

Review



Listen here

The journal of
Blind Veterans UK

September 2024

Veterans go 'Wet and Wild'!

An action-packed adventure
at our Rustington Centre



Inside:

Veterans Art Project: VE80

John launches 'Every Penny Counts'

Armed Forces Day 2024



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss



Champion our cause in your community

Remembrance is a time that we come together to reflect on the bravery and selflessness of those who have gone before us, and consider how different our lives could have been without their sacrifices. It's also important that we come together so that our younger generations never forget.

We are calling on our Members to spread the word about our Planning to Remember Campaign.

This campaign calls on individuals, groups and organisations to plan an event or activity between 26 October and 12 November 2024, to draw attention to this significant time

while also raising awareness and vital funds to support our work.

Are you part of a group or organisation that would like to organise a war memorial walk? Could your local place of worship hold a community Brew Up or a Remembrance collection for Blind Veterans UK as part of its Sunday service?

If you have a contact you could share with our Community Partnerships team, or you would like more information about our campaign, please visit blindveterans.org.uk/planningtoremember or get in touch by calling 0300 111 2233 or emailing fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk



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On the cover
Members and centre staff enjoying an action-packed week of watersports at our Rustington Centre.



A productive summer

A message from your Chief Executive **Adrian Bell**

I write this in the week that some of our Members are enjoying the annual summer camp hosted by HMS Sultan, the Royal Navy's School of Engineering in Gosport, Hampshire. The camp was



Adrian Bell

first set up by the vicar of Titchfield in Hampshire, from where it migrated to the Royal Navy Survival Equipment School at Seafeld Park, which was located nearby before it found a long-term home at HMS Daedalus in Lee on Solent. In the late 90s, at the closure of HMS Daedalus, the camp moved to HMS Sultan from where it has been run ever since.

Key to the support and running of the camp was the Fleet Air Arm Field Gun Crew, which used to provide the 'Guide Dogs' for campers in the week after the Field Gun was run at the Royal Tournament in London. Despite the demise of the Royal Tournament, The Fleet Air Arm Field Gun Crew Association still support the camp and we are indebted to them for their sterling efforts on behalf of our Members.

By happy coincidence, our recently appointed Director of Transformation,



Our Members and staff on HMS Sultan summer camp

Lee Hodgson, ran in the Fleet Air Arm Field Gun Crew in the 90s and fondly remembers his years as a 'Guide Dog'! I must also mention Chief Petty Officer Lorraine Osman, who serves at HMS Sultan presently, and has taken on the significant task of planning and running the camp. She is an absolute star who serves our Members with passion and pride.

On an entirely separate note, many of you recently took part in the first full Member Survey for which I thank you wholeheartedly. This is a really important piece of work which will help guide us in the way we organise to

support Members present and future. I will be looking to repeat this survey in due course and would welcome any feedback you might have that you think would help improve the survey and/or the way in which it is undertaken.

More than a third of you have responded thus far and I am due to receive the full results quite soon, but unfortunately not in time for this Review for which I apologise. The survey has been a significant piece of work and taken slightly longer than we had planned - and I had hoped - but I will be giving all Members the →



Staff and blind veterans taking part in a seated exercise session at the Llandudno Centre of Wellbeing

opportunity to understand what the survey says shortly. I am considering undertaking the feedback by way of a recorded presentation which we will make accessible to all, alongside a written transcript, for you and your partners/families to listen to and/or watch. Please do let me know your thoughts on this as I am happy to be guided by you.

I must also thank everyone who has been affected by the temporary

“Many of you recently took part in the first full Member Survey for which I thank you wholeheartedly”

closure of Llandudno, for your patience and forbearance as we have gone about the various works we needed to do. We are well on track now and the centre is presently partially open to Members and will be fully open in early September. I do appreciate just how much of a disappointment this has been to many of you, but I would not have made the decisions I did if they were not in the best interests of all.

The Llandudno staff have all been outstanding in their reactions and response to the closure and they are all really looking forward to seeing the centre full of Members again and enjoying all Llandudno has to offer!

Finally, I wish you all well for the rest of the summer, and long may these slightly warmer and less wet days run! As ever, if you have anything you wish to contact me about, please just reach out. I always enjoy hearing from Members and continue to learn a lot, although I recognise I still have lots more to learn! 🍷



News

Christmas and New Year breaks

If you'd like to come to our centres over the festive season, please register your interest via your community team by the 25 October.

The change in season brings with it challenges in respect of winter viruses, so in order to maintain service delivery across the festive period, the centres will be offering stays for *either* Christmas or New Year (so there will be no opportunity to stay for both). While reducing the risk of closure, this will also give more of you the opportunity to enjoy the festive period with us.

Llandudno

Christmas dates:

North: 21-27 December

South: 23-29 December

New Year dates:

North: 28 December - 4 January

South: 30 December - 7 January

Rustington

Christmas dates:

23-29 December

New Year dates:

30 December - 5 January



Christmas at our centres

Once spaces have been allocated, those who have secured a place will be notified as soon as possible. Our bookings team will not be able to take requests for these dates.

Did you know?

You can receive all the latest Member news, announcements and opportunities for you and your family in your email inbox every month?

Whether you're a Member, a family member or a carer, all you need to do is sign up via the Member area on our website at blindveterans.org.uk/member-updates. →

Llandudno Centre reopening

Following a period of building works at our Llandudno Centre, we are delighted to share that, as from 2 September, we are back to full operational capacity.

In July, we partially re-opened one side of the building for residential stays, as well as access to the lounge, gym, creative studio and an exciting programme of activities. Further



Our Llandudno Centre at night

rooms have since been made available.

Anyone whose stays have been affected by the closure has been contacted by our hospitality team so they can book their next stay.

Laying a wreath in memory of Kenneth

After Member Kenneth Aughton sadly passed away in January, in his memory, his son, Peter, took the Blind Veterans UK wreath, organised for Kenneth's funeral, to the D-Day beaches in Normandy.

On 25 June, he placed it amongst all the formal wreaths laid during the 6 June commemorations at the British Normandy Memorial.

Peter said "When we approached the D-Day commemorative wall, I noticed a gap on the right-hand side. I was delighted to have the opportunity to place the wreath there in remembrance of injured veterans.

"My hope is that even if just one person sees the wreath and contacts Blind Veterans UK, either for help or to offer support, it will have been worth giving it another purpose after its use in remembrance of my father."



Peter lays a wreath at Normandy in memory of his father, Kenneth

These boots were made for walking!

Five Members, plus several centre staff, will be looking forward to putting their feet up after their gruelling 100k walking challenge on 6-7 September.

The group have been gearing up to walk from Eastbourne to Arundel along the South Downs Way with a special week of training at our Rustington Centre. They took on several walks of differing terrains, and spent time on gym work and stretching. They even enjoyed a smoothie lesson with our centre sports nutrition expert, Jean.



Members and staff prepare for the South Downs walking challenge

Blind Veteran Ian, from the Isle of Wight, reflected on his week: "After pushing myself last year when I walked the first 'Blindfold Bimble' from Shanklin to Sandown, I decided to push myself again and sign up for this walking challenge. This week of preparation has been an eyeopener. I still feel a bit of in trepidation, but through this training I can see how I can scale and push myself. It's been good."

The team launched their Just Giving page to raise funds for Blind Veterans UK. Visit [justgiving.com/page/bvuk-ultra24](https://www.justgiving.com/page/bvuk-ultra24) →

Remembering VE Day

On 8 May 1945, after six years of a gruelling, brutal war, Germany finally surrendered and peace was declared. Millions of people across the country took to the streets to celebrate with parties, dancing and singing.

We asked 97-year-old Member Basil Everett, who had only just joined up by VE Day, to share his recollections of this unique and extraordinary historic event.

After being called up in 1945, just after turning 18 years old, Basil had no idea that the war would soon be over. Having been sent for infantry training near Worcester, he was mentally prepared for six more years of war.

Instead, just weeks into his training, as he was walking along the street, an American soldier coming the other way shouted, "Hey buddy! You know the war is over?"

As he rushed back to barracks, he looked up at the Malvern Hills nearby. On top of a peak, three beacons had been lit to herald the end of the war.

