

The Sandbag Times

The Veterans Magazine



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The Veteran Saint

How Ex-Soldier helps homeless Veterans to begin new lives

Hero Medic with PTSD
cast aside by Army

Veteran Marine hoping to
win gold at Paralympics



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Contractors ordered to 'step up repairs' or face the boot.

Firms failing to fix neglected Armed Forces homes have been warned they risk losing their contract.



Daniel Easthope, managing director of Carillion Amey, said last night: "We are sorry that our performance has not met the required standards in certain areas.

"We have agreed a plan that will mean a better service, including clearing outstanding work, increasing the number of staff and speeding up the process to ensure jobs are completed on time."

Top Gear apology over 'Cenotaph Stunt'



Chris Evans has apologised "unreservedly" after scenes for the new Top Gear series were filmed near the Cenotaph war memorial, adding that the footage was "disrespectful" and should not be broadcast.

Host Matt LeBlanc was seen driving around Westminster in central London as shooting took place for the new series of the BBC2 show, which is due to air in May, and photos show large tyre

circles left on streets surrounding the war memorial after the stunt. Speaking on his BBC Radio 2 show, Evans said he "completely understood the furore" around the photographs and admitted it had been "unwise" to film anywhere near the Cenotaph. Evan said

"On behalf of the Top Gear team and Matt, I would like to apologise unreservedly for what these images seem to portray

Bosses of Carillion and Amey have apologised after thousands of Armed Forces families complained about the poor maintenance of living quarters..

They have until the end of April to turn round the worst-performing area, the South East, or face losing their multi-billion pound contract.

In a joint venture named, Carillion Amey, they maintain 45,000 Forces' homes. But many families have told of mould-infested properties and boilers out of action for weeks.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said: "I made it abundantly clear to the chief executives of Carillion and Amey that their performance hasn't met the standards expected.

"They have apologised and agreed to introduce immediate improvement measures.

"I will continue to monitor the situation very closely and will not hesitate to take further action if they don't deliver."

Elite Regiment set to lose their Parachutes

The regiment, whose most famous sortie during the Second World War was immortalised in the film A Bridge Too Far, has been targeted by Ministry of Defence accountants keen to reduce budgets.

Until now, all recruits joining the 1,500-strong regiment have undergone intensive parachute training, including a requirement to complete eight jumps before being considered ready for battle.

Soldiers have had to do at least two refresher jumps each year of their service to ensure that they remain fully trained for drops behind enemy lines. Now, just a handful of recruits will receive parachute training and hundreds of more experienced Paratroopers will not do the annual jumps required to keep them battle-ready.

The move coincides with the withdrawal of the RAF's main transport aircraft, the Hercules – used by Paras for their jumps.



Soldiers attack 'unreasonable' and 'unfair' 1% pay rise

The failure of ministers to give the Army a “reasonable” wage is undermining morale, soldiers have told the Armed Forces Pay Review Body as a 1 per cent public sector rise was announced.

Independent officials looking into soldiers' pay found that “almost every group we spoke with” thought the pay cap was “unreasonable” and “unfair”.

Soldiers said they were effectively getting a pay cut due to rising food prices and urged ministers to link their pay to private sector increases.

Emily Thornberry, Labour's shadow defence secretary, said the findings suggested that soldiers' spirits were being “badly damaged”.

She said: “Our armed forces are finding their pay falling ever further behind the cost of living, and it is no surprise that morale within our armed forces is being so badly damaged as a result.”

An MoD spokesperson stated: “We fully recognise the importance of our Armed Forces and their pay is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains fair.



SAS veteran who lost his medals dies in Grantham Hospital

An SAS veteran has died aged 80 surrounded by his family in Grantham Hospital.

Peter Bennett passed away on February 27 in the hospice at the hospital. Mr Bennett hit the headlines at the end of last year when he lost his service medals on a train between London and Grantham.

Mrs Bennett said her husband was ‘thrilled’ when he received a new set of medals and a beret.

She told the Journal: “He had a good life. He was definitely a character. He was a risk taker and a maverick.”

Mrs Bennett said a memorial service will take place in Barrowby church on April 22.



