

ARMISTICE SLEEP OUT SUCCESS



Members of the public in the shelters built by the soldiers

A sleep out in the grounds of All Saints Parish Church, Leamington was a huge success thanks to a partnership approach and some help from local military units. 'Helping Hands', a charity supporting homeless people and those on a low income in Leamington Warwick and Kenilworth, chose to hold its 'Sleep Out' on Armistice Night, in recognition that some ex-Armed Forces personnel can become homeless and find themselves sleeping rough.

Over 70 people braved the elements overnight plus another 30 who listened to talks from Helping Hands, the Salvation Army, Warwickshire Police, the Armed Forces Covenant Team and others.

Soldiers from the Ammunition Technician Support Group at MOD Kineton were on hand to help build shelters and offer advice on how to look after yourself for a night of 'sleeping rough'. The Last Post was sounded at midnight, followed by a two minute silence. The soldiers conducted 'roving patrols' throughout the night to check on those sleeping for signs of distress or hypothermia. In the morning, they worked hard to clear up rain soaked cardboard shelters as well as the two tents on loan from 159 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps in Coventry.

The feedback from the civilians on their interaction with the military was positive. 'Helping Hands' raised over £13,000 from the event, which will go towards developing its services for the homeless and low income families. Helping Hands are extremely grateful for the contribution from the Army and many people feel their contribution 'made' the event extra special!



ARMED FORCES COVENANT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICE – REMEMBER VETERANS PROJECT

Warwickshire & West Mercia's Armed Forces Covenant Criminal Justice Service (CJS) Remember Veterans Project marches forward in its delivery of awareness and veterans champions training. Veterans Champions training was delivered to Custody Staff from Warwickshire & West Mercia Police Alliance and CJS Partners Veterans Champions in 2016. This has resulted in 53 Veterans referred to the CJS Referral Service & Helpline 02476 348227 and receiving support. Champions Training & Awareness courses are planned for dates in early 2017. Staff from across CJS Agencies and Community Partners attended the training on 2 February at the Veterans Contact Point based in Nuneaton.

Feedback from the first training session for Volunteers/Peer Support has been very positive; volunteers also attended the Military Mental Health First Aid Training, which was provided by Forces in The Community <http://forces.org.uk> a military charity based in Nottinghamshire.

The main aim of the Remember Project is to improve access, and support and develop an exemplar model of joined up strategy for veterans within the CJS across Warwickshire & West Mercia. The project has made fantastic progress in providing awareness raising session to over 500 frontline staff, these awareness sessions will continue to be delivered throughout 2017.

For more information please contact the Remember Veterans Helpline 02476 348227 or email contactus@veteranscontactpoint.co.uk

Make it more than asking the Armed Forces Question – Help improve the life of veterans

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A LITTLE PIECE OF HISTORY IN LEAMINGTON SPA

THE STORY BEHIND THE FOUNTAIN

In 2016 the Czechoslovak Memorial Fountain in Leamington Spa played a significant role in the Art in the Park event, reflecting the fact that Leamington Spa was the wartime home for the Czech Brigade. Every year since the fountain was first dedicated in 1968, flowers have been lain there on the anniversary of the day on 18 June 1942 when the Czechoslovak paratroop agents in the crypt of St Cyril's church chose suicide rather than capture by the Nazis.

The Free Czech Army arrived in Leamington in 1940 following the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Nazis. While based in mid-Warwickshire, a small number of specially selected Czechoslovak

soldiers were sent to Arisaig in Western Scotland to be trained as paratroop agents by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE). After a very rigorous training course, they formed a select group of men who were on standby to be parachuted into occupied Czechoslovakia to carry out sabotage missions and to support the Czech underground movement.

The seven names on the memorial in Jephson Gardens include four of the men who were part of Operation Arthropoid, a daring mission which saw the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, SS Governor of Bohemia and the ruthless right hand man to the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler.

The fountain has received a comprehensive survey suggesting restoration funds of approximately £17,000 (which includes 20% contingency) are needed to ensure the fountain has a future life. The Friends of the Czechoslovak Memorial Fountain also want to re-landscape the area around the fountain to allow for a more appropriate space for the annual wreath-laying ceremony and the bronze plaque outlining Operation Arthropoid to be better seen. It is likely this cost would be in the region of £10,000.

