

QUEEN'S VOLUNTEER RESERVES MEDAL AWARDED TO LOCAL WARRANT OFFICER

Congratulations to W02 Mick Guest of 159 Regiment RLC who was awarded the Queen's Volunteer Reserves medal (QVRM) in the New Year Honours list for 2019.



W02 Mick Guest QVRM providing another feast for hungry tummies

W02 Guest is the Regimental Catering Warrant Officer who was awarded the QVRM for over 10 years exemplary service in the Reserves where he has been an example to others. W02 Guest served at home and abroad and has been a mainstay of Army West Midlands Engagement with local communities.

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MAJOR REFURBISHMENT WORK MAKING PROGRESS AT THE VCP



Veteran Contact Point with new roof

Balfour Beatty is working in partnership with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) and Veterans from the Veteran Contact Point to refurbish the post WW2 prefabricated Horsa building currently used by the Veteran Contact Point (VCP) in Nuneaton. The VCP is a free and confidential space for veterans and their families in Coventry and Warwickshire and provides a gateway for support and services to aid community integration.

The centre has been founded, staffed and run by veterans, for veterans and the space is used by veterans of all three services; Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. The VCP also provides a range of welfare and support underpinned by Veteran to Veteran Peer Support. The facilities are also used by local community groups.

Balfour Beatty is working alongside its supply chain to not only refurbish, but also extend the existing building, generating more space for the veterans. The works will enhance the layout, general conditions and heating and lighting. Roof works have now been completed, as well as all demolition and clearance works. The internal renovation is now underway.

To enable the refurbishment to be completed a fundraising campaign is underway. Working collaboratively, all three organisations have worked to raise over £23,000 through various events, including Golf days, an auction and a BBQ. All proceeds will help subsidise the works and will fund new equipment and furniture for the Veterans.

With works still underway there is still an opportunity to get involved. For more information or to find out how you can help please email vcp@balfourbeatty.com or visit the Balfour Beatty website www.balfourbeatty.com/vcp. If you would like to donate to the cause please visit the Just Giving page.

Balfour Beatty



FULL STEM AHEAD!

It's full STEM ahead for Kineton Station in their STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) Outreach Programme. Kineton Station have been successful in their £20k bid to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to provide a STEM Learning Festival during 2019, to continue their Primary School Coding Clubs and other events with their three main Covenant partners; Compton Verney, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and British Motor Museum who put the Arts into STE(A)M.

The £20k will allow Kineton Station to buy key equipment to enable them to work with schools and other partners in delivering STEM activities. These activities are delivered by serving soldiers and airmen who have volunteered their time and experience to encourage the next generation of engineers, technicians and software designers.

Major John Rendall RLC, the senior STEM Ambassador at Kineton Station said *"I hope that some of these young people will be inspired to consider a career in engineering. Inside or outside the Army, engineering offers the opportunity to shape the future of the world in which we live."*

"STEM skills are vital to the Army. Our engineers can meet every challenge and are deployed across the globe in exciting and challenging environments. They are a critical component in delivering combat capability which protects the nation."

If anyone is interested in having STEM activities delivered by serving personnel please contact them via Facebook @KinetonStation, or Twitter @KinetonSTEM.

ADJUSTING TO LIFE OUTSIDE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Adjusting to Life Outside of the Armed Forces can be difficult, which is why it has been included in the Armed Forces Covenant e-learning programme from Warwickshire County Council.

This training programme has been designed to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and the support that exists for veterans and their families. It includes Top Tips from veterans who have gone through the adjustment process, as well as case studies to help people understand some of the issues they may face. The e-learning programme can be accessed via the national Armed Forces Covenant website www.armedforcescovenant.org/learning/adjusting-to-life-outside-of-the-armed-forces/#/ and is available free of charge to any organisation willing to host it as part of their e-learning programme.

Please contact afcc@warwickshire.gov.uk for more

£3M FOR VETERANS COMMUNITY CENTRES

In the November 2018 Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer awarded the sum of £3 million to the Ministry of Defence in order “to support the repair and refurbishment of community centres run by Armed Forces organisations which continue to provide a focus for veterans and support improvements to health and social outcomes”.