Regiments battle over securing Prince Harry as their honorary colonel

PRINCE HARRY is at the centre of a tug-of-war between regiments who want him as their honorary colonel.

The battle comes as Palace insiders admit the 31-year-old, who has carried out just two official engagements so far this year, has been “lacking direction” since leaving the Army in 2015.

Military sources last night

confirmed Harry would be discussed at an Army appointments board in April. One senior officer, based at the Army's London District headquarters in Horse Guards, said more than seven regiments and corps wanted the Prince to join them as ceremonial figurehead.

These include the Parachute

Regiment and the Royal Marines, which both believe his gung-ho reputation would make him a “natural fit”.

Other contenders include Harry's old regiments, the Household Cavalry and Army Air Corps.

“The decision ultimately rests with him,” said a source.



SBT Veterans News

Old cutlery helps army veteran tackle his PTSD

A soldier has found an unusual way of combating the post-traumatic stress disorder he developed after seeing the horrors of battle in the Gulf.

Former army medic Mark Thompson has found comfort in making unique sculptures and log burners out of knives, forks, spoons and odd bits of pre-loved metalwork.

He is now appealing for help from local people who might have unwanted cutlery lurking in their drawers.

When Mark left the army in 1997 he ended up jobless and sleeping on the streets of Kent because of his struggles with his mental health.

He ended up coming to Kettering for a friend's wedding in 2000 and never left. He met his wife Lorraine and got various welding jobs.

Mark, who now lives on a boat in Barnwell, said: "I got better and better at the metalwork and started making little things in my spare time. Check out his facebook page [here](#)

Hull 4 Heroes begins first DIY SOS-style project for PTSD sufferer 'Ady'

A CHARITY that was launched to support Hull veterans has started its first project.

Working in partnership with Hull City Council and Hull Veterans Support Centre, the team will renovate the property from top to bottom ahead of the former soldier and his family moving in.

The veteran, who wants to be known only as Ady, suffers with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He is moving from his home in east Hull to the new property to escape gangs of youths who congregate outside his home and make his life a misery.

Ady has now retired, due to illness, from

service with the Prince of Wales's Own Regiment after serving four tours of active duty. Paul Matson, co-founder of Hull 4 Heroes, said: "This will change Ady's life. Once he is moved away from his current situation, he will be able to get the help he needs with his PTSD counselling.

"Not being able to attend his PTSD sessions is now a serious issue, high stress levels are affecting his health and he is unable to sleep at night.

"Finding suitable housing can be difficult for veterans, hence why it is so important to have organisations like Hull 4 Heroes.



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The Veteran Saint

Ex-Soldier Chris Wieczorek becomes Saviour to homeless veterans

CHRIS Wieczorek served in Iraq and Northern Ireland but now has a booming property business and is keen to help former comrades who have fallen on hard times. Now once again Chris comes to the rescue to help a Fijian soldier who has been abandoned by the country he served.

Chris offered Semesa, known as Sam, a one-bedroom flat in Falkirk rent-free for six months as he fights his case to stay in the UK.

He said: "A pal flagged up this lad's plight. It's shocking. It was the same with the Gurkhas. These guys fought for our country, yet this is the treatment they get. I felt I had to do something."

Sam, 35, has been living in legal limbo in Edinburgh since 2012. He has no right to work, can't claim benefits or housing and is being supported by his nursery nurse

girlfriend, who struggles to provide for them both.

Chris has helped 7 Veterans in the last 6 months with more in the pipeline including giving a homeless ex-squaddie a rent-free home and a job after a heart warming appeal on social media. John Paul Gillespie, a former private in the Royal Logistic Corps started working with Chris in November 2015.

Other soldiers that have been helped by Chris include Steven Paterson and Richard Storer who was living in his car until the big hearted property



developer offered him a flat in Falkirk. Unfortunately Sam and Richard didn't take Chris up on his kind offer but this has not deterred him from helping others

The father of two from Bo'ness, known as Wizz, runs a very successful property business known as [Wizz Properties Ltd](#) as well as a support page, [Wizz Helps Veterans](#).

