of tips to keep you happy, healthy, safe, and comfortable all year round.

Doug Anthony, Unforgotten Forces Co-ordinator

Looking after your mental wellbeing

For over a century, Combat Stress has helped former servicemen and women deal with mental health problems including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Sue Freeth, Chief Executive of Combat Stress, introduces the service in Scotland.

A small but significant number of those leaving the Armed Forces develop mental health problems and struggle to leave the battlefield behind. Veterans wait on average 13 years after leaving the military before reaching out to Combat Stress. Without the right help their lives can become desperate, and for them, our support may be lifesaving.

In Scotland, we operate out of our service hub Hollybush House in Ayr and have community teams in east, west and north of the country. We provide multi-disciplinary clinical services and peer support to veterans of all ages. Currently, 5-10 percent of veterans we support are over 65 years of age, but we could help more. We've joined Unforgotten Forces to work in partnership with like-minded organisations so we can provide the best possible service to older veterans across Scotland.

During lockdown, the need for our specialist services has been critical. PTSD doesn't just stop, and the anxiety and isolation brought on by the pandemic has been making life even harder for some veterans. While clinical staff have been unable to meet veterans in-person, we have been providing online and phone appointments, as well as offering access to peer support services online.

Are you, or is someone you know, struggling with mental health or wellbeing? Call the Combat Stress 24-hour helpline (0800 138 1619) for confidential advice and support.

Mental health and wellbeing online

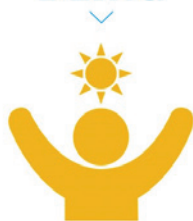
Combat Stress offers free online mental health and wellbeing self-care tools.

www.combatstress.org.uk/self-care-during-covid-19



SELF-HELP GUIDES

PHYSICAL WELL BEING



MANAGING ANGER



MANAGING LOW MOOD



Pete's story

Without
Combat Stress
I would be dead,
or doing life in jail

"I first joined the Army when I was 16, to get away from home. There were 10 kids in my family, it was horrible.

"In 1975 I was deployed to Northern Ireland for an 18-month tour. It was a really difficult time. I ended up getting a compassionate discharge in 1977 over an incident that took place there."

Pete spent the next three years trying to settle into civilian life but found it tough. Not knowing anything else, he re-enlisted in May 1980 and spent the rest of his Army career in the Royal Corps of Transport, transporting men and equipment across Europe.

Throughout this time, he battled with mental health issues without realising it. It wasn't until he retired from the Army that things began to reach breaking point.

"I think it was a combination of things that triggered it, but it definitely stemmed from that incident back in Northern Ireland.

"I started to get angry at the slightest thing, even kids playing outside was like a red rag to a bull. The paranoia was just as bad. If I saw a conversation going on behind closed doors in the office, I was convinced people were talking about me; it became obsessive.

"My family had to suffer through my mood swings, I was terrified about what I might do.

"Then there was this one particular moment, talking to my mate about this guy who I really didn't see eye to eye with, and well...all I'll say is that the stuff I was saying drove him to tell me about Combat Stress."

For eight months the Combat Stress helpline number sat in his phone, but eventually, 11 years after leaving the Army, Pete made the call.

"You don't want to admit that there is a problem, but I knew it had got to the point where I was going to do something really stupid if I didn't get help."

Pete was soon diagnosed with PTSD and underwent a range of treatment programmes including our six-week PTSD Intensive Treatment Programme and an anger management course.

"It was a relief to know that there was actually something wrong with me, and that I wasn't just a horrible b*****d. It was a difficult process, but it has changed my life. I still have moments, but I now have the tools to overcome them.

"Quite simply, without Combat Stress I would be dead or doing life in jail...and I mean that."

Since turning to Combat Stress, Pete has rediscovered his drive and passion for life, with the days of moping around and feeling sorry for himself a thing of the past.

When asked what he would say to other veterans out there struggling with their mental health, Pete was very blunt: "Make the call. You're not going to get anywhere trying to do it on your own."