To raise funds for the project Alan Griffin has written a comprehensive account of Operation Arthropoid in a booklet costing £3.50 plus 75p postage and packing. If you would like a copy, please contact Judy Ross on 01926 423033.

If you would like to make a donation, become a member of the Friends or want more information, please contact Georgina Pavel at: georgina.pavel@tiscali.co.uk



Jephson Gardens, Leamington Spa

COVENTRY REMEMBERS



Members of the public were invited to attend Coventry's War Memorial Park Remembrance Sunday service on Sunday 13 November to honour, remember and pay respects to those who lost their lives in the two World Wars and other conflicts. The service featured a parade, hymns, readings and the laying of wreaths and was led by The Right Reverend Dr Christopher Cocksworth, the Lord Bishop of Coventry.

The day also marked the 70th anniversary of the granting of the Freedom of Entry to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment to Coventry in 1946. This year, the parade was led by their successors, the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.



First Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusilier Corps of Drums

The Fusiliers' Area Secretary, Major Cole said "Coventry has been a long standing supporter of our Regiment and many of the city's young men have served bravely in action with us. We are delighted to show our gratitude for this support and commitment."

Also in attendance was Coventry's Lord Mayor, Councillor Lindsley Harvard, who lay wreaths and took the salute. He said: "As a city of peace and reconciliation, it will always be important to pay our respects and remember all those who have lost their lives in, or as a result of wars, and armed conflict."

Other guests included Sid Watson and Noel Doolan, who are both ex-servicemen, the Lord Mayor's Cadets, Reverend Asif Gill, Minister of Ecclesia International Church, Reverend Canon Father Thomas Farrell, Roman Catholic Dean of Coventry and Gordon Garland, Chairman of the Royal British Legion No.1 Branch. Members of the public were also welcomed to attend the annual Communal Grave Service at London Road Cemetery at 3pm later the same day to remember the civilians who died during the Blitz in 1940.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A RESERVIST?

Reservists give up their spare time supporting our regular forces worldwide in a variety of roles. They receive training to develop transferable new skills and enhance existing ones such as leadership, working under pressure, teamwork, communications and project management, which will benefit their employers back in the workplace. They play a central role to meet defence requirements, often training and working alongside Regular units.

CAPTAIN SAMANTHA FLOYD, HEAD OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS, TELLS US MORE!

159 Regiment, the Royal Logistic Corps is Coventry local Reserve Army unit who plays a pivotal role in the engagement between army and community. The Regiment has its HQ set up in Coventry with outposts in Grantham, Stoke, Burton and West Bromwich.

The local detachments encourage integration and work closely with different organisations to foster a strong relationship. Where possible they will open their doors to the public or support local events such as open days, recruitment fairs or even sporting events. The Coventry detachment were involved in the Art in the Park festival.

Being a Reservist means many different things to different people. LCpl Hayley Carney had this to say about her time with the Reservists; "My life did not have focus, not much stability and literally I was stuck in a rut. My journey has gained me confidence, gained more structure and given me many more opportunities which I never imagined I'd get. My future is bright with unlimited opportunities."



LCpl Carney engaging with community

When the soldiers are not training they take every opportunity to complete as many sports as possible. We have representatives in swimming, football, netball, skiing and ice hockey to name a few. The possibilities for sports and adventure training are endless. Pte Natalie Cullis describes it as "you can get out as much as you put in."

The main focus for next year is the continuing success of the regiments bespoke Access to Logistics course. It is a 10 week course which gives students the opportunity to go from a civilian to trained soldier whilst gaining driving licences, completing some sports and adventure training whilst earning a total of £5,500. It is a great offer and the places are filling up fast so contact us for more information.



A2L soldiers



A2L is not the only way to join us. If you can spare 27 days a year and would like to work with a diverse group of people and travel places you have never been before then check us out on FB searching @159Regiment. Alternatively find us online by searching www.armyjobs.co.uk

THE 'MIDLANDS LOGISTICIANS' ARE RECRUITING NOW!

SPOTLIGHT ON WARWICK DISTRICT

In this edition of our AFCC newsletter we aim to feature some of the work of our partners in their endeavours to support the principles of the AFC.

In this first 'Spotlight' article we focus upon the work of our colleagues in Warwick District.