All personnel were given leave. The officer in charge told them, "You don't need a pass. Just be



A young Basil in his service uniform at the age of 18

back." Basil travelled to his family in Wolverhampton and found the centre of town packed with people celebrating, some climbing over the statue of Prince Albert on his horse. He even remembers someone breaking the sword at Albert's side, forever marking the statue on VE Day.

Unfortunately, he didn't come out of the celebrations completely unscathed either. He says, "I got back to barracks a couple of nights after VE Day and went straight back on duty again. Within a couple of days, I was

in hospital with shingles. That's what comes of mingling with crowds!"

The end of the war in Europe gave Basil a "great sense of relief", but didn't mean the end of Basil's army service. He was sent abroad and spent three years in Italy, spending three Christmases in three different Italian towns, with three different companies of the Royal Engineers. On the first anniversary of VE Day, they were given a day at the seaside.

As an electrician, Basil was very busy in war-torn Italy, but his duties also included shovelling rocks into trucks, cleaning the saddles of the officers' horses and guarding prisoners of war.

In 1948, Basil was finally sent back to England to be demobbed. He was given a "terrible!" demob suit, some ration coupons and a rail ticket to Wolverhampton.

He arrived at Wolverhampton at about four o'clock in the morning and walked home. He says, "I didn't see anyone in the town at all. I never passed anybody. I went straight through Queen Square, where Albert still lost his sword from VE night."

Although he hadn't been able to tell his family he was on his way home, his mother was waiting. He says, "Mother

said she knew I was coming. She was ready for me. I don't know how, but she always knew."

Now 97, damage from glaucoma and retinal occlusion may have left Basil completely blind. He says that our phone groups keep him in "touch with the outside world". He really enjoys them all - the music, history and reminiscences groups - and takes part in quizzes, too.

His daughter visits regularly and prepares all his food and, although he can't read his many books anymore, the knowledge is most definitely still there. We're yet to uncover a fact about heraldry that Basil doesn't know! 🇬🇧

Tell us your memories of VE Day

As we approach the 80th anniversary of VE Day on 8 May 2025, we want to capture as many recollections as possible. If you have memories of the end of the war, no matter how old you were at the time, please email or phone us, or we can interview you if you prefer. Contact Zoe on zoe.smith@blindveterans.org.uk or call her on 020 7616 7935.

In your community

Just some of the social gatherings across the country that have taken place over the summer, bringing Members together in their local areas

Armed Forces Day 2024

We celebrated Armed Forces Day at events across the country on 29 June, coming together to show our support for our Armed Forces community - both past and present. Thank you to everyone who came out to show their support and make these events so memorable!



Members and staff had a fantastic day at Plymouth Hoe

Rustington

It was wonderful to see everyone who visited our stand at Littlehampton on Armed Forces Day. Visitors had the opportunity to chat with us about our work, try on our Sim Specs, and meet our inspiring blind veterans and volunteers.

We were particularly honoured to welcome the Chairman of Rustington



Volunteer, Yvonne, presents a raffle prize to a sea cadet at Llandudno



Aaron Garrett at the Army careers stand in Plymouth

Parish Council, Jamie Bennett, who experienced tunnel vision through our simulated spectacles, with guidance from Rustington staff member Annabel.

Our Members also stopped by to visit and enjoy a break at our stand, soaking up the atmosphere and the sounds of the military bands. The day was such a success that we even ran out of leaflets.

Llandudno

Armed Forces Day at our Llandudno Centre was a fantastic event, despite the rainy weather. We hosted a coffee morning, joined by the Mayor and Mayoress of Llandudno and representatives from across the



The Mayor of Rustington trying Simspecs at Littlehampton

Armed Forces, including the Conwy County Sea Cadets and Army Cadets.

We had a great turnout, with visitors, volunteers, and Members all coming together to show their support.

Plymouth

We had a fantastic day down at Plymouth Hoe. The amazing weather brought the crowds out, and it was a privilege to showcase some of the portraits from our D-Day 80 exhibition, which were a real talking point.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, we had a great Armed Forces Day with our new →



June, right, celebrates her 100th birthday with staff and Members

volunteer Megan. Blind veteran Alan joined us, with some of his relatives, proudly wearing his medals. Another Member, Gary, also made it along and enjoyed a welcome rest at our stand. And we had visitors from our friends at the Defence Garden Scheme, making it an all-round great day for meeting lots of military families.

Scunthorpe

Scunthorpe Armed Forces Day was a wonderful day with lots of people and veterans stopping by to say hello.

Blind veteran John joined our team in the morning and thoroughly enjoyed chatting with other veterans, as well as the general public, and, of course, the free cake, sausage rolls, and cup of tea.

Bridgwater

In Bridgwater, the Armed Forces Day event was a success despite the grey and chilly start. There was a good turnout with lots of interest in our Sim-Specs, and the sun came out in the afternoon!

Celebrating 100 years at the Ferryhill social group

We were delighted to celebrate Member June Frank's 100th Birthday at our Ferryhill group on 21 June, with a surprise party! One of our staff members dressed up in an RAF uniform to remind June of her days serving in the RAF and there were lots of games, songs and cake. All our Members thoroughly enjoyed themselves and were more than happy to join in the group singalong. 🎉

Want to know what's going on in your local area? Contact your local community team who can tell you everything you need to know.



John launches 'Every Penny Counts'

Member **John Brice** introduces his simple campaign to encourage people to raise funds for Blind Veterans UK

John Brice has had a fundraising idea. The 77-year-old from Weston-Super-Mare, is asking people to save an old plastic milk bottle or cordial bottle and fill it with loose change which can then be donated to the charity.

John says: "Money is tight for so many



John with his decorated bottles

people right now, so I was wracking my brain to think what could we as Members do to support the charity that won't cost a lot? Everyone has a milk carton at home, so I thought let's use that. Some time ago I remember the national news reporting that some people were discarding their 1p and 2p coins. Discarding them into our containers is a much better idea!

"I've decorated a label to stick on my plastic milk bottle and when visitors come to my home I'm hoping they will ask, 'What's that?' It'll become a talking point and hopefully they'll start to feed it too, and maybe even decorate their own. Every penny counts these days and if we work together those pennies will make pounds."

John joined the RAF at the age of 15 as a boy entrant, serving for over 26 years as a cook and then a catering clerk in the UK, Middle East, Ascension Island and North Africa. He was discharged with the rank of Sergeant in 1988. →

He lost his sight in 2006 due to age related macular degeneration.

He says: "I can remember the consultant appointment so clearly. She said I'd lose my central vision and all I heard was, 'You're going to lose your sight in both of your eyes.' I stood outside the hospital stunned and thought to myself, 'How the devil will I survive this?'"

"Sometime later, I started to volunteer for Vision North Somerset. I was based at the hospital chatting to people going to their eye appointments when I spotted a leaflet for Blind Veterans UK.

"The year I began receiving support from the charity was life-changing. I was lacking in confidence; I attended an introduction week at one of their centres and remember thinking that everyone else around me was so happy. With the support and encouragement of staff and my fellow blind veterans, I soon realised I could still do a million and one things I hadn't thought were possible.

"The charity provided me with a magnifying mirror, which is an absolute godsend - I wouldn't be able to shave without it. I also have computer software that allows me to zoom in on the text. This means I can do everything on my computer, including