Supporting you with sight loss

Veterans in Scotland who are living with sight loss can get support from an established charity with a new name. Hannah Mitchell introduces Sight Scotland Veterans.



Sight Scotland Veterans is the new name for Scottish War Blinded, unveiled in October 2020. It has been a big decision: our former name served us for over a hundred years.

How did we get here? We asked; we listened. We ran focus groups and surveys of those we currently support. We interviewed our external partners. We found out what the public knew and thought of us. We asked if 'War Blinded' was right for today and in the future?

Colleagues, veterans, and the public told us that our name was not right; today, or for the future. Scottish War Blinded was established to support soldiers returning from World War One with life changing blindness. Today, over 98 percent of those we support have sight loss that is not related to their service.

We know that there are many more military veterans in Scotland who could benefit from what we offer. Those we currently support have told us our former name made it hard to know we were for them. They told us it had to be explained that you didn't need to be blinded in a war to be eligible for our support and many told us they were uncomfortable accepting our support because of our name. We knew this had to change.

So why Sight Scotland Veterans? We are proud to serve the numbers who sustained sight loss during active service, but to support more veterans we found our name needed to be less misleading. We tested a wide range of options for a new name, and the veterans we currently support made numerous suggestions. By far the most common themes in their suggestions were 'sight' or 'sight loss', 'vision' or 'vision loss' and 'veterans'. It was clear from their feedback that these words were more easily identified with than 'war blinded'.

As Sight Scotland Veterans we continue to provide support to empower ex-service men and women affected by sight loss to regain confidence, restore independence, and make new connections. If you have sight loss and would like to find out how we can help, you can call us on **0800 035 6409** or visit sightscotlandveterans.org.uk where you can complete an online referral form.



Jim's story

World War Two veteran Jim has reconnected with his Royal Navy heritage thanks to Sight Scotland Veterans' rehabilitation team. Jim served in Gibraltar working on the signalling tower and then in contraband control with the Royal Navy Patrol Service for two-and-a-half years. He then undertook minesweeping duties in the Bristol and English Channels until he was demobbed in 1946.

Jim has macular degeneration and has always kept in touch with his Navy roots and was frustrated to find his sight condition was making it difficult to read his monthly Navy News magazine.

But since becoming a member of Sight Scotland Veterans in 2019, Jim has been receiving support from our expert rehabilitation officers. Now kitted out with an Optelec Traveller HD video magnifier – a portable, lightweight device that can zoom in on text and change colour contrast to suit reader requirements – Jim is delighted to be enjoying his Navy memorabilia once more.

Jim said: "I have a black spot in the centre of my eye that I can't see with, but I can get a picture in my peripheral vision. In my right eye I have cataracts.

"I was trying to use a handheld magnifier to read and I was struggling for ages until it ended up tiring my eyes. Now that I've got the Traveller with the stand I can read the Navy News again. The magnifier's perfect for me, I'm enjoying it. It's been a lifesaver. I get a lot of letters so it helps me to read those too."

Rehabilitation Officer, Fiona McCormick, assessed Jim at home, and worked closely with him to establish the ideal specialist equipment to help him maintain his independence – including the Traveller HD and specialist portable lighting. All were provided free of charge to Jim.

Jim said: "Fiona's been very good. She came to visit me at home with a range of pieces of equipment to try out and the support I've been receiving from her has been lovely. I can't fault it.

"Sight Scotland Veterans have also set me up with the Freedom LED lamp, I think it's brilliant. The brighter it is, the better it is for my sight. I have a smaller one too. I use that for smaller work, it complements some handheld magnifiers I have.

"The charity also gave me suitable anti-glare glasses to help when the sun is out. I just think all the help I'm getting is brilliant. Some of this equipment can be quite expensive, but the charity is helping me with it for free. The support and access to specialist equipment is important because it gives you more interests in your life.

"I hope my sight doesn't get worse, but I know Sight Scotland Veterans will have things to help me if it does."

