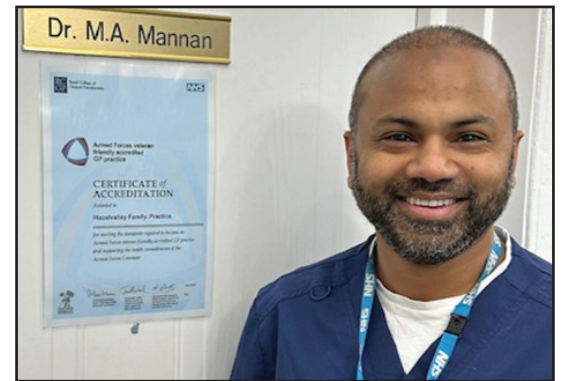




NHS takes strides to support the Armed Forces



THE health and wellbeing of all those who served, are serving and their families, is now a key focus in long-term NHS plans which demonstrates the influence of the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Covenant is a promise by the nation to ensure that all the Armed Forces community, and their families, are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged when accessing public or commercial services due to their military service. It also allows for special provision, when appropriate, for those who have sacrificed the most, such as the bereaved and injured.

It has been further strengthened in law and the amended Armed Forces Act 2006, now places a legal obligation on certain public bodies to have due regard to the Covenant principles when exercising functions in the areas of housing, healthcare, and education. This new Duty came into force in November 2022.

The NHS has developed The Veterans' Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) which is a clinically-led, quality improvement programme delivered in partnership with the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital (RNOH) and NHS England. Its aim is to

develop, share and drive the implementation of best practice which will improve the healthcare of military veterans, while at the same time also raising standards across the NHS for all users.

To date, all the Lancashire NHS Trusts, and 170 nationally, have been accredited as 'Veteran Aware', having demonstrated their commitment to eight core standards, including signing the Covenant and raising awareness of veterans' healthcare needs.

Additionally, The Royal College of General Practitioners' Veteran Friendly Practice Accreditation Programme was launched in 2019. Aimed at raising standards in Primary Healthcare, it assists GP practices to better identify, treat, and refer veterans, where appropriate, to dedicated NHS services.

Dr Abdul Mannan is a GP at Hazelvalley Family Practice in Haslingden and Clinical Lead for Rossendale West Primary Care Network. Hazelvalley is accredited as a Veteran Friendly GP Practice.

He said: "Since getting this accreditation, it has helped the staff at the surgery become more aware of the specific support that helps veterans. Furthermore, through my role as Clinical Lead in Rossendale West, I

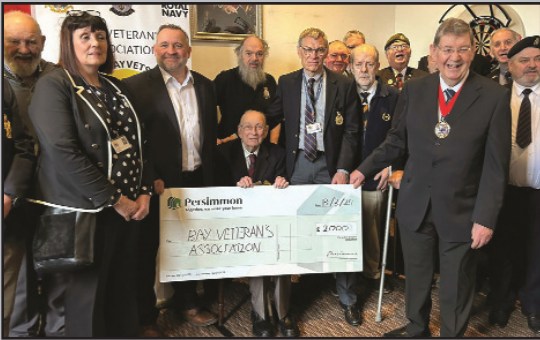
have encouraged all of the other Rossendale GP Practices to also become accredited and, to my knowledge, most of them have."

Building on the work carried out by the NHS to improve services in the Trusts and Primary Healthcare settings, a new Veteran Friendly Framework for care homes has been created. It is specifically designed for residential care home settings and seeks to create a veteran friendly culture, address social isolation and signpost veterans to services by identifying veterans early and providing staff with training on the Armed Forces community.

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YOUR COVENANT AT WORK



SEASIDE BASE

SIX months after Gary Kniveton formed the Bay Veterans' Association, the organisation now has its own base offering a daily drop in facility at Euston Road in Morecambe.

Former Royal Marine Gary set up the organisation last September and the BVA was fortunate to be supported by The York in Morecambe who kindly allowed veterans to use a room in the pub for breakfast clubs.

It started with six people but that expanded quickly; with bacon sandwiches enticing members along – now there are more than 170 members and the new venue offers more facilities.