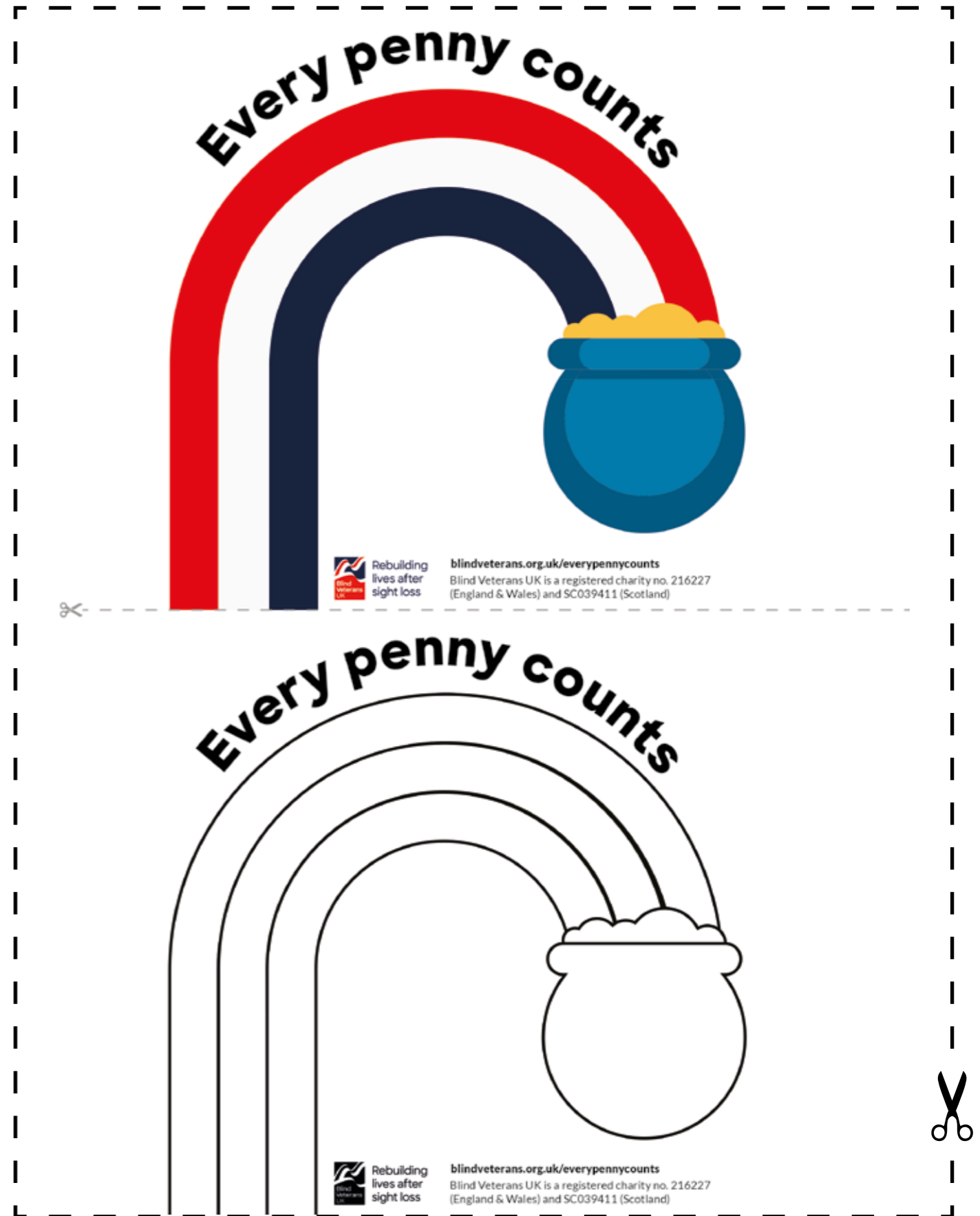
online shopping and banking. I hate to be a pain to others so this means I can do things for myself and not starve! I can also use it to plan journeys, meaning I can pop off out with confidence."

John hopes that others will join him in donating their loose change with the help of their own plastic milk bottles. He says: "In 1970, I was sent on detachment to Madagascar and one afternoon, sat on the veranda with a cold drink, I became aware of a grasshopper levitating up the side of one of the 12 foot supporting columns. I thought I was going mad, but then I noticed it was being carried by a small army of ants.

"I watched fascinated as the ants worked as a team and, reaching the top, manipulated the grasshopper horizontally through a crack into the nest! I thought to myself, just look what they have achieved by working together! That was 54 years ago and I still remember it clearly.

"By working together we can make every penny count." 🐜

■ **If you'd like to support John's campaign, then take a look at our website to find out more at blindveterans.org.uk/everypennycounts**





How to knit or sew your own poppy

As we prepare for Remembrance this November, we show you how to make your own poppy to proudly wear on the day, or add to the stunning display at our Llandudno Centre



Rebuilding
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To get involved in John's Every Penny Counts campaign, simply cut out the template on the reverse side of this page, stick it on your empty milk bottle and start collecting loose change to donate to the charity.

Your bottle can sit on your kitchen counter top, or in your office at work, and maybe even be used to collect donations from family, friends and colleagues.

You have the option of two templates: a pre-designed one or a blank one you can design yourself. The choice is yours!



What you'll need

- Red four-ply wool or red felt
- Size 4mm knitting needles or a crochet hook
- A black button
- Green felt
- A safety pin
- Scissors

- A large needle
- Red thread
- Glue

Where to start

1. Using the knitting needles and red wool, cast on 20 stitches.
2. Knit a garter stitch until ➔



Making poppies at Llandudno



Last year's knitted poppy display at our Llandudno Centre

work measures 10cm x 10cm, or thereabouts.

3. If you're knitting, cast off and leave a long enough tail. Then thread the end with a large needle. For felt, thread a needle with red yarn.
4. With the threaded needle, weave the needle in and out around the sides of the knitted or felt square.
5. Gather in the sides by pulling in the yarn. This should create a round poppy-like shape.
6. When you're happy with the shape



A close up of the knitted poppies on the stunning display

of the poppy, secure the middle with a few stitches then weave in any loose thread and sew the button on top.

7. With the button sewn on and poppy nicely shaped, cut a leaf out of green felt.
8. Glue or sew the leaf on to the back of the poppy.
9. Sew the safety pin on to the back of the poppy.
10. Your knitted poppy is ready to be worn with pride. 🇬🇧

STEVEGILLPHOTOGRAPHY / ADOBE STOCK

How to get involved in our poppy project

If you'd like to add your poppy to the 2024 poppy display at our Llandudno Centre, please send it to us by 14 October to: 2024 Poppy Display, Blind Veterans UK Llandudno Centre, Queens Road, Llandudno, LL30 1UT
You're welcome to include the name of a loved one who has passed away.
We will plant the name with your poppy in our field of Remembrance.



Listen here

Service spotlight

Review writer **Sheena Thomson** talks to former Royal Navy electrical engineer, **Mike Taylor**



Name: Mike Taylor
Trade: Electrical mechanic (general electrics)
Service: Royal Navy, 1959-1961

Former electrical engineer, Mike, joined the charity in 2022, following his diagnosis of dry macular degeneration and age-related macular degeneration in his right and left eyes respectively. He and his partner, Sue, stayed at our Rustington Centre

in February, where Mike shared memories from his national service.

What was life like for you in the Royal Navy?

"I initially deferred my national service as I was completing a five-year electrical apprenticeship. When I did join, I was a qualified electrician, so I joined at HMS Collingwood and went straight on to a leading hands course. I qualified in the Navy after six months but didn't pick up my hook [Leading Hand rate] for 12 months.

"After qualifying, I flew straight out to Malta as the RN was recommissioning a landing craft, HMS Dieppe. It was a Landing Craft Tank (LCT) that was taken out of the reserve fleet and part of a little squadron; two LCTs, two smaller landing craft and a frigate.

"After a couple of months in Malta doing sea trials, we sailed from Malta through the Suez canal to Aden. We only travelled at seven knots, our maximum speed, travelling through the canal at night. →



Equator crossing certificate

“When we arrived at Aden, we were moored on a buoy in the harbour. After that, the rest of the time I recall we then went down to Mombasa, back to Aden, then to Bahrain and then back to Aden again, all the time crawling along at seven knots.

“The daily routine onboard was getting up at 0630. We’d lash and stow our hammocks, shower and get dressed, have breakfast and then start work at 0830. The day was spent doing routine electrical maintenance. The routine also included some night



Mike crossing the equator

watches as the lighting in the galley was hopeless.

“HMS Dieppe had around 103 ships company. I remember when we crossed the line [the equator]. I was fed a salt tablet and had to wash it down with salt water. I also got a nice shave with flour and water, then I was plopped into a pool! There were about 30 of us - all dressed up. It was fun and games for all. I was flown home from Aden and had all my leave – foreign service leave, Christmas leave and discharge leave.

“It was great to be introduced to everyday aids like talking scales, a talking watch and other things”

What difference has it made to your life being a Member?

“I was diagnosed about four years ago, just as we were coming out of the pandemic. When I first joined Blind Veterans UK, I had a one-hour call with other Members every week.

“I’ve also been introduced to wellbeing



A young Mike in his navy uniform



HMS Dieppe

and creative activities, and have taken up model building, which I do with my grandson. So far, I’ve made models of St Paul’s cathedral and a steam engine. An aircraft carrier is my next project.