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL



Warwick District Council signed the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) in 2012. Since then the council has taken various steps in order to demonstrate its commitment to the

AFC including appointing their own AF Officer Champion in 2014 and more recently an elected member AF Champion – Cllr George Illingworth.

In November 2015, Warwick District hosted its first AFC Awareness Raising Event targeting social housing providers and the voluntary and community sector. This helped to inform organisations on ways in which they can support ex-Armed Forces more. 2016 saw Warwick District develop a Localised Action Plan, the promotion of 'Salute our Forces' on the staff intranet, and flying the flag above Leamington Town Hall for AF Day. The council also worked in partnership with 'Helping Hands', a local charitable organisation, to arrange a community sleep out to raise awareness that some rough sleepers are ex-Armed Forces. Other significant developments include launching a survey to capture information regarding numbers of service users with an AF Connection, the data will be used to build a picture of the AF community to assist with establishing the extent of their support needs, and to help Warwick District Council decide on how to deliver services to veterans in the future.

Warwick's AFC Officer Champion Bernadette Allen joined Warwick District Council 15 years ago. Her current role as a Localities and Partnerships Officer, involves working to support the development of stronger and vibrant communities within Warwick District.

Whilst the council has taken a number of steps over the last three years to demonstrate its commitment to the AFC, it acknowledges that a great deal more needs to be done. Some of the projects that are being developed over the next year include training on the AFC to be delivered to WDC elected members, senior officer and staff, launching a campaign around getting internal and external services to ask the Armed Forces connection question in any interaction with the public, and turning the Armed Forces Event into an annual one, with the event for 2017 already at planning stage with the theme of volunteering. Moving forward, WDC aspires to achieve the bronze AFC Employer Award.

The role of AF Champion is varied and includes working to raise the profile of the armed forces community, being the first point of contact, providing information, and working in partnership with the AF community and support organisations we have to develop an understanding of the issues and ease some of the barriers being faced by the armed forces community.



We asked Bernadette what it means to be an Armed Forces Champion.

"I became involved in the AFC in 2014, when I was asked to help launch the Defence Discount Card in Warwick District. I became aware of the issues affecting the AF community. As a result of this and my own personal Armed Forces connection (my son is currently in the Armed Forces) I volunteered to be Armed Forces Champion.

A great deal of my time is spent developing understanding amongst staff and colleagues in Warwick District Council and partner organisations as to the importance of this area of work.

The AFC work I do has recently been given high profile through my involvement in the 'Helping Hands' sleep out event."

Bernadette Allen WDC

EX-ARMED FORCES MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT SHORTLISTED FOR PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARD

Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust has been shortlisted in the Health Service Journal (HSJ) Awards.



Work by mental health clinicians Dr Dan Barnard, Lynne Davidson and their team, has been recognised in the national scheme.

They have been part of an innovative programme of work across the West Midlands region to ensure that NHS services are ready to respond to the needs of ex-Armed Forces personnel.

They have developed an Enhanced Care Pathway available to anyone who has served in the Armed Forces. They have also developed extensive community resources with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector bodies who share the aim of meeting the needs of people who have served their country – and now need help or support themselves.

Dr Barnard explained: “Our commitment is to ensure that anyone experiencing mental distress and who has experience of working in the UK Armed Forces has their health needs met by our services.

All too often people with Armed Forces experience don't feel their needs are heard. We have worked hard with veterans themselves, and with the wider community, to identify the best ways to put this right. It's great to be recognised like this. It makes us feel certain that we should continue with this work.”

For 35 years the HSJ Awards have recognised, celebrated, and promoted the finest achievements in NHS, and showcased them to the service's most influential leaders.

Over that time the HSJ Awards have grown to become the most sought after accolade in British healthcare – and very probably the largest awards programme of its type in the world. With 23 categories to choose from, the awards reflect the full spectrum of the NHS's services and challenges.

Alastair McLellan, Editor, HSJ, said, “With the NHS experiencing a tough time as funding fails to keep up with demand, the HSJ Awards are once again the best reminder of the excellence the service is capable of. Taken together the entries to the HSJ Awards represent work which, directly or indirectly, has saved thousands of lives and enhanced many times that number.”

To find out more about the Trust, visit www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk.