Jim with Synaptic tablet



Help at the hospital bedside, and beyond

The Defence Medical Welfare Service supports armed forces, veterans, NHS staff, 'blue light' services, the merchant navy, and their immediate families, during periods of hospital treatment. Harriet Mallinson tells how this independent charity is making a difference and introduces the DMWS team in Scotland.

Our practical and emotional support ensures that no family goes through the worry of illness or injury alone. From a life-threatening injury sustained by a soldier, to a housing crisis for a military veteran, we help them to unlock solutions to improve wellbeing and support recovery. Our support is tailored to the individual.

We work with patients when their medical needs are being met but other problems may be distracting them from their recovery. We help because we believe that it is right to provide a high-quality medical welfare service to those who serve and have served the nation and the community during their most critical time of need.

DMWS welfare staff are embedded in specific NHS hospitals in four NHS board areas in Scotland: Fife, Lanarkshire, Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and the Borders.

Our involvement can often reduce waiting times for discharge from hospital; when a patient is medically fit to return home, but their living arrangements are not suitable for current health situation. We also help patients over-come social isolation and loneliness, financial issues, homelessness, or inappropriate housing - all of which have such a significant effect on health and well-being.

Covid-19 hasn't stopped us. We support patients and their families who have had no contact due to restrictions. We visit community hospitals and conduct home visits, within Covid-19 safe guidelines, to support shielded veterans by delivering essentials. We provide regular telephone support and collect medications.

Dan's story

Dan*, a Royal Scots veteran, had poor health, mobility, and eyesight after several strokes. He had to stop driving and, less able to enjoy activities and visit friends and family, was becoming socially isolated. Partner charity Sight Scotland Veterans told DMWS about Dan, so we got in touch and asked him how we could help.

Dan wanted to stay independent for as long as possible. So, working alongside Legion Scotland, we helped him move out of his second floor flat and into new ground floor flat with an outdoor area. Once Covid-19 restrictions relax we will be able to help him connect with local groups and find other opportunities for Dan to socialize.

*Name has been changed

Introducing our Welfare Officers

NHS Fife



Kirsty Smart is married to a serving soldier and is based in Queen Margaret's Hospital in Dunfermline.



Ryan Gordon operates out of the discharge hub in the Victoria hospital, Kirkcaldy. He is a Sociology graduate whose dissertation focused on the armed forces community.

NHS Lanarkshire



Kenny Cumming and Ashley Calderwood are based at University Hospital Wishaw and University Hospital Hairmyres in East Kilbride.

NHS Scottish Borders



Local veteran Michael Lowry joined the team in August for our new service based at Borders General Hospital near Melrose.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde



The most recent addition to the team is reservist Elaine McArdle who has started our new service based at the Vale of Leven Hospital, Alexandria.

DMWS
has provided both
compassionate and practical support to ex-service personnel and their families, some of whom without the DMWS support would not be able to return home due to them requiring specialist equipment to enable this.

I am proud to work in partnership with the DMWS.

Yvonne Bachelor – Senior Social work Practitioner Queen Margaret Hospital, Dunfermline.



CONTACT THE DMWS

Contact the DMWS helpline on **0800 999 3697**
or by email to referrals@dmws.org.uk

www.dmws.org.uk

Breakfast with banter

The 'Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Clubs' movement has become an international phenomenon. We spoke to founder Dereck Hardman.

Interview Doug Anthoney

"In 2007 I was converting a military vehicle as a hobby and found another veteran to help," says Dereck. "Bacon butties and a brew became a regular fixture of our get-togethers, and it wasn't long before more veterans joined us". Dereck felt 'recharged' by these gatherings, "I recognised that there was something missing in me," he says. "I was 17 when I joined up. Your military service life conditions you to become a service person, and in civilian life it can be lonely if you don't have people around you who shared and understand those experiences".

By 2014 the garage get-togethers regularly drew up to 40 veterans. Some visiting veterans said they wished they had something like this in their area, "It was 'lightbulb' moment" says Dereck and he set about replicating it in other places across the UK; within a year there were around 120 breakfast clubs.