“Being a Member has opened my eyes to things that I can still do. It was great to be introduced to everyday aids like talking scales, a talking watch and other things.

“My partner, Sue, and I have also enjoyed visiting the centres. I always find these visits very enjoyable. It’s the camaraderie I feel around other veterans and picking up tips on how to cope with my blindness.

“Sue has also noticed me ‘blossoming’ when I’m among the Blind Veterans UK community and others experiencing blindness.” 🌈



Front from left: Chris, Lee, Jules, Mark and Jamie with our centre staff



Balancing on a giant paddleboard together at Chichester Waterpark

Veterans go 'Wet and Wild'!

Member Jules shares his diary of a recent action-packed activity week at our Rustington Centre

The Rustington Centre was looking its absolute best, with newly turfed lawns glowing in the afternoon sunshine, when five of us Members arrived to go 'Wet and Wild'. This is a glimpse of what unfurled...

Wednesday
Our first day took us to the leisure facility to find out what axe throwing entailed. We were introduced to a table laden with an array of axes, tomahawks, and other frightening

devices - including a rounded shovel head with very sharp edges!

The instructor gave us a brief demo of throwing techniques and showed us our target - a large block of wood fixed to a wall six metres away, caged in lame. So, basically, a very large dart board without the markings.

We each paired up with a member of staff and went off to our own lane to fire-away. At first all we could hear was the dull thud of our axes bouncing off the target but, before long, we started to hear the immensely satisfying clear sound of our axe firmly embedding itself in the target.

In the afternoon, we moved on to rifle shooting at the outdoor range where we took turns to fire semi-automatic weapons at suspended metallic targets. This brought out our competitive nature and the afternoon concluded with a rapid fire shoot off, resulting in a well-deserved victory for Chris.

Thursday
The first 'wet' part of our week took place at Chichester Waterpark. In the morning, we tried kayaking and paddle boarding in the safety of this former gravel pit lake. We ended the session all balanced on a giant paddle board, which descended into a very mature water fight! →



The Members celebrating after their game of footgolf in Brighton

In the afternoon we tackled a huge inflatable assault course moored in the middle of the lake. Whilst great fun, this was challenging in many ways and surprisingly hard work.

Friday

The day's morning challenge - new to all of us - which took place at the Hove Lagoon, was wake boarding. In simple terms, your feet go into boots fitted to a board, similar to a snow board. Then, once in the water, you hold a bracket attached to an overhead pulley system, and the pulley moves as you slowly rise from the water until you're standing on your board, making it look so serenely

calm and easy. Well, that's the theory anyway!

We all tried it, with different degrees of success and failure. Our two stand-out stand-up performers were Mark and Jamie, though the latter edged it with his bravado of a one-handed wave at the end of his run!

The afternoon brought more competition as we split into two teams to construct rafts from four barrels, plus planks of wood and rope.

Our two Royal Engineers (Jamie and Mark) were appointed 'Designers-in-Chief' and each team managed to

“In the afternoon we tackled a huge inflatable assault course which was moored in the middle of the lake”

create sturdy, floating rafts which were paddled, pushed and pulled across the lagoon. Jamie's crew won a narrow victory. We rounded off a great day with more paddle boarding.

Saturday

This day was a trip to the Queen Elizabeth II Activity Centre in Southampton, where a range of activities were available for us to try.

After starting off with archery, we then tried using a crossbow - another first for all of us. Then after lunch we took up the chance to try their zip wire - Zip World in North Wales it was not, but still a good laugh for all.

We were offered the chance to do one further activity and, as Lee had overheard a remark that only one blind person had previously made it to the top of the climbing wall, he had to give it a go. He took on the challenge with great determination and eventually reached out to ring the bell at the top. Then, competitive to the last, Chris and Jamie followed him to the top!

Sunday

As befits a last day of any activity week, we enjoyed a very gentle wind down with a bit of footgolf in the morning. (Imagine a pitch and putt golf course with holes the size of dustbin lids and that's what we were kicking footballs around.)

Then, after our first lunch at the Rustington Centre, we ventured off to the Firefighters Charity Rehabilitation Centre to use their pool for a few games and a swim. A great end to a hectic and action-packed week.

An inspiring week

Special thanks go to Theresa and Rich who planned and organised our week. And huge thanks go to the drivers too, and other staff members who ferried us around, guided us and took part in activities alongside us.

The week was fantastic and re-established my confidence and belief that I can still do all the activities I enjoy, despite my sight loss.

And having two totally blind members with us - Lee and Jamie - was such a source of inspiration. Both of them are genuine real-life embodiments of this charity's encouraging 'Victory over Blindness' spirit. 🏆



Listen here



Michael, third from right in the front row, at the House of Lords

My career after the military

Former RAF Aircraftman, **Michael Skelton**, 87, talks to **Sheena Thomson** about his old job at the House of Lords

From Nelson Mandela to Mikhail Gorbachev, Member Michael Skelton has rubbed shoulders with some of the most important leaders in history. And all because he used to work as a

doorkeeper at the House of Lords.

The former RAF Aircraftman, now retired, joined up in 1954 and left more than 20 years later as a sergeant.

“Like the institution, there is history and evolution behind the function and duties of a doorkeeper”

After being encouraged by a friend to pursue a career in the House of Lords at the Palace of Westminster, he got the job there almost immediately. He explains his motivation for joining: “What appealed to me was the environment. Once you become a Lord, you reach the highest position that you can in life, so everybody was relaxed and friendly. It was a lovely atmosphere to work in.”

Like the institution, there is history and evolution behind the function and duties of a doorkeeper, as Michael explains: “The origins of the House of Lords go back to the 12th century. The Lords were not very well behaved, so they appointed someone to discipline them. As a symbol of office, they gave him a black stick and the title, The Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.

“If, as Lord, you misbehaved, Black Rod had the power to fine them, but he couldn’t be everywhere at once, so he employed others to act on his behalf. As a symbol of their authority,

they wore the coat tails and a badge, which indicated they belonged to Black Rod, represented him, and acted on his behalf.”

As a doorkeeper, Michael was responsible for the smooth running of the House, dealing with the facilities, the public and any potentially tricky situations. He recalls one incident when a police officer approached him for his assistance with an agitated member of the public:

“I went down and asked what was bothering him, and he said, ‘I’ve come here to kill Mrs. Thatcher’. I apologised, adding: ‘I’m sorry, but there’s a queue, and you are at the back of the queue, but if you leave your name and phone number, I’ll call you.’

“He then left of his own accord and because I got his contact details the police were able to follow up.”

There were four Black Rods during Michael’s tenure, which spanned 25 years. He recalls some of his more memorable experiences during this time, which included meeting world leaders Robert Mugabi, Nelson Mandela and Bill Clinton, to name but a few.

He says, “I had to sometimes look after VIPs. I had to walk along →

[the House] and they followed me, because I knew where we were going.

“Mikhail Gorbachev surprised me when he visited. I was taking him and Lech Walesa on a guided tour and we were standing inside parliament in the central lobby, Gorbachev appeared with his interpreter and then asked me, ‘Who’s in charge?’ I replied, ‘I am.’ He then asked ‘Does the President have to shake hands with you? Are you a welcoming party?’ I replied ‘No, we are the peasants of England, and he doesn’t have to shake hands.’ Once



Michael at the House of Lords

translated to Gorbachev, he burst out laughing and came across the room and shook my hand.”

He also met our own Head of State, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II: “I met Her Majesty at least once a year [at the state opening of Parliament] and sometimes again if she came on separate occasions.

“When I received my MBE in 2000, as she pinned it on me, she said ‘Do you know, I could have brought this down at the last state opening and saved you the bother of coming up here.’”

Michael retired from the House of Lords in 2002 as Principal Doorkeeper and enjoyed spending his time cycling and golfing. Then, in around 2010, he started to notice problems with his eyesight, first as he was driving and then during a game of snooker. He says, “I was playing snooker at a local club I was a member of, and suddenly, I couldn’t see the balls at the end of the table. I went to an optician and was then referred to a specialist, who told me I had a condition called macular degeneration.”

The impact on Michael’s life was immediate. “I used to cycle every morning on the roads, and I played golf. So, I couldn’t do either of those

anymore. And I miss those sorts of things. It wasn’t the golf; it was the social – having our pork pie picnics and a tippie halfway through the round and putting the world to rights.