To find out more about the veterans service: <https://www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/service-detail/health-service/exarmed-forces-veterans-80/>



SPRINGFIELD MIND 'VETERANS FAMILIES' PROJECT

Springfield Mind is a leading mental health charity delivering services across Warwickshire and Worcestershire. The organisation has been in operation for over 30 years and has an excellent reputation for delivering high quality community mental health and wellbeing services.

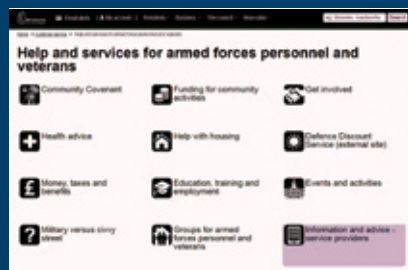
The Ministry of Defence recommend to new veterans that “communicating with family and friends is key in facing the future”. Family relationships are often fundamental during the transition, particularly for leavers with mental health needs. The feelings, issues and attitudes described by some veterans can sometimes take effect over many months and years after leaving service. Consequently, issues that have an affect on mental health can go unaddressed for extended periods of time. In some cases it is the partner of a veteran who encourages the engagement with support services. Ultimately it is very often up to the families and carers to manage the extent of the leaver's support and assist in their adjustment, often looking after their emotional needs at a time when the ex-servicemen and women find it difficult to bestow the same level of support in return.

There are currently over 140 former service men/women utilising CWPT ex-armed forces project. This denotes a larger band of families and carers whose lives could be impacted. Furthermore, there may be even more members of the Armed Forces community whose wellbeing still isn't being attended to, due to lack of engagement in support interventions through loss of Armed Forces networks, or lack of awareness of the provision in a new community.

There are a number of services in Warwickshire that focus on support for veterans, in-particular CWPT Ex-Armed Forces Project and the Armed Forces Covenant support. But there appears to be very little in the way of direct support for the families, both in preparing them for potential challenges ahead due to the transition into civilian life and dealing with the symptoms of ongoing mental health issues following combat trauma. As part of the project, Dawn Caswell has been employed to lead focus and peer groups with families and carers with a view to bridge any gaps between Ex-Armed Forces services and veterans' families, to provide sign-posting and support to assist in their well-being within the Warwickshire area.

For further information about this project please email dawn.caswell@springfieldmind.org.uk

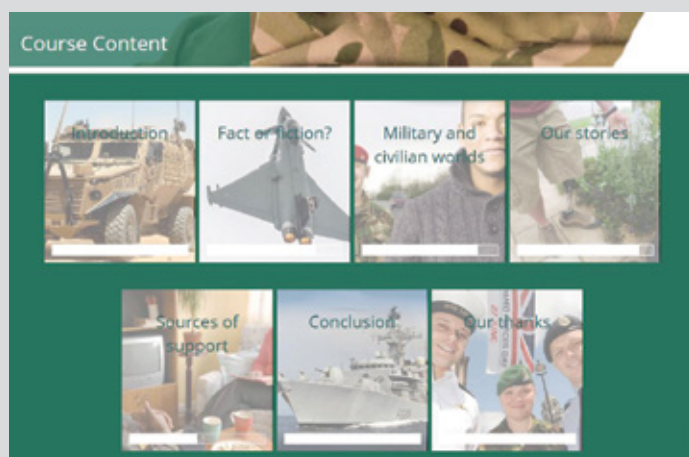
EDUCATION UPDATE



Awareness raising sessions have taken place, including delivery to over 160 representatives from Warwickshire County Councils Education department. Coventry,

Solihull and Warwickshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership has also travelled to Hampshire, an authority supporting huge numbers of children from military families, in order to share examples of good practice in terms of supporting young people from the Armed Forces Community in a school setting. We also have a dedicated section on our Armed Forces Community website aimed at helping schools support children who have a military background.

COVENTRY, SOLIHULL AND WARWICKSHIRE ARMED FORCES COVENANT E-LEARNING PROJECT



An e-learning programme being developed by the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership has been gaining national recognition over the past few months.

The MOD Covenant Fund has awarded £20,000 to Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership to further develop an e-learning project, which was also highlighted at the national AFC conference in London in November. The first module in the elearning programme, which is being targeted at frontline staff in statutory, voluntary and community organisations, is being launched in February. The work is a partnership project involving a number of agencies including the Naval, Army and RAF Families Federations, TRBL, local military units and others within the CSW partnership.