In 2016, an invite to meet Mark Lancaster, then Minister for Veterans, was the catalyst for formalising the organisation. "He thought was a great idea and pledged to support it". Dereck gradually discovered just how powerful Breakfast Clubs could be. "We come from all branches of the military, each mercilessly taking the mickey out of the other until your face aches from laughing," he says. "The ripples of this go out into the community. Veterans are less isolated and support each other. Clubs make veterans 'visible' in their communities, with Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Day parades being organised in places where there were none". He tells of a first-time attendee at a club in Wales who became tearful, and when he was asked why, he said, 'I've just realised that I've come home.' It's about veterans 'returning the tribe'" says Dereck.

Breakfast Clubs are completely free and inclusive. "If you are a veteran, you will be made welcome. It doesn't matter if you were a former National Serviceman, or haven't done a tour, have stayed in the UK, were in the Territorial Army for a year, you're currently serving or are a reservist, you'll be welcomed. Nearly all encourage families to attend or have 'family days'." Clubs have even been established in other countries, including in New Zealand, Australia, USA, and Europe. Several UK clubs have veterans of other nations. "One even had a German U-Boat Submariner!" says Dereck.

Informality is key. "If it's all gavel banging, apologies, subs, and reports from standard bearers, where's the fun? At Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs, people can just turn up as and when they wish". Dereck does however see a huge advantage for veterans' support organisations attending; "In the military, the perception is often that if you've had to ask for help, you've failed. But at several clubs where support charities attend regularly, and make connections, it's more personal and less shameful to ask for support and allows us to excerpt a little 'peer pressure!'"

"You really you don't need much to start up" says Dereck. "Just find a venue willing to host your club, schedule a regular day and time, and contact us at Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs. We will put together a connected, networked Facebook group for your new club, with the guidelines in place, and support you". Clubs can take off very quickly; "I spoke to a guy this morning about starting one, and by the end of the day he was all set." As not every veteran has internet "we can advise you on how to encourage launch publicity to get word out. Every local authority has now signed the Armed Forces Covenant, so they have a Veterans' Champion which we encourage Club Admins to utilise. They can be asked to help promote the club and often provide a bit of funding".



Coronavirus has stopped normal meetings, but mutual support continues. Many clubs have delivered food parcels and checked in on housebound and isolating veterans. There have been online get-togethers using Zoom, phone call rotas and ‘buddying’. “None of this would have happened without clubs” said Dereck. In readiness for Christmas “club administrators are be sharing ideas for reaching out to all our members”.



FIND A LOCAL CLUB

To find your nearest Club visit www.afvbc.net/find-a-club or call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222** and we’ll research it for you.

If there isn’t an Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club near you, and you are interested in setting one up in your area, please email Dereck at founder@afvbc.net and the AFVBC will be very pleased to help.

Casting off the blues

Feeling fed-up because of coronavirus restrictions? Paul Coffey offers inspiration with the tale of how veterans at 3-Towns Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast club in Ayrshire boosted mind, body, and spirit with an adventure together in nature.

The morning had arrived. With trepidation our group of seasoned veterans separately made their way through park and past castle ruins to Eglinton Loch. Braving unrelenting warm sunshine, a devastatingly balmy breeze, and the very rough calm waters, we settled down to fish (or at least teach bait to swim.) Military training took over - we were hidden from view and each other as we got our tackle out and prepared. Bayonets honed and ready, we were off!

Some colourful language was used as at least one show-off caught three trees before eventually managed to get the bait in the water. Like coiled springs ready to go into action at a week's notice and well stocked with paracetamol we waited. Some reminisced of days gone by, in faraway lands, when fishing was as easy as pulling a pin and dropping a grenade into the water. The days!

After five hours, with all but one fish successfully social distancing, we called it a day. Ravaged by the lovely weather and the relaxing peace and quiet we dissipated back to Largs, Irvine and the 3 Towns, our heroics as we battled to get worm on hook unknown and unsung.

We couldn't regroup in the pub as before, talking about the one that got away (which gets bigger with each pint until a friend's arm is needed, as well as your own.) But overall, a great socially distanced day out, with grateful thanks to the Kilwinning Eglinton Angling Club.