The Sandbag Times recognises Chris as one of our true heroes and a credit to humanity through his selfless acts towards his fellow veterans. Well done Chris!!

Support the UK's Wounded
Troops and their Families



Hero Medic raises public awareness of Mental Health

Awarded the Royal Red Cross Medal by Queen then abandoned by the Army after falling ill with trauma

Eight years ago, Lt Col Janet Pilgrim stood before the Queen to receive a medal known as nursing's Victoria Cross for her selfless devotion in running a British field hospital under heavy fire.

The former senior Army medic once nicknamed 'Florence of Arabia' by newspapers sits at home battling flashbacks, depression and suicidal thoughts as she struggles to come to terms with what she faced that summer.

Her PTSD and depression have seen her abandoned and cast out by the Army, she feels, and left her at times to question whether she would have been better treated if she had lost a limb, rather than suffered mental wounds serving her country.

The 49-year-old believes her struggle is being mirrored across the Armed Forces, where many others psychologically scarred in Britain's wars are being badly let down by a failing military mental health care system.

Treatment for soldiers, sailors and airmen needs overhauling she warns, because at present they are either treated in a civilian NHS that is unable understand their needs, or by military medical units that are poorly equipped and funded.

"I once told someone, I would have been better off losing a limb," she told the Telegraph, "because you then get flown to Birmingham, you get treated by the top surgeons, you get put on a military ward and you have got a whole lot of welfare staff to look after you.

"A mental health patient gets none of that. You get thrown into the NHS mental health system that can't cope with us and we can't cope with it, then we are left out on a limb with nothing."

The former officer in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, who was tipped for promotion to Colonel before her illness, says: "If it was happening at my level, then what was happening to the guys who were junior, who didn't speak out."

The responsibility and constant threat she had faced was to take a terrible toll. Returning to personnel and training staff jobs in the UK, she found herself unable to concentrate and suffering flashbacks.

Her condition deteriorated back home to where she could not eat, sleep or concentrate. She soon began to feel suicidal and turned to drink, but tried to keep her deterioration from her family.

She was admitted to an NHS mental health ward in Darlington, but treated by staff who had never dealt with the military, in a ward with a constantly changing set of civilian patients.





Her bosses later tried to gradually ease her back to work with a desk job, but she again deteriorated when she was left adrift without guidance or support. She was sent to another civilian mental health hospital in York, where staff had once again never treated a member of the military. When she left early in despair, she says the Army put her before a medical board and discharged her.

"I have had to jump through so many hoops just to try and get the support that I need, that it's just devastating," she said.

"I feel the Army just cast me out, they just didn't care and I can't believe that they would do that."

Her anger at her treatment has been made worse by the fact one clinical psychologist told her if she had been correctly treated from the start, she would have been "still in uniform" and able to continue her job.

She said: "Mental health care within the military needs sorting out. We are the poor relation of those with physical injuries. There are so many people out there who have been through stuff."

A spokeswoman for the MOD said it was unable to comment on individual cases. She said: "We are absolutely committed to the mental health of our Armed Forces and in general it remains good."

Jan said: "PTSD can catch up with you straight away or it can take five, 10, 20 years or more," she said.

"I had been a nurse for more than 25 years and at the time I did think, 'why has this happened to me'."

Jan said that while she was convalescing she started to volunteer at a local rehabilitation centre run by the registered charity, Border Collie Rescue, and helped look after one dog, Mollie, while her owner was seriously ill.

"Sadly, Mollie's owner died and the charity suggested that she came to live with me," she said.

"Mollie has made an enormous impact on improving my life and helped me through the horrible struggles. That anyone with PTSD will understand.

"I have never looked back, we now do everything and go everywhere together - Mollie is my soulmate."

As well as providing support for Jan, Mollie has also been registered as a Pets as Therapy dog.

Jan said: "She is nine years old in December and has a beautiful temperament, soft and gentle so was perfect for the job."



Sailing charity help former military policeman to get back on track

A former Royal Military policeman who was injured in Afghanistan is getting his life back on track with the help of a Cornish sailing charity.

Roy Newport suffered a spinal compression injury after his vehicle went over a landmine in 2010. In addition to living with the physical effects of the incident, he suffered from severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which impacted on his recovery process and the lives of his wife and two young children.