The project is being developed locally, with a vision for it to be available (free of charge) to those organisations interested and willing to use it.

For further information please contact afcc@warwickshire.gov.uk

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT READING FORCE?



In the Autumn Term, an ambassador from Reading Force visited an open afternoon event at Wolvey Church of England Primary School and the Peter Pan Nursery at Bramcote Barracks. Reading Force encourage service families to use books to help communicate, by reading, talking, and keeping a scrapbook about the book they are reading, sharing the experience and giving a common interest between child and serving parent, particularly when that parent is away on deployment.

“One of the best things about reading books is sharing and talking about them with family and friends – and if you have a family member or friend in the Armed Forces, then Reading Force is for you! Whether your loved ones are at home or away, all can get involved. So join the fun and sign up to receive your free book and special scrapbook. It’s free and easy – and brings families and friends closer together” (Reading Force)

www.readingforce.org.uk/



READING TOGETHER - UPDATE!

Additional support has been provided for Service Children and their families by introducing a selection of relevant books into our libraries, which look at the issues facing children/families from a serving background. Parents say they have been helpful when dealing with the separation and reunion caused during deployment. The project has also helped raise awareness amongst our librarian colleagues who are now looking at ‘the bigger picture’ in terms of purchasing and cataloguing books in a more easily accessible way for our military/ex-military library users who want to easily identify resources with a particular relevant theme.

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/communitycovenantinformationandadvice>

If you or your family have found a particular book helpful we want to hear from you – we are always looking to make the information we provide as extensive as possible so let us know at afcc@warwickshire.gov.uk



COMPTON VERNEY COMES ON BOARD



Over the past year, since attending the Warwick AFC Conference in Leamington, Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park in South Warwickshire has been establishing a mutually-beneficial relationship with the local AF community and has now become the first museum in England to sign the AFC in Business.



The collaboration has already brought about several results including; discounted entry and memberships for current and former serving personnel; Captain Rachel Mather and her explosives dogs giving a highly popular demonstration at the gallery's first dog show; Lt Andy Cole attending the gallery's first radio-controlled Wings and Water Show to talk about his personal interest in drones.

In the future, Compton Verney hopes to work much more closely with the community to offer employment and volunteer opportunities, act as a training location for explosives dogs, work with cadets on events and develop new programmes such as a radio-controlled vehicle competition for local schools. In addition, of course, they hope to offer creative outlets for artistic members of the community and, through the military artefacts in their Folk Art collection and 2018 exhibition Soldier Art, use art to help the public understand the military experience both past and present. They have volunteered to be the location for a SSAFA fundraising event in 2017 and have submitted a Heritage Lottery Fund application for a project to help service leavers, veterans and military families prepare for careers in the culture and heritage sector through traineeships.

As Sheila Stephenson, Community Engagement Officer with Headquarters 11th Signal and West Midlands Brigade, has said:

'Escapism through creativity has long been associated with the military whilst at times of war – poetry, cartoons, music, the conversion of items of military hardware into sculpture, and so on. However, the arts sector is one with which the army is not traditionally associated with as having a close relationship. It is now a sector that we wish to partner with, to better understand and integrate our service community to mutual benefit and enjoyment.'

For more information about Compton Verney visit www.comptonverney.org.uk.

ARMED FORCES SUCCESS AT ART IN THE PARK 2016

The Art in the Park festival took place in Leamington Spa between 5-6 Aug and brought in a crowd of about 5000 people. One of the themes was camouflage so the Armed Forces Covenant Team worked with 159 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps (Reserves) based in Coventry to support Art in the Park. The Army Reserve unit were able to provide a display of various camouflage uniforms and information to engage with the public and have conversations about life in the Army and the opportunities in the Reserves. 159 Regiment RLC were also able to supply tents for information and first aid, which were greatly appreciated by the Art in the Park organisers.

Another feature of the festival was an open air production of 'Ratburger' by Heartbreak Productions. This is based upon the award winning Children's book by David Walliams. This event was part sponsored by the Armed Forces Covenant partnership and the Covenant Team worked with 30 Signal Regiment in Bramcote, MOD Kineton and 159 regiment in Coventry to provide free tickets for Army families to see the performance. Some 40 tickets were taken up and 6 children involved in workshops to become 'camo-rats' and took part in the opening number of Ratburger!