“Gradually I’ve lost sight in my left eye, but in my right eye I still have peripheral vision.”

Three years ago, Michael was introduced to Blind Veterans UK via his brother-in-law. He says, “He said to me, ‘Why don’t you join Blind Veterans UK?’ I’d never heard of them, but he got the phone number, I called, and a very lovely man put me onto my local representative, and it went from there.

“It’s a wonderful organisation. You’re in touch with people who are all in the same boat. Some are totally blind, and some have macular degeneration to varying degrees. We’re all able to sit and talk and exchange information about how we’re feeling.

“Talking to someone with similar experiences has been amazing. I go to a lunch once a month. We laugh, we exchange stories, and we all get on extremely well. But what I like most is that, even though I’m 87, many are in their 90s so I’m the young lad!”

Michael’s equally as complimentary



With Member, Nancy, at Rustington

about our Rustington Centre, saying, “It’s excellent and what makes the centre so good is the staff. They’re so attentive, caring and understanding. They’ll do anything for you. You can hardly sit still for five minutes, and someone asks, ‘Are you OK?’”

“All the attention is lovely. It makes you feel much more relaxed. And, of course, you talk to other people. We talk about our conditions.”

The staff and permanent residents look forward to welcoming the charming and good-humoured Michael back to the centre and hearing more about his remarkable life. 🇬🇧

Member voice

Tim Eckersley, our Member Engagement and Military Lead, shares the latest Member news and updates

This month's survey for all Members

Every month we ask a few multiple-choice questions to get your thoughts on a particular aspect of our work. We then share the results with you in the Review and via the Blind Veterans UK website once we have collated your

responses.

September's survey focuses on fundraising and the questions have been provided by Yvonne Konieczna, Executive Marketing Manager – Partnerships & Trusts

- Would you like to fundraise for Blind Veterans UK?
- Would you like our team to contact you with information how you can fundraise for us?
- Would you be interested in taking part in our challenge events, or do you know someone else who would?
- Do you know someone who works for a company that might wish to support us?

- **If you would like to get involved, you can reply directly via blindveterans.org.uk/monthlysurvey or contact our Member Support Hub on 01273 391447 between 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.**



HMS Wellington lunch

In July, Members enjoyed a lunch and guided tour aboard HMS Wellington, the only surviving Battle of Atlantic ship on the east side of the Atlantic. The ship has been an iconic feature on the River Thames since 1948.

The Battle of Atlantic was the longest battle of World War II, starting on 3 September 1939 and ending on 8 May 1945. HMS Wellington is credited with escorting over 103 Atlantic convoys and saving over 400 lives. The ship is listed on the National Historic Ships Register.

Members Roan Webb and Angela Morris were both enthralled. Roan said it was “a truly fantastic and memorable day,” while Angela, who was celebrating her birthday, added, “It was a fantastic day out and even better for being able to celebrate my birthday aboard HMS Wellington!”

New ‘champions’ pilot to launch

We will be launching a new pilot scheme, Military Sight Loss Champions, in October, to build on the support we receive from the Armed Forces. The scheme, which invites members of all regular, reserves and cadets to



PHILIPBIRD123 / ADOBE STOCK

Members and staff on board HMS Wellington

volunteer as ‘champions’ for Blind Veterans UK, will help us continue to remain relevant with this group, build new relationships and establish a military network across the UK. It will also give us the opportunity to offer information and expertise around eye care to service personnel.

A ‘champion’ - which could be one volunteer or elected person, or a division, squadron, regiment, ship or entire establishment, depending on how they wish to be involved - will participate through volunteering, fundraising and education. The scheme will run for six months, after which we will evaluate its success. We’ll provide an update in Review again soon. →

What did you think of our event?

Have you attended a Blind Veterans UK event recently? We'd love to know what you thought of it so we can improve our services and offer more of what you like. You can now provide events feedback to us directly via blindveterans.org.uk/event-feedback

New Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Military Dinner

The Member Engagement team are thrilled to be able to invite you to a new military dinner at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on 6 December.

The event will mark ten years since British combat troops left Afghanistan on 12 December 2014.

Located within the prestigious Indian Army Memorial Room, overlooking RMA Sandhurst's stunning grounds, the event will include a special tour of the Academy.

■ **If you'd like to attend this event, please register your interest at blindveterans.org.uk/sandhurst by 18 October.**

D-Day stories at HMS Sultan Military Dinner

Blind veterans and their guests, volunteers and staff from the charity, gathered together with representatives from HMS Sultan to enjoy canapes, a four-course meal in the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess at the Navy base, and even a performance by the Portsmouth Military Wives Choir.

Between courses, the group of 80 guests had the honour of listening to the fascinating wartime stories of D-Day veteran Alec Penstone.



Commanding Officer Mark Hamilton with Alec's representative, James

Although Alec, 99, who lives on the Isle of Wight, was unable to attend the event, tales of his Second World War escapades, including his time on the Arctic Convoys, were shared by his friend James King. James has written Alec's memoirs in a book 'My ten and a half Arctic Convoys'.

D-Day veteran George Chandler, 99 who lives in West Sussex, was the guest of honour at the dinner. Accompanied by his son Paul, they presented the Commanding Officer and HMS Sultan's Warrant Officer and Senior Rates Mess with a signed photograph of the Royal Navy torpedo boat he was onboard for D-Day as it made its way to Omaha Beach.

Three Blind Veterans UK Founder's Awards were also presented at the event. These awards recognise the inspiring contributions of blind veterans and their family members who share the same boundless spirit as the charity's founder, Sir Author Pearson, who opened the doors to war-blinded veterans in 1915 for the very first time.

One of these awards was presented to Bob Strickland, 86, from Fareham in Hampshire, for inspiring communities. Bob has been running a regular lunch club for his fellow blind veterans in his local area with the support of his wife, Ann. He was delighted to have been



Bob Strickland with his Founder's Award at the dinner

presented the award by the Base Warrant Officer, Daniel Castle.

Tim Eckersley, our Member Engagement and Military Lead, said: "These dinners provide a fantastic opportunity to bring our veterans together, alongside staff and volunteers who work for the charity.

"It's an honour to be in the presence of our veterans and to hear them laughing, reminiscing, catching up with old friends and creating new ones. The camaraderie and support between blind veterans are such a huge and valued part of the charity." 🇬🇧

NCWP creations

Our National Creative Project Coordinator, **Lucy Bradshaw**, shares a selection of wonderful artwork by our Members, created as part of the National Creative Project. Please do keep sending us your creations!

1. Frank Berry - Aircraft carrier **2. Ron Smith - Robin drawing** **3. Cameron Kennedy - Flower Moon Mosaic** **4. Viv Trout - Aircraft carrier and robin mosaic** **5. Miriam Bowler - Shell sketches** **6. Bryan Naylor - Watercolour seascape**





National Creative Wellbeing Programme

This month's creative activities you can take part in - all from the comfort of your own home...

To sign up to or find out more about the following creative activities or hobby circles, simply call **01273 391447**. You can leave a message on our answer machine if you'd just like to request an activity pack, or visit our Member area to sign up online at blindveterans.org.uk/activitykit. All our projects come with VI and

reader-friendly instructions, as well as the option of audio on a USB stick if requested

Mosaic

Autumn mandala mosaic: This bespoke mosaic has been designed for our Members for the autumn. A circular base with a concentric circle design, your tiles will be separated for you in labelled step by step bags, with everything else you'll need for your mosaic. Make sure to hang on to your leftover mosaic tiles, tweezers and glue for our Christmas leftovers mosaic project!

Wooden model

Angelfish: A cheerful wooden model kit, this angelfish kit comprises of 130 pieces. It will come with a step-by-step graphic designed picture guide and a written guide with hints and tips for each step. Slightly simpler than previous models, but still a fun challenge for model enthusiasts and fans of puzzles!



Angelfish

Veterans Art Project

VE Day 80: See over the page for more information about this. You are welcome to take part in both of these projects if you wish. Both kits come with a large print instruction guide as an introduction to your materials.

Painting: You'll receive 12 tubes of acrylic paint, a variety of brushes and sponges and a canvas, alongside some paper to practice on.

Drawing: You'll receive two sketch pads and a variety of specialist sketching materials, including coloured pencils.