After being medically discharged in 2014 and spending time serving with Hassler, the Navy's rehabilitation unit at Devonport Naval base, Roy was introduced to Turn to Starboard, a sailing charity based at Falmouth in Cornwall.

The organisation was founded from the belief that sailing has a therapeutic and calming effect on participants and also help injured veterans by teaching them to sail.

People like Roy and their families are assisted by accompanied sailing trips for either a few hours or a few days, with destinations from Falmouth including channel crossings to France, trips to the Isles of Scilly and excursions along the Cornish coast.

Training courses are also on offer for veterans to gain internationally recognised Royal Yachting Association qualifications, which can help start new careers anywhere in the world.

"At first, I couldn't even talk to anyone, I really struggled. I didn't know what was wrong with me, I'd have for long panic attacks and no control over my own body," says Roy.

"Once I discovered Turn to Starboard, I found that sailing had a therapeutic effect and there's no time to sit and ponder. Everything is completely different when you are at sea to when you're on land."

Sailing is known to provide elements that mirror the ethos of Armed Forces life, such as team cohesion and leadership skills. This can help participants gradually adjust to civilian life while gaining comfort from those in a similar situation.

"I'm at a point now where I can control how I feel and have a normal conversation but it took a long time to get there. I'm now working towards

gaining Yacht Master qualifications and I'm currently acting as a communications manager and volunteer coordinator. A lot of the guys on the scheme have PTSD and it's great for them to see how far I've come."

Turn to Starboard was created from the personal experiences of its founder, Squadron Leader (Retired) Shaun Pascoe in 2012.

Shaun served on numerous tours during his 16 years in the RAF, including Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Iraq and repeatedly to Afghanistan as Officer Commanding (OC) of a Medical Emergency Response Team.





MERT is a medical team that flies forward using the Chinook aircraft to retrieve those significantly injured, often under heavy enemy fire. The high-intensity nature of his operational work meant the transition on coming home became an increasing challenge.

Shaun decided to spend his resettlement time and money on a Royal Yachting Association, Yacht Master Offshore course with Cruising Instructor. Within two weeks of sailing he felt in a better place.

“Learning new skills, achieving qualifications forging new friendships and experiencing adventure is what we offer and is incredibly powerful in aiding recovery. We’ve had veterans complete our courses saying they found an increased sense of purpose and pride which ultimately boost their self-esteem,” he says.

“People sail with us to benefit from a shared experience, helping them re-engage after separation. We also help individuals completing operational tours or requiring resettlement assistance can train on a Zero to Hero programme, designed to build confidence and self esteem through learning new skills, which leads to a new career as a Yacht Master.”

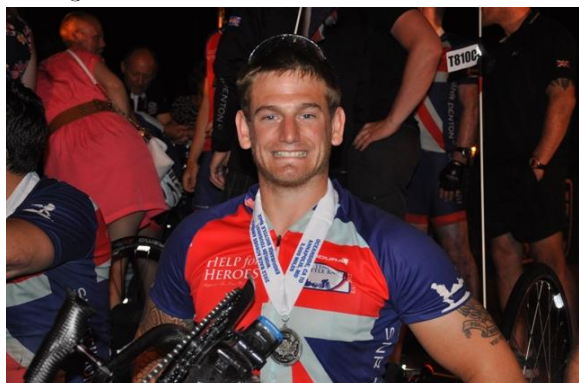
Zero to Hero is a 16-week program with flexible, expert tuition to meet the individual needs of those on the course. Participants are guided through nineteen RYA courses, culminating in an RYA Master and commercially endorsed Cruising Instructor qualification.

For sailing or volunteering opportunities at Turn to Starboard, or to make a donation, call 01326 314262 or visit www.turntostarboard.co.uk.

Ex-marine who had both legs blown off is now hoping to win gold at the Paralympics

A former marine who became a double amputee at the age of 19 is now hoping to bring gold home for Britain at the Rio Paralympics.