The event was also attended by members of the Covenant partnership, including Cllr Stevens (Chair) and Capt. Neil Wood RLC, who was in uniform and looked 'very smart!'

The Leamington branch of the Royal British Legion was also part of the festival and developed a 'Poppy carpet', raising £1,000 in the process.

LOCAL COUNCILLOR BACKS THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

One notable attendee of our first ever sub-regional Armed Forces Covenant conference was Cllr Jill Shepard, Mayor of Nuneaton and Bedworth (2016-17) and her consort Bill Shepard. The couple have links to the Military, (Bill having been in the Reservists). Speaking after the event, the Mayor talked about her keen interest in supporting our serving and ex serving community, and how she is looking forward to a busy year in terms of events and making a difference, she is aware of the good work undertaken at the Veterans Contact Point Armed Forces Centre based in Nuneaton, and that her chosen charities for the Mayoral Appeal are in fact the VCP, and a much smaller local Mental Health Drop-In Centre based in Newtown Road, Nuneaton. Mayor Shepard has a team behind her to help with raising fund for the charities, collections in town centre on Saturdays, functions, meals etc with money raised being split equally between the charities.

READ ALL ABOUT IT!



THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT IN COVENTRY, SOLIHULL & WARWICKSHIRE

Providing practical help and support to the armed forces community past and present.

Tell us about your armed forces connection so that we can signpost you in the right direction.

HEALTH
COMMUNITY COVENANT
HOUSING
EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT
INFORMATION & ADVICE -service providers
VOLUNTARY (SUPPORT) GROUPS
MONEY, TAXES & BENEFITS

The Armed Forces Covenant is the nation's commitment to you!

For more information visit our website:
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/armedforcescommunitycovenant

Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership has been busy putting together leaflets and posters to raise awareness of the Covenant in our area. The literature aims to inform our Serving and ex-Serving community and their families that the Covenant is there for them, and that they can access more information via our website www.warwickshire.gov.uk/communitycovenant. It hopes to encourage those individuals accessing services to divulge their AF connection so that service providers can ensure that the most appropriate help, support and advice is offered. If you would like to do your part in raising awareness through displaying the posters or distributing the leaflets please contact us at

afcc@warwickshire.gov.uk

ARE YOU MISSING OUT ON THE CHANCE TO APPLY TO THE COVENANT GRANT FUND?

The Covenant fund has £10 million each year to support the Armed Forces Covenant by funding projects which meet specific priorities. Voluntary, community and other organisations can apply to secure some of the funding that is available in 2017-18. The priorities for 2017-18 include families in stress and community integration/delivery of local services. The timetable for 2017/18 will be announced soon!

The MOD is launching a small grants fund to help smaller groups and organisations to access funding to help their work with the Armed Forces community. This will be an open rolling programme beginning in February 2017. Keep an eye on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covenant-fund-guidance-on-how-to-apply-to-find-out-more-in-february>

For more information in the first instance you can contact the AFC team locally at afcc@warwickshire.gov.uk

DON'T MISS OUT!!! SOLDIERS TO SCHOOLS



The MOD has extended its offer to make available trained soldiers who will provide direct support to teacher-led delivery of First World War lessons in secondary schools in the United Kingdom. If you would like to bring your teaching to life, to 'make it real' – read more about this opportunity at www.army.mod.uk/training_education

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!

Reserves Day
Wednesday 21st June 2017

Armed Forces Day
Saturday 24th June 2017

75th Anniversary Celebration for Marlborough Barracks and Kineton Station

Thursday 20th July 2017
75th Anniversary Regimental Dinner in Warwick Castle

Friday 21st July 2017
Veterans Evening

Saturday 22nd July 2017
Freedom of Warwick Parade (am)
Station Open Day/Party in the Park (pm)

FORCES HELP TO BUY SCHEME TO BE EXTENDED!

The Secretary of State recently announced that the very popular Forces Help To Buy scheme will be extended into 2018. The scheme, which was launched in 2014, allows serving military personnel to borrow up to half their salary up to a cap of £25,000, interest free over ten years so they can buy their first home, extend a current one or move up the property ladder.

The news is featured on the Armed Forces Covenant website <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/housing-development/>