■ **We'd love to see what you create. Share photos of your work by emailing us at ncwt@blindveterans.org.uk.**

Gardening project update:

Many of you took part in the Surprise Seeds project earlier this year, designed and provided by Member Jim Long. The impact of this project has been felt all over the charity, so in recognition of this outstanding contribution, Jim received a Founder's Award for Camaraderie, awarded on 18 June. Sadly, shortly after this, in August, Jim passed away. Our thoughts are with his family at this time. Thank you, Jim, for your support in providing a unifying project for your fellow Members -



Member Jim Long with his Founder's Award certificate

something that will continue to bring joy for years to come.

CREATIVE HOBBY CIRCLES

Facilitated by NCWP staff and our Member volunteers, Members meet monthly on the telephone for a chat about specific areas of shared interest. If you would like more information about our gardening, woodwork, painting and drawing or knitting groups, please get in touch at ncwt@blindveterans.org.uk or you can join a group via our website at blindveterans.org.uk/virtualgroup



Veterans Art Project

NCWP coordinator **Lucy Bradshaw** and **Jennie Fuller**, from our Member Engagement team, share information about an exciting new VE80 initiative to showcase your talents

The Veterans Art Project will run from September 2024 to January 2025 and is an opportunity for you to create artwork or photography for the charity. The theme is VE80 - the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, marking the end of the Second World War on the 8 May 1945.

We want to showcase your talents and raise the profile of our charity by exhibiting your work at various events and online, and using it for fundraising, gifts and merchandise. Even if you aren't old enough to remember VE Day, the project gives you the chance to explore the theme of war and peace and get creative.

Two bespoke art kits have been put together for painting and sketching, both suitable for beginners and more experienced artists. And for those interested in photography, you're also welcome to submit one VE80 themed photograph per person, taken with professional equipment or simply a phone camera. See page 39 for more information about the kits.

For all submissions, we ask that you include a short personal story, which includes a brief outline of your service history and your sight loss journey, plus the techniques you have used and the inspiration for your work. If you do remember VE Day, we'd love to read your recollections. The closing date for entries is 31 January 2025. 🇬🇧

- **For more information and to order a pack, please visit blindveterans.org.uk/vap, email ncwt@blindveterans.org.uk or call 01273 391 447 and leave a voicemail for the NCWP team.**



VE Day celebrations in London, 1945

AGENTURFOTOGRAFIN / ADOBE STOCK



Member Alan, who started losing his sight at just 24

Passing on the baton

Member **Alan Lock** reflects on the importance of supporting future generations of blind veterans with a gift in his Will

“As blind veterans, we truly feel the positive impact of the charity’s support on our lives and that of our families. We know first-hand how much the charity has transformed our lives. I think it’s important that we help ensure the same support is there for those veterans and their families that come after us. That’s why I am leaving a gift to Blind Veterans UK in my Will, and hope that you will consider joining me in doing so.”

Alan Lock was just 24 when he started noticing changes in his sight. Having joined the Royal Navy as a Marine Engineering Officer in 2002, he went

on to complete a nuclear submarine engineering course at HMS Sultan before an inherited eye disorder sadly forced his early retirement. →

Alan says “I’ve always been active and enjoyed sports, but suddenly, I felt like I couldn’t take part in these activities anymore. It was very frustrating.

“By 2005 I’d lost a huge amount of my sight due to cone rod dystrophy (bulls eye maculopathy). This forced my early retirement from the Navy after only three years of service. I’d prepared to be in the Royal Navy for life and without warning I had to start all over again, but now with very limited eyesight.

“I joined Blind Veterans UK in 2005 and the time with charity allowed me to meet other veterans. Hearing your stories and achievements encouraged me to take up the sports I had enjoyed.



Alan Lock

“Shortly before losing my sight, I had signed up to take part in the 151-mile-long Marathon des Sables - billed as the toughest footrace on earth. After hearing what other veterans like you had achieved, I decided I’d still give it a go. It was very tough, but it was a really good challenge.”

Alan has gone on to achieve many more thrill-seeking adventures, including becoming the first vision impaired person to ski from the coast of Antarctica to the South Pole and to row across the Atlantic. He credits the remarkable achievements of his fellow Members at Blind Veterans UK as inspiration for taking on some of the world’s hardest sporting events.

“Meeting other veterans going through the same thing showed me that I could still train and take part in the sports I love. The community and peer-support at the charity is crucial. I’m so grateful to you all for that.

“Much of the care and support we receive today, and the charity that brought us all together, is down to the generosity of those that previously left gifts in their Wills. Please consider leaving a gift in your Will to Blind Veterans UK too, so that together we can give back and help ensure that this support and inspiration is available in the future.” 🇬🇧



Quiz time

Our quizmaster **Ron Russell** tests your general knowledge

1. What rank in the army is three chevrons and a crown?

2. Who is the longest serving US president?

3. What’s the name of Japan’s highest mountain?

4. In which European city lies another city?

5. What sport are you not allowed to play left handed?
 - a. Badminton
 - b. Tennis
 - c. Polo

6. What planet has the same name as the Roman god of the sea?

7. Who performed the theme song to the Bond movie ‘Thunderball’?

8. Which one of these is not a musical instrument?
 - a) Italian horn
 - b) French horn
 - c) English horn

9. What speed in an aircraft is equal to a nautical mile?

10. In cuisine, what are devils on horseback?



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Answers on Page 55



Listen here

Family news

Kenneth Batt who celebrates his 103rd birthday on 25 September 2024.

Neville Bowen who celebrates his 102nd birthday on 22 September 2024.

Nancy Bowstead who celebrates her 103rd birthday on 18 September 2024.

Peggy Brooks who celebrates her 101st birthday on 4 September 2024.

Stanley Cox who celebrated his 101st birthday on 8 August 2024.

Robert Joseph Crum who celebrates his 104th birthday on 14 September 2024.

Josephine Donaldson who celebrated her 103rd birthday on 5 August 2024.

Cecil Friedlander who celebrated his 100th birthday on 26 August 2024.

Robert Gravells who celebrated his 100th birthday on 29 August 2024.

Barbara Hart who celebrates her 103rd birthday on 15 September 2024.

Frederick Hayter who celebrates his 100th birthday on 7 September 2024.

Frederick Jewett who celebrated his 101st birthday on 21 August 2024.

Matthew Mackinnon-Pattison who celebrated his 100th birthday on 14 August 2024.

Alexander McCombie who celebrates his 100th birthday on 11 September 2024.

Sydney Podd who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 17 August 2024.

Rosalie Randle who celebrates her 100th birthday on 20 September 2024.

George Simpson who celebrated his 101st birthday on 12 August 2024.

Constance Tea who celebrates her 101st birthday on 7 September 2024.

Grace Taylor who celebrates her 100th birthday on 11 September 2024.

George Taylor who celebrates his 100th birthday on 26 September 2024.

Enid Unstead who celebrated her 100th birthday on 15 August 2024

John White who celebrated his 100th birthday on 25 August 2024.

William Williams who celebrated his 100th birthday on 29 August 2024.

Kenneth Windle who celebrates his 102nd birthday on 30 September 2024.

All birthday information was correct at the time of going to press

Condolences

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following, and we offer our heartfelt condolences

Joan Magnall who died on 16 March 2024. She was the wife of Bryan Magnall.



In memory

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following Members and we offer our heartfelt condolences to their widows, widowers, families and friends

Douglas Aiken of Bexhill-On-Sea, East Sussex died on 1 June 2024 aged 88. He served as a Junior Technician in the Royal Air Force.

Lionel Ainsworth of Withernsea, East Riding of Yorkshire died on 2 July 2024 aged 98. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Emmanuel Akpan of London died on 24 July 2024 aged 82. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Joseph Baron of Fleetwood, Lancashire died on 29 July 2024 aged 96. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Stanley Thomas Bartlett of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire died on 1 June 2024 aged 98. He served as a Flight Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

Kenneth Bowden of Bristol died on 7 June 2024 aged 85. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

Norman Charles Bowler of Wigton, Cumbria died on 1 July 2024 aged 89. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Donald Boyd of Windsor, Berkshire died on 4 June 2024 aged 97. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Navy.

Ronald Charles Brodie of Hailsham, East Sussex died on 1 June 2024 aged 86. He served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Signals.

Derek Buckley of Oldham, Lancashire died on 1 June 2024 aged 88. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Army Pay Corps.