ITV News first spoke to Joe Townsend shortly after he lost both his legs in Afghanistan and "couldn't see a light at the end of the tunnel". Now 27, he has now turned his life around and credits sport with helping him do more than he thought he could ever achieve.



He said: "Sport has completely changed my life. I suffered life-changing injuries and managed to flip that round on its head and make the best out of a bad situation, and I'm just going to push myself." Joe now hopes to be selected to represent Great Britain in the Paratriathlon - a new sport which combines wheelchair racing, wheelchair biking and swimming. It's a far cry from what he describes as his "darkest days" when he had to lie on his front for two weeks after having his legs and part of his bottom removed. He said: "At the time, I wasn't strong enough to lift my head off the pillow. It was difficult to see any light at the end of the tunnel. "I was lucky enough to meet other guys injured earlier on in Afghanistan and Iraq so I knew there was a life waiting for me."

For more information on stories like Joe's, visit www.helpforheroes.org.uk or the British Paralympic Association at paralympics.org.uk





God is our
REFUGE and STRENGTH
A very present help in trouble

PSALM 46:1



Strength To Carry On

I had been pondering on what this week was going to throw at me, and how I would cope. I try not to worry about tomorrow but sometimes when you know it's going to be **another** tough day, you spend the evening before getting more and more anxious & tense about it. You can feel the dread building in the pit of your stomach. One tough day rolls into another, and another, when you seem to be moving forward something happens which knocks you back to square one. I have this image of a mountain in my head. Life is like a mountain you climb and climb, the higher you get the harder it is, and then you slip & hurtle back to the bottom, usually accompanied by injuries that you've picked up on the way down. We've all experienced this. You're moving steadily forward, things are nearly where you want them to be and then

disaster...you lose your job, go through a marriage breakup, become very ill, a loved one dies, the list is endless. You go crashing down that hill and it hurts. The fact is you still have to pick yourself up and face the mountain, none of us can avoid the climb unless we stay at the bottom but that tends to be a very lonely and desperate place. We heal, and then we start to climb again.

Now I'm not a climber, my biggest climbing expedition is walking up the Malvern Beacon via St Anne's Well, but I know how hard I find that, so climbing a mountain must be so much harder!! Life is a mountain, sometimes we ascend and sometimes we descend both are painful. There are bumps on the way down, cuts, bruises, sprains, possible broken bones, but what about on the way up. The amount of strain you put on your body climbing, muscles working hard, tendons straining, sweating, blisters, heart pumping, breathing heavily, concentrating on every movement, the

air thinning and the incline getting steeper, digging deep to find the strength to go on.

And then you hit that wall, that point where you can't go on, you have no strength left, you feel tired, drained and ready to give up. I get to this point and just want to sit where I am and be left alone. I can't face the climb or descent I just want to give up. So what do I do? I usually stay put for a while, but then I remember verse 1 of Psalm 46, sometimes as a bible reading, sometimes in the words of a song. It is written:

***'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.'* (Psalm 46:1)**

I remember to pray, to ask God for HIS strength. We were not created to live this life alone. God gives me the strength to face things that I know should've made me fall apart. When I got divorced a friend of mine asked me how I managed to cope with everything that was going on and I knew how, it



was God carrying me through. When I struggle to get out of bed in the morning, it's God that gives me that gentle nudge, reminding me that I'm not alone. He even uses other people as a means of support. He sends the right people at the right time. These I call 'God sends'. The people that are there just at the right time with some encouragement.

I think about a man in the news recently who is in hospital. He has a friend/carer that clearly loves him and wants to be there for him. He feels his friend's suffering and can see how tired he is of fighting & he will do anything he can to give him the love, support, encouragement and hope he needs to carry on climbing his mountain. However as human beings we are limited to what we can do. We don't have a magic wand. We must continue to provide that support, but we need a helping hand, we need supernatural intervention.

What I'm trying to say really is that God is always there. He will shelter you when needed, He will send help when needed, He will give you strength, but more importantly He will BE your strength when you have nothing left in you to fight. He's just waiting for you to ask Him.