Gary said: "Members will find a warm space with tea, coffee and snacks all day. We have a pool table, dart board, cards, dominoes, books etc and we emulate the services of a NAAFI. The activities we run here include a Boccia group, model group, walking group etc – there is no limit as to what we can run now we have our own base.

"We have a dedicated Trauma influenced counsellor on the team to provide mental health support – something necessary to combat the PTSD and mental health issues amongst veterans. We signpost to other support services, such as SSAFA, British Legion, Blind Vets etc and details of all of these services can be found in the hub through flyers, phone numbers etc."

Events continue at The York for those who can't make a weekday, and at the Ex-Servicemen's Club in Carnforth and at Carnforth Fire Station.

Visit [Facebook Bay Veterans Association](#)

SLEEP OUT FOR TOMMY

A GREAT Tommy Sleep Out was organised by Accrington Stanley Community Trust Military Veterans' Project.

Members and supporters swapped their comfy beds for sleeping bags on the terraces at the Wham Stadium when they took part in The Royal British Legion initiative. They raised more than £2,000, which was

far more than expected. Healthier Heroes founder Andrew Powell visited and explained the work that his charity does with Op Fortitude which offers help to homeless veterans. More than 6,000 veterans are currently experiencing homelessness in the UK.

www.stanleytrust.co.uk/militaryveteransproject/



NUCLEAR TEST MEDAL

ROYAL Engineer veteran Brian McDonald was presented with his Nuclear Test Medal by Retired Colonel David Waters, North West Deputy Group Director of the Royal Engineers Association.



The medal was only announced in November 2023 by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and is for British servicemen who took part in the British and American nuclear tests and the clean up that followed between 1952 and 1967.

Brian was called up for National Service in May 1957, when he was 21 years old. He passed out on September 2 and married Barbara

five days later. Then he was posted to Osnabrück, West Germany before embarking on Hired Military Transport ship, HMT Dunera, bound for the Christmas Islands. Brian played an important role as Engineer Internal Combustion and Pumps and, while there, he witnessed two atom bombs and three far more powerful hydrogen bombs being detonated.

YOUR COVENANT AT WORK



GRANT TO FIND 'HIDDEN' VETS

VETERANS In Communities has received its largest ever Armed Forces Covenant grant to seek out hidden veterans to make sure they are supported so they can prosper within, and as part of, their community.

The Haslingden-based charity works across East Lancashire and areas of Greater Manchester, was awarded £97,142 from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust for the three-year-project.

Reach, Support, Belong and Prosper responds to a need the charity identified post pandemic and will see VIC providing a proactive service to seek veterans who are most isolated.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "We are very grateful to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust for approving the grant which will enable us to identify, reach and support those from the Armed Forces community across our areas of benefit.

"This will help them overcome their individual barriers so they can lead fulfilling lives, and feel a sense of belonging and be able to prosper within their local community. The grant will focus on the most isolated and hardest to reach and the project aims to locate veterans who were previously unknown to us and help them to access other services."

For more information contact **01706 833180**.

BACK TO WORK SUCCESS

THANKS to a breakfast meeting with Gary Shivers, British Reserve Army HR combat specialist Martin Johnson was able to secure a new role after he left the forces.

Queen's Royal Hussars veteran Gary, is the Department of Work and Pensions Armed Forces Champion for Cumbria and Lancashire.



knew I was leaving the service because I had reached the cut off age, he was instrumental in helping me secure myself an assistant officer job."

Martin worked in sheet metal before joining the Army seven years ago and he said he loved every minute of being in the Army, especially the public engagements.

The Lions' Breakfast is where the Duke of Lancaster Regiment invite employers in to meet and network and provide service leavers with potential job opportunities.

● Gary also obtained funding for an HGV project to train eligible veterans in Category C + E, the most comprehensive HGV licence. For more information email gary.shivers@dwp.gov.uk

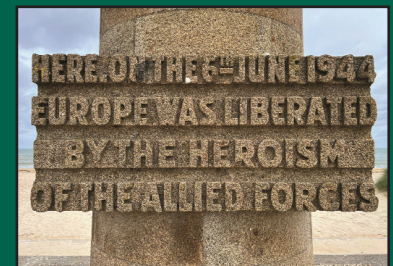
Martin, pictured, said: "When Gary

D-DAY 80 VETERANS' VISIT

FIVE Lancashire Second World War veterans will be flown to the 80th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy in a BAE Systems business jet.

