

Helping veteran inmates get back on track



The custodial manager with a veteran in the bike workshop, which is run by a veteran at HMP Risley.

Ex-Forces personnel, who find themselves in the prison system in Lancashire, now have specific measures to support them including a dedicated prison wing – The Discovery Wing at HMP Risley.

Veteran Lead for HM Prison and Probation Service Co-Financing Organisation (CFO) Carrie Rogers, explained the work that has been carried out to support the Armed Forces community in custody and to reduce reoffending after release.

She said: “Since the start of the Network for Ex-Service Personnel project (NESP) in 2016, HMPPS has increasingly enhanced the support to ex-Armed Service Personnel (ex-ASP), across the prison estate.

*This includes introducing Veterans' Policy Leads covering all prisons and providing a network of contacts for Veterans in Custody Support Officers (VICSOs). Specialist Military Human Training has been offered to prison staff working with

veteran offenders, probation staff and other professionals in the service who support ex-ASP.”

Lancashire Prisons currently hold veteran support meetings, to support ex-ASP's.

Carrie explained: “It is widely known that these networks help ex-ASP to talk openly and feel part of a community. This helps to boost positivity and engagement - not just from those individuals, but also for those who have not yet wanted to declare they are ex-ASP.”

Regarding the dedicated prison wing, Carrie said: “The idea of the CFO Discovery Wing is to provide a bespoke programme that benefits veterans, care leavers, those serving short sentences and those with few or no family ties.

“It complements existing provision and HMPPS CFO have commissioned the current contract provider, Achieve North West Connect, to deliver this nine-week rolling programme.

“There is an emphasis on peer mentorship and teamwork, with prisoners benefiting from additional gym time, family visits and evening associations. The ex-ASP will gain mentor qualifications and have tailored support to aid their rehabilitation.

“The wing is open to support those ex-ASP in other prisons who are eligible and would like to co-locate with other ex-ASP's. The wing will rely on the network of the prison service working together to ensure that the right support is given to the those who wish to be transferred.”

HMP Risley are now accepting transfers for the HMPPS CFO Discovery Wing – speak to your local VICSO or email the Lancs Covenant team at LancsCovenant@uclan.ac.uk

REMEMBRANCE SERVICES

Services were held across Lancashire to remember and pay respects to all Armed Forces Personnel who fought for our country and our freedom and those that paid the ultimate sacrifice. We will remember them.

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YOUR COVENANT AT WORK

ODE TO CAMP

Poetry workshops were held at Weeton Barracks, Preston, as part of the 'Out of School Adventures' summer programme.

Weeton local author, spoken word artist and youth worker Nathan Parker came in to work with the children to create some poetry which reflected their lives growing up on a military camp.

They created a group poem 'Camp Life' and individual poems on a topic of their choice. At the end of the week a performance was held for the parents and the Mayor and Mayoress of Fylde Borough Council.

Camp Life

Welcome to our camp,
It's where we call home.
There are lots of houses,
Where we never feel alone.
Theirs is always lots to do,
We make lots of friends.
And whilst we might move,
The Friendship never ends.
Other places might have big buildings
and lots of amazing sights,
We have nature, wildlife and trees,
It's just a case of differences,
not wrongs or rights.
We have a community centre,
Tonnes of places to walk.
A park, youth club and school,
And with Rachel we can always talk.
Sometimes we feel hidden,
When other people don't know,
Witnessing new experiences,
We will always learn and grow.

*Written by Joseph, Victoria, William, Maddison,
Charlotte, Olivia and Tyler*



VISIT TO ARBORETUM

A coach party of veterans and supporters from the West Lancs Ark in Skelmersdale, visited the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

Some members of the group found lost family and friends mentioned on the Armed Forces Memorial and they were joined on the trip by Andy Powell, founder of Healthier Heroes, based in Burnley.

They all had a fantastic day and thanked: SWILCAN for refreshments, Miners Peg for breakfast and carvery, piper Bob Wilson, photographer Alan Moore, P,D and M Deli for sandwiches, Neil from Charlton Coaches, Upholland Tawd Vale Lions for funding the event and their continued support and Sue Dunnett, without whom the day would not be possible.

The day ended at the Miners Peg in Skelmersdale.



VIC 10TH CELEBRATION

A celebration evening marked 10 years of Haslingden-based Veterans In Communities and was enjoyed by 100 guests.

After-dinner speaker former World Champion Snooker Player Steve Davis was a delight with his witty talk covering everything from tales from the snooker table to receiving his MBE and OBE.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton and Administrator Amy Thompson organised the evening at Burnley Football Club's Turf Moor. She said: "I was just a perfect way to



celebrate 10 years of VIC being here to support veterans."

Addressing the veterans at the celebration, Mayor of Rossendale Councillor Anne Cheetham said: "We all know that if we want to keep our freedom, sometimes we have to fight for it to make sure. For all those who have been involved, we thank you very much."

YOUR COVENANT AT WORK

HONOURING OUR LATE QUEEN

Veterans from Blackpool FC Community Trust (BFCCT) were among those in attendance when the specially engraved stone was dedicated. It pays tribute to the late Queen's pledge to serve the country her whole life 'whether it be long or short'.