NEED INSPIRATION?

Do you need ideas or inspiration to get more active, meet new people, or just enjoy life more? Call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.

Call for camaraderie



If you have lost touch with the veterans' community, it's never too late to reconnect. The approach of winter weather and the continuation of coronavirus curbs mean opportunities for face to face get-togethers are limited. However, the humble telephone can open more doors than you might think, says Rachel Connor.



Through the Comradship Circles service Age Scotland connects veterans around Scotland with each other for a weekly or fortnightly group chat of up to an hour, by phone. It's for any veteran of the British Armed Forces aged 50 or over, and their partners, widows, or widowers.

Hazel is one of those enjoying a regular get-together. "I'm loving it," she says. "It's a shame we can't see each other in person but it's fantastic to be able to keep in touch."

Hazel is part of Circle Age Scotland has set up for Lothian Veterans Centre. Veterans and Families Support Worker Pauline Cherrington says; "I think Comradship Circles are a great opportunity to bring our members together at a time when we can't have them in the Centre. It doesn't take much knowledge of technology- it's a simple phone call and keeps everyone connected."

Veterans who are not part of an existing group can also join a Comradship Circle. Call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222** and I, or another team member, will call you back to find out about you and your interests so we can match you with a Circle group you will enjoy at a time and one a day that suits you. Taking part is free: there are no call charges.

Group telephone chat won't suit everyone, but there plenty of options for those who prefer one to one conversation. **Legion Scotland** can match you with a friendly volunteer who, subject to coronavirus rules, may be able to visit as well as phone. Many charities offer regular friendly calls, including **Sight Scotland Veterans** for veterans with sight loss, and the **RAF Association** for those from the RAF family. You'll find their contact details on the back page. The **Age Scotland helpline** can also arrange a regular one-to-one phone call if you are feeling lonely or isolated.

THE KNOWLEDGE

All London taxi drivers must pass the famous 'Knowledge of London' exam. To do so, they must memorise 320 routes within a six-mile radius of Charing Cross, an area with over 60,000 streets and roads, and all places of interest.

Later life can bring changes and opportunities and you may need to know about organisations and services that are unfamiliar. The good news is that Age Scotland has done 'The Knowledge' for you. We can tell you about the best routes for getting help when you need it. We can also tell you about 'places of interest' – groups and opportunities that can help you live life to the full. And if you want more information, or advice, you can call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.

The Coronavirus Maze

With coronavirus restrictions in a state of constant change it's hard to keep up to speed. If in doubt about what you can and can't do, or if you have concerns about staying safe, Age Scotland has an online guide available at age.scot/coronavirus. We won't send out printed copies of this as it needs to be continually updated, however you can call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222** for the latest information and advice.

Face covering exemptions scheme

To curb the spread of coronavirus face coverings must be worn on public transport and in most indoor public places. However, the Scottish Government accepts that for some people in some situations this will be difficult, for example because of a health condition or disability. If you are one of them, you can now apply for an exemption card that can be worn out and about so that others understand why you are not using a face covering. To request an exemption card call freephone **0800 121 6240** (10am – 3pm, Monday – Friday) or visit www.exempt.scot.

Smoke alarms – don't be alarmed!

New legislation in Scotland will require homes to have interlinked fire and smoke alarms. Every house must have: a smoke alarm in the living room and in circulation spaces such as hallways and landings, a heat alarm in every kitchen, all alarms ceiling mounted and interlinked, and a carbon monoxide alarm where there are fixed combustion appliances such as boilers and wood burners.

Originally the deadline for complying with the new law was 1st February 2021. However, after concerns were raised that homeowners were unaware of and unprepared to meet that deadline, the Scottish Government will now ask the Scottish Parliament to extend the deadline by 12 months. If you have questions about the new law, or home safety and security generally, you can call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.