This Veterans Community Centres programme is being run by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and there will be the opportunity of applying for up to £30k (Band A) or up to £150k (Band B) by Armed Forces charities or Community Interest Charities supporting veterans.

BACK ON THE RIGHT FOOT; VETERANS MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER DEVELOPMENTAL COURSE

This is a brand new course designed for Veterans, or the families of Veterans, to equip them to understand and improve their skills to enable integration and general awareness of mental wellbeing in a friendly non-clinical way.

The course will cover:

- ways to improve your health and mental wellbeing;
- understanding how being a veteran can affect relationships;
- adjusting to Civvy Street – to include Benefits & Accommodation;
- improving employability;
- dealing with the stigma of being a veteran;
- understanding addiction and the support available to you; and
- understanding what support networks are available and how to use them more effectively.

The course is being delivered by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust Ex-Armed Forces Service, in partnership with the Recovery and Wellbeing Academy, The Veteran Contact Point and Unique Partnership

The course sessions will vary in length and be delivered over eight consecutive weeks starting later in the year.

If you are interested please contact Nancy Tomlinson (Ex Armed Forces Pathway Manager) on 07771 984394 or Len Hardy (Veterans Contact Point) on 024 7634



LOCAL GRANTS PROGRAMME RE-OPENED!

The Armed Forces Covenant Local Grants Programme has re-opened with new guidance. The Local grants programme makes grants of up to £20,000 for local projects that improve integration between Armed Forces and civilian communities, and that deliver local services and projects that meet a need within the local Armed Forces Community.

Applications need to be supported by the CSW partnership so if you would to discuss a project please email details to afcc@warwickshire.gov.uk

Applications are assessed four times during the year:

- 9am on 11 March 2019;
- 9am on 5 June 2019;
- 9am on 9 September 2019; and
- 9am on 2 December 2019.

VETERANS' CAFÉ OPENS IN WARWICK

A Veterans Café has opened at the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum at St. John's House, Warwick.

This provides free tea, coffee and biscuits on the first Tuesday of the month between 10.30am and 12.30pm for veterans from the south of the county as a way of providing a relaxing friendly place to chat, socialise and support each other. The Veterans Café is open to all veterans (those who have served one day or more in the Regulars or Reserves or were Merchant Mariners on a legally sanctioned operation).

One veteran commented that it is *'Especially good for retired single veterans who might be a bit lonely. There is the familiar banter of being in the Armed Forces, coming along helps to keep people active. They soon get to look forward to the next café and quickly build-up relationships.'*

The Museum is working in partnership with Warwick District Council to deliver the café.

For further information contact Stephanie at the Museum on 01926 491653 or Email: rrfmuseum@hotmail.co.uk

Follow @rrfmuseumwarks



WE REMEMBERED

On the 11th November the Nation fell silent in memory of the fallen from WWI. Events have been held across the whole of Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire leading up to and beyond Armistice Day commemorations.

WARWICK POPPIES COMMEMORATION

The idea behind the Warwick Poppies installation was to have a handmade poppy for all 11,610 soldiers of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment who died in the Great War. Poppies were donated locally, nationally and across the world with 62,438 poppies being used in the installation at St. Mary's Church, Warwick. Helen Fitzpatrick from the Warwick Poppies committee said *"So many people have been moved by our project and it has certainly provided a local focal point where folk could come together, get involved and pay their own personal tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for us to have our freedom today"*.

During the nine weeks that Warwick Poppies was open to visitors, St Mary's Church had more than 30,000 people – the usual number for a whole year."

On Sunday 17th February, Warwick Poppies 2018 will be presenting the money raised from the display and associated events to their two nominated causes – the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, and St Mary's Church. This will take place after the morning service of Choral Eucharist at St Mary's Church, Old Square, Warwick, at 10.30am. Representatives of both organisations will be present to receive their cheques and there will be a short drinks reception afterwards.

Warwick Poppies have also organised an event where you can obtain poppies in return for a donation to the campaign. This will take place from Friday 8th to Saturday 9th March, each day from 10am-4pm, in St Mary's.