Community engagement is a big part of the Armed Forces engagement officer's job description at Blackpool and during his time at the Trust, Tony Codling has seen an influx of veterans, serving armed forces personnel and their families accessing the many services and opportunities on offer.

A midweek NAAFI break is held every Wednesday from 10.30am to noon in the Corner Flag at Bloomfield Road; it is funded by the Armed Forces Covenant and as 20 to 25 attendees each week.

To coincide with the Premier League 30th anniversary, the Naafi break veterans had the opportunity to have their photo taken with the Premier League Trophy.

The club also produces a calendar of all events and services in the Fylde area so that everyone involved in working with veterans in the area is working together.



PC STEVE SWAPS FORCES

After 14 years in the Royal Military Police, Steve Scott was used to the camaraderie but he found it again working in the police service.

He said: "My biggest fear in leaving service life was losing the camaraderie I had become accustomed to. I had fellow service colleagues I could trust and depend on, who would always be by my side, ready to help out when the going got tough.



"However, working with Lancashire Constabulary officers in Blackpool quickly set these concerns aside as that exact same camaraderie existed within the Constabulary. One of the major concerns I had was the then career length of 30 years and my previous pensionable service. I was quickly able to clarify that the 12 years adult (pensionable) HM Forces service translated to 9 years police pension, meaning I will still be able to complete my full pensionable service."

Lancashire Constabulary has veterans in a number of front-line and supporting roles within the organisation. It also has an ever-growing Armed Forces Staff Support Network which provides support to cadet forces, adult leaders, military reservists, veterans and spouses whose partners are deployed overseas.

GRANT AIDS CAMP ACTIVITY

Free weekly sports and social activities were provided to the families of The Mercian Regiment thanks to a Covenant Grant.

The 'Just Join In' project was delivered in Weeton Barracks by staff from AFC Fylde Community Foundation to August 2022 and, while most Mercian 2 personnel and families have left the barracks and been amalgamated into other regiments, support for remaining families continues.

Assistant Foundation Director Mick Whittle said: "This would not have been possible without the Covenant grant. We are now using the club's reserves to continue the programme to offer support for the remaining families. We held family sessions, a youth group, half-term activities, match day events in the stadium and provided one-to-one support for families. We also supported those who were transitioning from service life to civilian."

Over the programme's length, the Community Foundation worked with 107 people, the youth club ran at capacity, family sessions were held twice a week along with regular coffee mornings. The Barracks is isolated, but on the doorstep of AFC Fylde, so the programme helped to encourage interaction and friendships among both communities and reduce isolation.

YOUR ARMED FORCES CHAMPIONS

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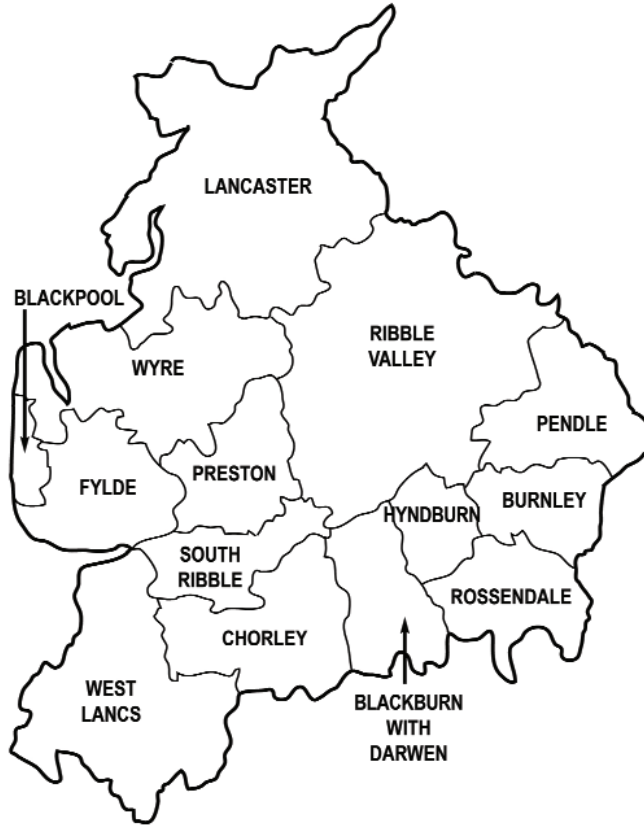
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HELPING HAND FOR ARMED FORCES' CARERS

Lancashire Carers' Service is excited to be working in partnership with The Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub.

We are keen to hear from people from the Armed Forces community, both serving or discharged, who provide a consistent level of unpaid care

to a relative, friend, loved one or neighbour due to a physical injury and/or emotional health problem such as PTSD. This could be you, or someone you know of.

If you are interested in getting involved with the pro-

motion of this initiative, or to support our planned informal 'meet-ups' across the County, we would value your contribution and would love to hear from you.

To find out more please contact 0345 688 7113 or email enquiries@lancscarers.co.uk



lancscarers.co.uk

We are here to support all people providing unpaid care in Lancashire.

For more information visit: www.n-compass.org.uk click on 'Our Services' and follow the drop down link to The Lancashire Carers' Service.

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