Ken Benbow, Royal Navy, is 98, Royal Marine Jim Relcher is 99, East Lancashire Regiment soldier Richard Brock is 99, Bill Mould, RAF, is 98 and Stewart Taylor, also RAF, is 101.

They will attend a ceremony on June 6 and then the Winston Churchill Learning and Education Centre, adjacent to the Normandy Memorial, will be officially opened. This has been made possible by a donation of £500,000 by BAE Systems towards the building costs plus additional monies, a further £100,000, towards the running costs.



Colonel David Waters, President of the Lancashire Armed Forces Association, said: "Well done to our own WW2 veterans Stewart Taylor and Ken Benbow who encouraged BAE's decision to donate the large amount of money towards the project when they went to the memorial on D-Day last September courtesy of a flight from BAE Warton. It's so important the younger generations learn the lessons from history to try to stop the same mistakes being made again."

YOUR ARMED FORCES CHAMPIONS

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BLACKPOOL Council
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email: adrian.hoyle@blackpool.gov.uk



BURNLEY Borough Council
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CHORLEY Borough Council
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email: aaron.beaver@chorley.gov.uk



FYLDE Borough Council
Councillor Frank Andrews
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email: frank.andrews@fylde.gov.uk



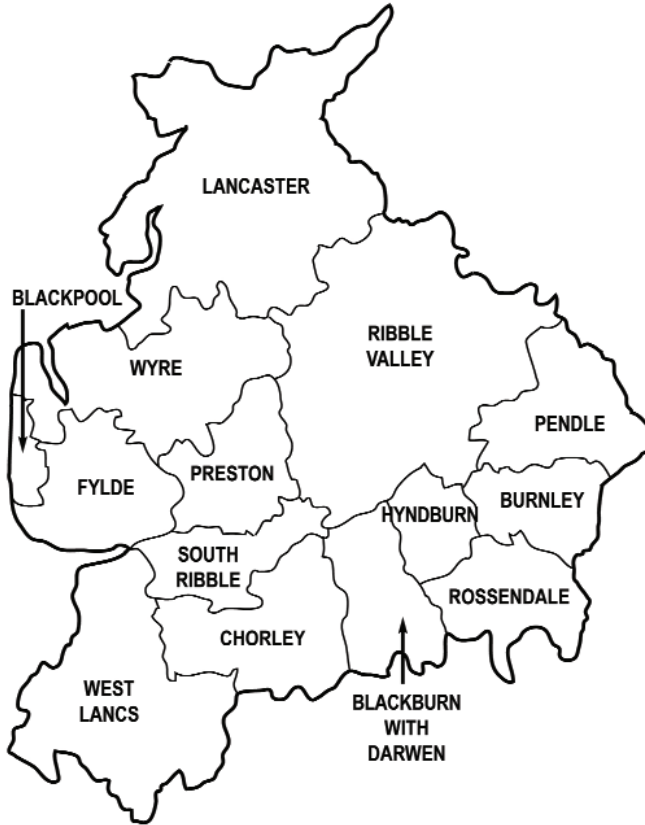
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WYRE Council
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UNITED WE STAND

REPRESENTATIVES from two Lancashire councils recently came together to support their local Armed Forces community.

For several months, staff and elected councillors from Chorley and South Ribble councils have been working hard to establish a Covenant group of representatives from public sector organisations such as, the council, NHS and DWP, as well as local leaders of charities and CICs who work

among the Forces community locally.

They met at Chorley Town Hall, and the meeting was chaired by Chorley Armed Forces Champion Councillor Aaron Beaver, who invited all attendees to introduce themselves and describe how they interacted with Forces' people.

Talks were given by Ian Barber, Project Leader of the



Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Hub, and Gary Oakford, the Regional Employment and Engagement Director from the Reserve Forces and Cadet Association. They provided overviews of their organisation's activities, and encouraged local military veterans and their family

members to visit the Hub's website to find about local activities. The website collates useful information for Forces' people which is broken down into subject areas, such as health, housing and education, for more information visit:

www.lancashire.gov.uk/armedforces