Warwick Poppies display

COVENTRY

The Coventry Peace Festival began on 1 November and continued through to 14 November 2018. This included the 'First World War in Art' at Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, 'The Window' a play on a soldier's experiences of WWI and on the 14th November (the anniversary of Coventry Blitz) dignitaries and 600 primary school children from across the city came together at the War Memorial Park to hold a Service of Remembrance. This was dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of the First World War and led by the Bishop of Coventry.



School Remembrance Service

SOLIHULL

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council commemorated the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One with a series of Remembrance events beginning with the unveiling of a 'Tommy' statue at Woodlands Cemetery on Tuesday 6 November and culminating with the lighting of the beacon in Elmdon Park on the evening of Sunday 11 November.

The remembrance service at St. Alphege Church on Sunday saw thousands of people gather to hear the names of those listed on the war memorial, share prayers for the lost and sing hymns. The 'Tommy' statues unveiled by the Mayor of Solihull, Cllr Flo Nash, at Woodlands and Robin Hood Cemeteries and in Shirley Park are part of the Royal British Legion's 'There But Not There' campaign. The aluminium silhouettes of soldiers represent those who left but never came back, and will remain in place at the cemeteries for people to visit.



St. Alphege war memorial

REMEMBERING THE REAR-GUARD ACTION OF THE ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENT IN WWII

Alex Payne from Warwickshire Scouts took part in a trip to Belgium to see the battlefields and museums in and around the town of Ypres. Most of the places visited during the tour were related to the First World War including locations such as Dodengang (the Trench of Death) and the Tyne Cot war graves. Alex said *"The trip was very good as it showed the Scouts what the trenches were actually like rather than in films which don't really bring the suspense and fear of those in the trenches to life"*.

On the way back, they stopped at the site of Wormhoudt, where in 1940 Allied soldiers including those from the 2nd Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, were holding back Axis troops, so that the Dunkirk evacuation could take place. Whilst there, the Scouts had the opportunity to hear the story of the incredible bravery and heroism of those who fought and died so that others could escape.

Alex was chosen to lay a wreath at the site on behalf of Warwickshire County Council in memory of those who gave their lives so that others could be saved. Alex said *"It was an honour to be able to do this and the experience will stay with me for the rest of my life."*



WCC wreath laid at Wormhoudt massacre site

COMMEMORATIVE PAVING STONES LAID IN HONOUR OF LEAMINGTON'S WWI HEROES

One hundred years after the end of the conflict commemorative paving stones for two local heroes of the First World War were unveiled at a special ceremony at the War Memorial, Euston Place, Royal Leamington Spa on Sunday 23 September.

In a joint ceremony, the stones were unveiled by relatives of Lieutenant John Cridlan Barrett (Leicestershire Regiment) and Henry Tandey (the Green Howards and the Duke of Wellington Regiment), who were both awarded the Victoria Cross in September 1918.

Dignitaries included senior officers, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire, the High Sheriff, the Leader of Warwickshire



WWI VC stone in Leamington

County Council, Cllr Izzi Seccombe together with representatives of the military including members of the Regimental Associations in which John Barrett and Henry Tandey served during World War 1.

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS FOR VETERANS

On Christmas Eve, 24 Armed Forces families and veterans received a Christmas hamper courtesy of a joint initiative between Edible Links, the Veterans Contact Point (VCP) and Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire Borough Councils.



The Edible Links Hamper team

Nick Caswell, the AFC Community Outreach Support Officer for VCP, working across Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire and Paul Roberts, the Housing Strategy and Development Officer from NWBC, delivered the hampers on Christmas Eve providing some much needed festive cheer.

SUNDAY LUNCH FOR VETERANS

On the 18th of October 2018, at the Ratcliffe centre Atherstone, Veterans enjoyed a Sunday Lunch provided by EdibleLinks as part of a thank you for their Service. It was also a chance for them to integrate with the community and meet new people including others veterans from around North Warwickshire. The afternoon was a great success with 4 veterans and 20+ families being fed.



From left to right: Erich Modrowics, Micky Palfreyman, Tam Ster and Nick Caswell (Armed Forces Development Worker). Photo taken by Graham Beale

FREE MASK MAKING WEEKEND FOR VETERANS (23-24 MAR)

In March, Vamos Theatre will be running a free two day Mask Making Residency for Veterans living with Post Traumatic Stress (PTS/PTSD) and health professionals who care for them.