'I lift my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. ' (Psalm 121:1-2)

***'So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.'** (Luke 11:9-10)*

I want to reassure you that however alone you are feeling right now, you are NOT alone in your battle. Please message me if you have any questions or if you would like us to pray for you or for someone you know. Please contact me at Vickie@thetommyatkinstrust.com





Mysterious deaths of the English flying aces during WW1



The three biggest-hitting British air aces of World War One rose from quiet backgrounds to become national heroes - but their deaths have still not been fully explained.

In 1914, the sky was a new battlefield, with startling contrasts. On one hand it was daring and exotic, but with flimsy planes and no parachutes, it was also infamously dangerous. At one point the life expectancy of a new pilot sank as low as 17 days.

But three men, for a time, beat the odds and rose to national renown, before succumbing to extraordinary twists of fate. Edward Mannock was probably the most enigmatic of the three. His birthplace is uncertain, his final tally hotly disputed, his grave unmarked.

Born in 1887, claims have been lodged for Aldershot, Brighton and Ballincollig, but when his soldier father deserted the family in 1909 they were in Canterbury, Kent. Looking for work he moved to Wellingborough, Northamptonshire and he returned there on leave during the war. In 1916, Mannock joined the Royal Flying Corps in 1916,

with his Irish mother earning him the nicknames Mick and Pat. Joshua Levine, author of *Fighter Heroes of WWI*, says: "Mannock is one of the most fascinating personalities to come out of World War One, he is so unlikely as an ace.

"He was older, working class, a strongly minded socialist and supporter of Irish home rule. "He wasn't a natural flyer, he was scared and admitted it - almost unthinkable to most pilots - which led to allegations he was 'yellow', a coward.

"What he then did was remarkable. He rationally sat down and worked out a series of rules of how to fight. "Crucially this could be taught and as his successes grew, he became more popular, even idolised."

On 26 July 1918 though, he broke one of his own rules and circled a plane he had shot down. Within seconds his own plane was struck by ground fire, burst into flames and crashed.

"He had become increasingly bleak in his outlook and maybe there was an element of if he was going to die then he would choose how," Mr Levine says. "He didn't forget his rules but this time chose to ignore them, to look fate in the eye and see what happened."

The Germans reported finding and burying Mannock's body but the spot could not be traced after the war. His name stands on the memorial for missing airmen. However, recent research has shown a body of a pilot was exhumed nearby but placed in an official grave as an unknown. It is a double irony that the methodical pilot was killed by rashness and his celebrity status did not save him from an anonymous grave. James McCudden's career mirrored Mannock's, in that he





rose from a humble military family, in Gillingham, Kent, to inspire the country. Author and historian Alex Revell says:

"McCudden's attitude to flying was the same to everything he did. His rule was: 'If a thing's worth doing, it's worth doing well'. 'To rise through the ranks from air mechanic to major in under five years was remarkable in those very class conscious days."

He scored rapidly and his successes led the government to name its top fighters. At home on leave he dismissed the attention as "bosh".

Flying back to France on 9 July 1918, McCudden landed his brand new plane at small aerodrome called Auxi-le-Chateau to check his location. On leaving, his plane struggled, swerved and crashed into a wood, leaving him fatally injured. Several witnesses said he had been trying to perform a stunt at the time. Others said they heard his engine misfiring. The official report, routine after every crash, was either not carried out or quickly went missing.

Mr Revell interviewed Captain Herbert Charles, the RAF's accident investigator, who inspected the wreckage. He said: "He gave me the impression that he considered that there had been a cover up, but was reluctant to go on record in saying so.

"He found an obsolete air filter had been fitted which would have led to the engine failing during a steep, climbing turn. 'Personally, I think Charles believed it was a manufacturing fault by the Royal Aircraft Factory, which built the SE5a McCudden was flying."

England's leading ace had been killed not by the enemy but perhaps by a clumsy mistake in a home front factory. Unlike the others, Albert Ball was neither steeped in military life nor dogged by poverty.

Pilot and aviation historian Paul Davies said: "Ball was the first British pilot to become a celebrity, he was taken to the heart of the nation which needed good news, helped by his boyish looks and patriotic attitude."

Born in 1896, his well-off businessman father made sure he attended a good public school in his native Nottingham.