Leo Hardy Burch of Ipswich, Suffolk died on 1 July 2024 aged 93. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Jack Reginald Burton of Henfield, West Sussex died on 15 June 2024 aged 100. He served as an Acting Flight Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

Bryce Campbell of Edinburgh died on 18 June 2024 aged 91. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Pay Corps.

Joseph Arthur Cass of Billingham, Cleveland died on 21 June 2024 aged 94. He served as a Junior Technician in the Royal Air Force.

Ralph Charters of Slough, Berkshire died on 1 July 2024 aged 93. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

Kenneth Clapperton of Barnoldswick, Lancashire died on 15 June 2024 aged 88. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

Sidney Francis Clench of Aberystwyth, Dyfed died on 1 July 2024 aged 90. He served as a Lieutenant in the Warwickshire & Worcestershire Yeomanry.

Neville Cobbold of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk died on 13 July 2024 aged 89. He served as an Aircraftman Second Class in the Royal Air Force.

Frederick Leonard Cooper of Thornton Heath, Surrey died on 7 July 2024 aged 93. He served as a Naval Airman in the Royal Navy.

Anthony Joseph Cornfield of Haverfordwest, Dyfed died on 22 June 2024 aged 86. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

Leslie Cottam of Eye, Suffolk died on 1 July 2024 aged 99. He served as a Private in the Grenadier Guards.

Gordon Davies of Carmarthen, Dyfed died on 19 July 2024 aged 91. He served as a Platoon Sergeant in the Royal Regiment of Wales. →

Spencer Davies of Hitchin, Hertfordshire died on 20 June 2024 aged 93. He served as a Lance Bombardier in the Royal Artillery.

Eric George Irwin Denton of Doncaster, South Yorkshire died on 1 July 2024 aged 94. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Service Corps.

James Durkin of Rugeley, Staffordshire died on 20 July 2024 aged 94. He served as a Warrant Officer in the Royal Air Force.

Frederick Brian Evans of Liskeard, Cornwall died on 1 June 2024 aged 87. He served as a Seaman in the Royal Navy.

William Fakey of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire died on 2 July 2024 aged 92. He served as a Trooper in the Hussars.

George Sidney Farnell of Wolverhampton died on 1 July 2024 aged 94. He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers.

William Feeley of Newcastle upon Tyne died on 14 June 2024 aged 102. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

Frederick Feline of Reading, Berkshire died on 16 June 2024 aged 93. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Joyce Margaret Felstead-Beasley of Launceston, Cornwall died on 30 May 2024 aged 98. She served as a Private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Peter Fletcher of Macclesfield, Cheshire died on 1 July 2024 aged 89. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

William Foreman of Bedlington, Northumberland died on 1 June 2024 aged 94. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Michael Foster of Oldham, Lancashire died on 27 July 2024 aged 70. He served as a Trooper in the Household Cavalry Regiment.

Eric Raymond French of Barry, South Glamorgan died on 2 July 2024 aged 81. He served as a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy.

Gerald William Frith of Stourbridge, West Midlands died on 1 July 2024 aged 90. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

Muriel Grace Gaffney of Norwich, Norfolk died on 6 June 2024 aged 103. She served as a Lance Corporal in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

David Kenneth George Gowers of South Croydon, Surrey died on 5 July 2024 aged 98. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Air Training Corps.

Brian John Graves of Bedford, Bedfordshire died on 29 July 2024 aged 87. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Barry Griggs of Thetford, Norfolk died on 1 March 2024 aged 90. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

John Hagyard of Plymouth, Devon died on 6 July 2024 aged 84. He served as a Marine in the Royal Marine Commandos.

Brian John Hailey of Hitchin, Hertfordshire died on 22 July 2024 aged 86. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

William Halliday of Belfast died on 1 June 2024 aged 94. He served as a Chief Technician in the Royal Air Force.

Brian Hallums of Littlehampton, West Sussex died on 6 July 2024 aged 99. He served as an Aircraftman First Class in the Royal Air Force.

Terence Hanley of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 22 September 2022 aged 86. He served as a Private in the Royal Engineers.

Frank Hatton of Fairbourne, Gwynedd died on 7 July 2024 aged 93. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

Reginald John Hayward of Whitchurch, Shropshire died on 3 June 2024 aged 92. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Shropshire Yeomanry.

Ronald Eric Heath of Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire died on 24 July 2024 aged 97. He served as a Corporal Technician in the Royal Air Force.

Owen Hillier of Frome, Somerset died on 2 July 2024 aged 102. He served in the Royal Air Force.

Esther Vivian Hills of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on 27 June 2024 aged 99. She served as a Leading Aircraftwoman in the Women's Royal Air Force. →

Thomas Edward Hodson of North Walsham, Norfolk died on 17 July 2024 aged 94. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Lancashire Fusiliers.

Keith Horn of Swindon, Wiltshire died on 12 June 2024 aged 89. He served as a Private in the Royal Pioneer Corps.

Bernard Richard Jewell of Plymouth, Devon died on 10 June 2024 aged 94. He served as a Group Captain in the Royal Air Force.

Jeffrey Edward John of Neath, West Glamorgan died on 27 June 2024 aged 96. He served as a Sergeant Artificer in the Royal Navy.

Patricia Mary Molly Jones of Plymouth, Devon died on 8 June 2024 aged 93. She served as a Corporal in the Women's Royal Air Force.

Norman Frederick Jones of Bradford, West Yorkshire died on 12 June 2024 aged 95. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Jean Lacock of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire died on 8 June 2024 aged 105. She served as a Leading Aircraftwoman in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

David Magenis of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 1 July 2024 aged 86. He served as a Private in the Lancashire Fusiliers.

David Meurig Martill of Ilkley, West Yorkshire died on 11 June 2024 aged 96. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

Roger John Mawer of Bootle, Merseyside died on 1 July 2024 aged 86. He served as a Private in the Highland Brigade.

Joseph Michael Mcardle of Swindon, Wiltshire died on 19 July 2024 aged 94. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

William Meadows of Skelmersdale, Lancashire died on 1 June 2024 aged 93. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Engineers.

Basil Charles Meath of Uckfield, East Sussex died on 24 July 2024 aged 93. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Derek Moores of Widnes, Cheshire died on 25 June 2024 aged 97. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

William Moretti of Thetford, Norfolk died on 12 June 2024 aged 95. He served as an Aircraftman First Class in the Royal Air Force.

Stanley George Morgans of Bolton, Greater Manchester died on 1 July 2024 aged 99. He served as a Private in the General Service Corps.

Derek James Moul of Ilford, Essex died on 31 July 2024 aged 94. He served as a Flying Officer in the Royal Air Force.

Gerard Myles of Prescot, Merseyside died on 3 August 2023 aged 96. He served as an Efficient deck hand in the Merchant Navy.

Ronald Naylor of Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire died on 26 July 2024 aged 86. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Arthur Neild of Hyde, Cheshire died on 1 July 2024 aged 98. He served in the Royal Artillery.

Brian William Newbury of Selby, North Yorkshire died on 1 June 2024 aged 82. He served as a Petty Officer in the Royal Navy.

John Northway of Bridport, Dorset died on 27 July 2024 aged 99. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

Ronald Stanley Oatway of Exeter, Devon died on 15 January 2024 aged 87. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Hampshire Regiment.

Leonard O'Connor of Liverpool died on 1 July 2024 aged 89. He served as a Private in the Liverpool Scottish Regiment.

Peter Oliver of Bournemouth, Dorset died on 24 June 2024 aged 96. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

John Kevin Ormesher of Liverpool died on 1 July 2024 aged 85. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Harold Hepworth Packham of Kilbirnie, Ayrshire died on 1 June 2024 aged 97. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-Shire Buffs, The Duke of Albany's).

George Pearson of Newton-Le-Willows, Merseyside died on 1 July 2024 aged 82. He served as a Private in the Royal Welsh Regiment. →

Charles Pinder of Leyland, Lancashire died on 13 June 2024 aged 91. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Joseph Edwin Preece of Wolverhampton died on 16 June 2024 aged 96. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

Eric Preston of Stockport, Cheshire died on 11 June 2024 aged 93. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

Tom Arthur Remfrey of Guernsey died on 17 July 2024 aged 91. He served as a Captain in the Intelligence Corps.