The two-day residency, delivered by highly-experienced Vamos Theatre practitioners with the help of a Veteran trained by the company, is designed to be a fun, informal and creative chance to explore practical mask making, and participants will learn how to make a full face mask from scratch. Everyone will be guided through the stages of making and painting the mask, and there's no need for previous art or theatre experience.

After previous residencies, Veterans have commented on how enjoyable they've found the course, not only because practical mask making is challenging and interesting, but because creating the masks can be calming and meditative and beneficial to mental health.

One of the participants in a Mask Making workshop held in 2018 alongside Help for Heroes commented, *"With the support, I was able to produce a mask, which I did not believe I could have done on the first morning. It also showed mindfulness can come in many different forms!"*



Four veterans wearing their masks (Photo courtesy of Kate Holt)

Rachael Savage, Artistic Director of Vamos Theatre added: *"We're grateful to all the Veterans who've attended previous Mask Making Residencies for letting us know how impactful and beneficial they have been, and the importance of continuing to offer them to Veterans whenever we can. The residencies are always relaxed and informal events and I've been incredibly impressed by the commitment, attention to detail and creativity that Veterans bring. I'm very much looking forward to this one."*

The Mask Making Residency runs in central Worcester. Places are free (including lunch), but are limited, so if you are interested please get in touch asap.

To book: email info@vamostheatre.co.uk using 'Mask Making' in the subject header

LEGION D'HONNEUR AWARDED TO D-DAY VETERANS

Two D-Day veterans were presented with their Legion D'Honneur awards at a ceremony in Birdingbury, Warwickshire on 15 September 2018.

Bill Cowley, 95, and Ron Trenchard, 100, were presented France's highest award in recognition of their service during the D-Day landings. Mr Cowley delivered ammunition and rations across the enemy held Normandy countryside and Mr Trenchard worked on the Mulberry floating harbours which enabled cargo to be landed quickly on the beaches of Normandy.

They were presented their awards by Brigadier General Yann Poincignon from the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps who said 'Bill and Ron have shown outstanding merits, and as a French officer I am delighted to underline what they did on D-Day and the following days as absolutely outstanding'.



Bill Cowley and Ron Trenchard, Legion d'Honneur September 18

MAXIMAL CHRISTMAS CAKE BENEFITS!

How do you get the most from your Christmas Cake? First you buy it in a raffle for a good cause and then you give it away to another good cause! Louise Richards, the Lead Officer for the Armed Forces Covenant at Warwickshire County Council, did exactly this! Louise bought the cake in the 159 Regiment RLC Christmas Cake Raffle which raised funds for Combat Stress.



Christmas Cake baked by Army Cadets with support from 159 RLC RCWO

The cake, baked by Army Cadets under the supervision of the Regimental Catering Warrant Officer Mick Guest, was given to Helping Hands in Leamington Spa. Helping Hands, who support homeless people and low income families put the cake in a Christmas hamper for a young family with eight children.

What a lovely surprise for them! Thank you Louise!

AND THE WINNER IS...

Back in the summer, North Warwickshire Borough Council had a competition, in which veterans living in North Warwickshire had an opportunity to win a brand new iPad.



All they had to do was ring the freephone number stating their regimental number. This was to raise awareness of and to celebrate the development of Veterans Hubs in North Warwickshire.

The draw took place in October and the winner, Ryan Greaves, was presented with his brand-new iPad by Paul Roberts from North Warwickshire Borough Council and Nick Caswell from the Veterans' Contact Point.

"TO BE PART OF A TEAM AGAIN"

"TO GET MY LIFE BACK"

Just some of the reasons Veterans apply for

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION VETERANS' COURSE

The Royal British Legion Battle Back Centre has developed a new 5 day fully funded residential course for Veterans.

18 - 22 February 2019

13 - 17 May 2019

22 - 26 July 2019

16 - 20 September 2019

10 - 14 February 2020

To apply for a course call **0195 281 5681**

or email battlebackcentreveteranscourse@britishlegion.org.uk



Veterans need to have served in the UK Armed Forces.

To gain benefit from the course, veterans must be independently mobile and self-medicating. The Battle Back Centre is a recovery facility and is unable to provide clinical or nursing support. Registered charity number: 219279