Winter fuel bills

New rules from Ofgem, the energy sector regulator, will boost protection for vulnerable energy customers this winter. From 15th December energy suppliers must offer emergency credit to customers who cannot top up their pre-payment meters. They must also offer 'realistic and sustainable' repayment plans to those who are in debt.

Being unable to heat your home adequately can put you at increased risk of heart attacks, stroke, flu, and other illnesses. If you are worried about fuel bills or want help making sure that you are getting the financial assistance that you are entitled to, can call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.

Veterans Rail Card

Veterans can now save on most rail fares with a new Veterans' Railcard. The card is available at an introductory price of £21 for a one-year Railcard or £61 for a three-year Railcard, until 31st March 2021. Railcard holders, and their companion, can get a third off most rail fares and 60 percent off for up to four children aged 5-15 years. It comes as both an actual card and digital card that can be kept on a smart phone. You can apply for the railcard at www.veterans-railcard.co.uk or call **0345 301 1656** for more information.

The library is open!

Age Scotland publishes a library of free advice guides for older people, their families, friends, and carers. Topics covered include housing, care and support, money, health, and 'planning ahead'. We break down each of these broad headings further so, for example, the money topic has individual guides on specific welfare benefits. We also have a suite of guides specifically for older veterans. To find out more about what's on offer and to order guides by post call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**. All our guides are also available online at www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/information-advice.



Your Unforgotten Forces directory

If you can't find what you need here, call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222** and we'll identify who is best placed to help.

Transport

Fares4Free can get you to and from vital appointments, groups, and clubs.

Call David Gibson: **07708299399**
www.fares4free.org

Home maintenance

The **Highland Veterans Handyperson Service** can do odd jobs and small repairs if you live Ross and Cromarty, Sutherland, and Moray.

01349 884774
Email: **handyperson@ilmhighland.co.uk**

For information on services in other areas call Age Scotland **0800 12 44 222**.

Support for ex-RAF

The **RAF Association** offers welfare support and friendship opportunities, for you and your family.

0800 018 2361 / www.rafa.org.uk

Welfare support

Poppyscotland offers welfare support on a range of issues, including financial.

0131 550 1557
Email: **gethelp@poppyscotland.org.uk**

Specialist ex-service information and advice

The **Armed Services Advice Project** has a free advice line, with one to one case-worker support available many areas.

0808 800 1007 / www.adviceasap.org.uk

Later life information, advice and friendship

Age Scotland offers information and advice on later life matters. You can also enjoy free regular group chat as part of a veterans' Comradeship Circle.

0800 12 44 222 (Monday-Friday 9-5)
www.age.scot/helpline

Support with mental health and wellbeing

Support is available from **Combat Stress** regardless of a mental health diagnosis.

0800 138 1619 (All and every day)
www.combatstress.org.uk

Help during NHS treatment

Defence Medical Welfare Service can support you during a period of hospital treatment if you live in Fife, Edinburgh, Borders, Lanarkshire and in the Vale of Leven area.

Call Bob Reid: **01738 472143**
Email: **rreid@dmws.org.uk**

Support with hearing loss and tinnitus

The **Hearing Forces** service can support you to live well with hearing loss or tinnitus.

07464 828452 / hearing.forces@rnid.org.uk

Support with sight loss

Sight Scotland Veterans can support you to live well with sight loss and enjoy a range of social opportunities.

0800 035 6409 / sightscotlandveterans.org.uk

Social and leisure activities

If you live in west-central Scotland, you can enjoy camaraderie and a range of activities at the **Erskine Reid Macewen Activity Centre**.

Call Debs Dickson: **0141 814 4535**
Email: **debra.dickson@erskine.org.uk**

Support to reconnect with your community

Legion Scotland's friendly volunteers can visit regularly and support you to re-connect with your community if you have lost touch.

Call Tommy Douglas: **0131 550 1560**
Email: **support@legionscotland.org.uk**

Unforgotten Forces also includes arts projects from **Luminate** and **Music in Hospitals & Care**, currently on hold due to coronavirus, and helps older veterans have a say on matters affecting them through the **Scottish Older People's Assembly**.

www.unforgottenforces.scot