Alun John Richards of Swansea died on 20 May 2024 aged 100. He served as a Warrant Officer in the Royal Air Force.

Frederick Robson of Bedlington, Northumberland died on 30 June 2024 aged 92. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Armoured Corps.

Christophers Rogers of Dagenham, Essex died on 1 February 2024 aged 98. He served in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Alfred James Sandiford of Preston, Lancashire died on 1 June 2024 aged 98. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

Frances Mary Shaw of Shipley, West Yorkshire died on 17 June 2024 aged 94. She served as an Aircraftwoman Second Class in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

Frank Edwin Shepherd of Harlow, Essex died on 19 May 2024 aged 97. He served as a Private in the East Surrey Regiment.

Roy Sheppard of Chesterfield, Derbyshire died on 24 June 2024 aged 88. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Signals.

Beatrice Shields of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 24 July 2024 aged 97. She served as a Corporal in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

David Shoosmith of Blandford Forum, Dorset died on 8 July 2024 aged 91. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Geoffrey Stanford Robert Simms of Northampton, Northamptonshire died on 31 May 2024 aged 89. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

George Laurence Smith of Nelson, Lancashire died on 27 July 2024 aged 93. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Pay Corps.

David Joseph Spreadbury of Bath, Somerset died on 3 July 2024 aged 86. He served as a Private in the Somerset Light Infantry (Prince Albert's).

Sean Steedman of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on 14 April 2024 aged 57. He served as a Rifleman in the Royal Green Jackets.

John Derrick Stenton of Worthing, West Sussex died on 1 July 2024 aged 99. He served as a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Naval Reserve.

James Walter Stephens of Ormskirk, Lancashire died on 20 May 2024 aged 85. He served as a Private in the King's Regiment.

Leonard Alfred Tappin of Hornchurch, Essex died on 13 July 2024 aged 91. He served as a Rifleman in the King's Royal Rifle Corps.

John Elwyn Thomas of Wilmslow, Cheshire died on 20 June 2024 aged 88. He served as a Fusilier in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

Ronald Stanley Topping of Liverpool died on 26 June 2024 aged 89. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Engineers.

Joseph Turpin of Blackpool, Lancashire died on 1 July 2024 aged 99. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

Roger Tye of Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex died on 19 July 2024 aged 79. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Lindsay Tyndale of Crawley, West Sussex died on 18 June 2024 aged 61. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Thomas Walker of Blackpool, Lancashire died on 13 May 2024 aged 92. He served as a Private in the North Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's).

Roy Cecil David Walker of Sutton, Surrey died on 1 June 2024 aged 90. He served as a Private in the Royal Armoured Corps.

Joseph Walsh of Blackburn, Lancashire died on 29 June 2024 aged 91. He served as an Aircraftman First Class in the Royal Air Force. →

George Wasley of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 21 June 2024 aged 89. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Signals.

George Whissell of Aberystwyth, Dyfed died on 20 July 2024 aged 97. He served in the South Staffordshire Regiment.

Mavis Whiteman of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 15 January 2024 aged 77. She served in the Women's Royal Army Corps.

John Edwin Whitter of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 10 July 2024 aged 84. He served as a Leading Hand in the Royal Navy.

Dennis George Wilce of Ross-On-Wye, Herefordshire died on 30 June 2024 aged 91. He served as a Private in the Hertfordshire Regiment.

Arthur Henry Wildsmith of Willenhall, West Midlands died on 23 June 2024 aged 100. He served as an Air Mechanic in the Royal Navy.

Alfred Charles Wilkes of Wolverhampton died on 7 June 2024 aged 95. He served as a Private in the North Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's).

Robert Sulwyn Lloyd Williams of Oldham, Lancashire died on 28 May 2024 aged 90. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

David Williams of Hengoed, Mid Glamorgan died on 13 June 2024 aged 86. He served as an Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Samuel Alexander Williamson of Derby, Derbyshire died on 1 June 2024 aged 91. He served as a Private in the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment.

Dennis Woods of Southport, Merseyside died on 14 June 2024 aged 93. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

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Contact details

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New Members: Anyone who may be eligible to join Blind Veterans UK, can phone our Membership Department on freephone **0800 389 7979**.

Rustington Centre: 01903 945 300

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Quiz answers – from page 49

1. Staff Sergeant
2. Franklin Roosevelt
3. Mount Fuji
4. Rome (Vatican City)
5. Polo
6. Neptune
7. Sir Tom Jones
8. Italian horn
9. A knot
10. Prunes wrapped in bacon

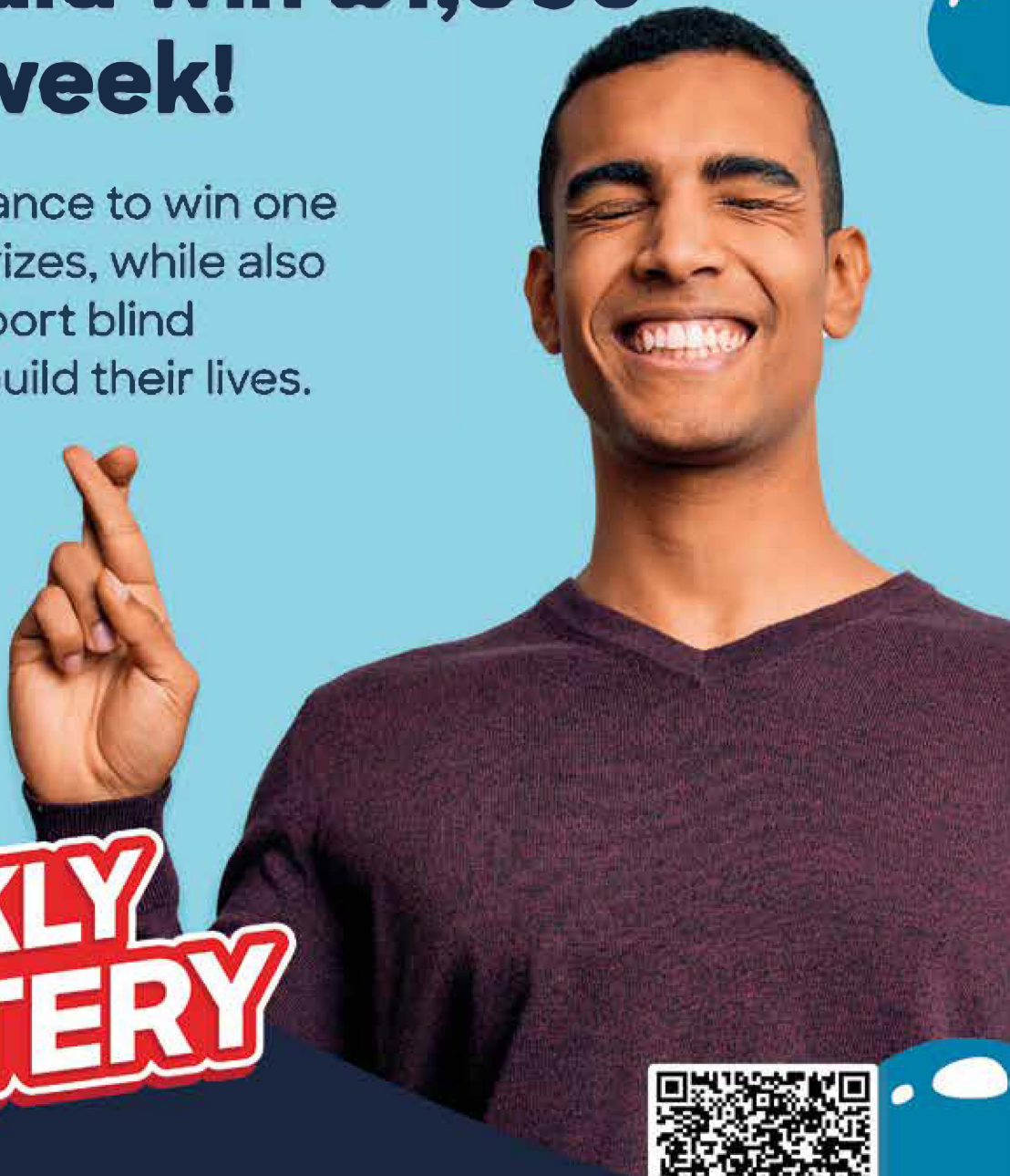
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