Mr Davies says: "Ball grew up believing he had to put his country first, he had 'Britain' running through him like letters in a stick of rock.

"Desperate to live up to his father's expectations and his own sense of duty, the war was in some ways an ideal opportunity."

He arrived in France in February 1916 and immediately began to gain victories. While lacking the methodical wisdom of Mannock and McCudden, he had his own strengths.

"He was a mix of extraordinary bravery and boyish naivety. He became known for charging straight into enemy formations yet was embarrassed by public attention. "He disliked the act of killing but felt it was a necessary thing to do to defend his country," says Mr Davies.

On 7 May 1917, near Douai, Ball became involved in swirling dogfight. Ball pursued an opponent into low cloud but moments later his plane reappeared, upside down. It crashed behind German lines.

Claims Ball had been shot down were disproved as his plane and body suffered no bullet damage. The nation was shocked and confused.

He was buried with some pomp by the Germans and his father paid for a memorial at the crash site.

Mr Levine says: "The British authorities didn't want any of them to be turned into heroes but there was an immense public appetite to put a human face on what was essentially a faceless war."





Cruising & Schmoozing A Veteran on the Ocean Waves

One of the great pleasures while cruising is meeting all the veterans from other countries and swapping war stories. On a recent transatlantic cruise on the Norwegian Jade, I talked to the Cruise Director, Archie Archbold and he agreed we could hold two Veterans Social Clubs on alternative Saturdays and gave us free use of a large conference room and complimentary teas, coffees and pastries, so we were all set for a great meeting.

We couldn't call it a Veterans Breakfast Club as they couldn't provide a full breakfast service. The first Social attracted 25 veterans, including one of the ships officers,



an ex RN guy, and a mixed bunch of US Marines, Navy and Air Force, and me. Within minutes the banter had started and a nice touch was everyone standing and having a minute to tell us all about themselves. The most moving was an ex-Marine veteran who told us that he had served in Vietnam and within the month he was the only one left alive, putting it down to the fact that he was born on Friday the 13th.

The second meeting attracted 28 veterans, the Marine did not come back, but some brought friends they had met and we even had the pleasure of meeting an ex WREN officer. I have heard of others organising Socials on P and O, where Denis Scaife of the Retford Club held one where they even had the Captain attend. One of the veterans who attended was an Ex RN Stoker, who was taken ill on the ship and through the network of Breakfast Clubs, Colin and Tracey Gaynor of the Southampton Breakfast Club were able to help and support the couple during their stay in Southampton and then move them to Nottingham, a story in itself.

So if you have a cruise planned, and you have a sea day, talk to the Cruise Director and see if you can organise a Veterans Social Club, and just enjoy the international banter and camaraderie, it's well worth the effort. **John Terry**



The Banger & Beans Show

The Saturday morning show dedicated to the Veterans Breakfast Clubs around the UK. Bringing you the very latest news, reviews, gossip and banter presented by your 2 favourite presenters, Pablo & Ricky.





This Week in Pictures



Pic Of
The Week

Veterans Radio Net

Our Time | Our Place | Our Voice



Welcome to Veterans Radio Net (VRN) The NAAFI of the Air Waves

We have had a few changes this week and over the coming weeks and months there will be a few more. One thing we are going to be doing more of is "Live Interviews" with some of the smaller charities out there.

We all know the big charities, they spend big buck's telling us all about themselves but there are lots of smaller charities, some only local to their own area, that are doing really fantastic work, I tell you, any one who can get a triple amputee up on a surfboard deserves to be "Bigged Up"

We will try to get them On Air live but if it has to be recorded then that's how it is.

We also want to do a few Live Broadcasts from some of the Breakfast Clubs (thinking to myself I'm asking for trouble there LOL)

So if you know of a small Charity that deserves Time on Air or if your Breakfast Club is up for a bit of a laugh then let us know.

But we are still in need of presenters, so if you think you could become part of the VRN team then Please get in touch.

Keep your eyes on our Website <http://veteransradionet.co.uk/chat.html> and join in with the banter.

Cheers Peep's

Sapper Ken



On Veterans Radio Net This Week...



Mon – Fri	0700 – 1000hrs
Mon – Fri	1000 – 1200hrs
Mon – Fri	1200 – 1400hrs
Tuesday	1800 – 2000hrs
Tuesday	2000 – 2200hrs
Friday	1800 – 2000hrs
Saturday	0800 – 1000hrs
Sunday	1800 – 2000hrs

Sapper Ken Breakfast Show
Remy in the Mid Morning
Sapper Daz does Lunch
GWF Northern Soul
Songs for Heroes
The Tommy Atkins Show
The Bangers & Beanz Show
The Banger & Beanz Washing Up Show



The Sandbag Times

In association with The Tommy Atkins Trust

The Veterans Classified Section

Veterans Help



Other Helpful Links



Our Links





The Sandbag Times

In association with The Tommy Atkins Trust

The Online Magazine for Veterans

A word from the Ed

Wow, what a week. Veterans news has been hot flying off the press this week and I have certainly had my hands full swapping and shifting between SBT, Tommy Atkins, VRN, The Veterans Breakfast Clubs and A Song For A Hero. Who said men can't multi-task!

The magazine as you have probably realised has become a different monster with a new layout, front cover, design etc all constructed on a crusty old laptop that's seen better days. The old girl still plods on though.

Got to say a huge thanks to my good friend John Terry of the Veterans Breakfast Club Admin who has jumped in and helped out with some of the

duties of the Tommy Atkins Trust. Don't know what I'd do without him. The same can be said for Ricky, Vickie, Ken, Remy, Daz and Vince. All of who have vital roles in the running of our little kingdom.

One new change to mention is the new Twitter page for the SBT. You can find us at @thesandbagtimes This now gives me a platform to review, preview, update and also read your comments on the magazine. With any luck this will be a magazine of the future for Veterans across the UK and, who knows, maybe even further. Don't worry I'm not looking for World Domination yet.

Keep abreast of what we get up to on VRN and the Trust. Pabs

Ways to find us

The Sandbag Times



@thesandbagtimes



sbt@thetommyatkinstrust.com

The Tommy Atkins Trust



www.thetommyatkinstrust.com



TheTommyAtkinsTrust



@TheTATrust



info@thetommyatkinstrust.com



A Song For A Hero

"The Brand New Rock Opera which tells the truth of what happens to our heroes when the killing ends. Packed with incredible songs, breathtaking graphics and an emotional rollercoaster of a story that will leave you asking questions for a long time to come."

Where Do They Go...

... When The Killing Ends



The Sandbag Times

Time for a NAAFI Break



Military Word Search



ADJUTANT	JOIN	RULES
AIRCRAFT	MARINES	SKILL
AIR FORCE	MEDICAL	SKIPPER
ARMY	MILITANT	SPY
ATTACK	MINE	STAFF
BOMB	MISSION	STRATEGY
CAMP	NAVY	TANK
CARRIER	OBEY	TARGET
COAST GUARD	OFFICER	TASK
COMMANDER	PILOT	TERRORIST
CONVOY	RADIO	TRUCK
DUTY	RANGE	UNIFORM
ENLIST	RECRUIT	VETERAN
FIGHT	RESCUE	WAR
HERO	RISK	WEAPON
INSURGENT	ROCKET	WOUND



Name all Six and win a prize
sbt@thetommyatkinstrust.com



What do you mean
 "you've read it already?"
 READ IT AGAIN!!!!!!

Easy

		8		3		5	4	
3			4		7	9		
4	1				8			2
	4	3	5		2		6	
5								8
	6		3		9	4	1	
1			8				2	7
		5	6		3			4
	2	9		7		8		

Medium

6			7	2			3	1
	3	5	1	6	9	8		
9				8				
	5	6		9				
		1					7	
3	4		5			2		
		8	6	3	7	5		
	7			5				3
							8	

Hard

4	5			8		2		
			1					
	2			6	7		9	
		8					3	
5		6				2		1
	1					4		
	8		9	7			6	
				1				
9	8			5		7		

V. Hard

	7		2	8	5			1
		8	9		3	5		
5				1				8
	1							9
9				4				3
		2	4		8	6		
	9		6	3	2		8	