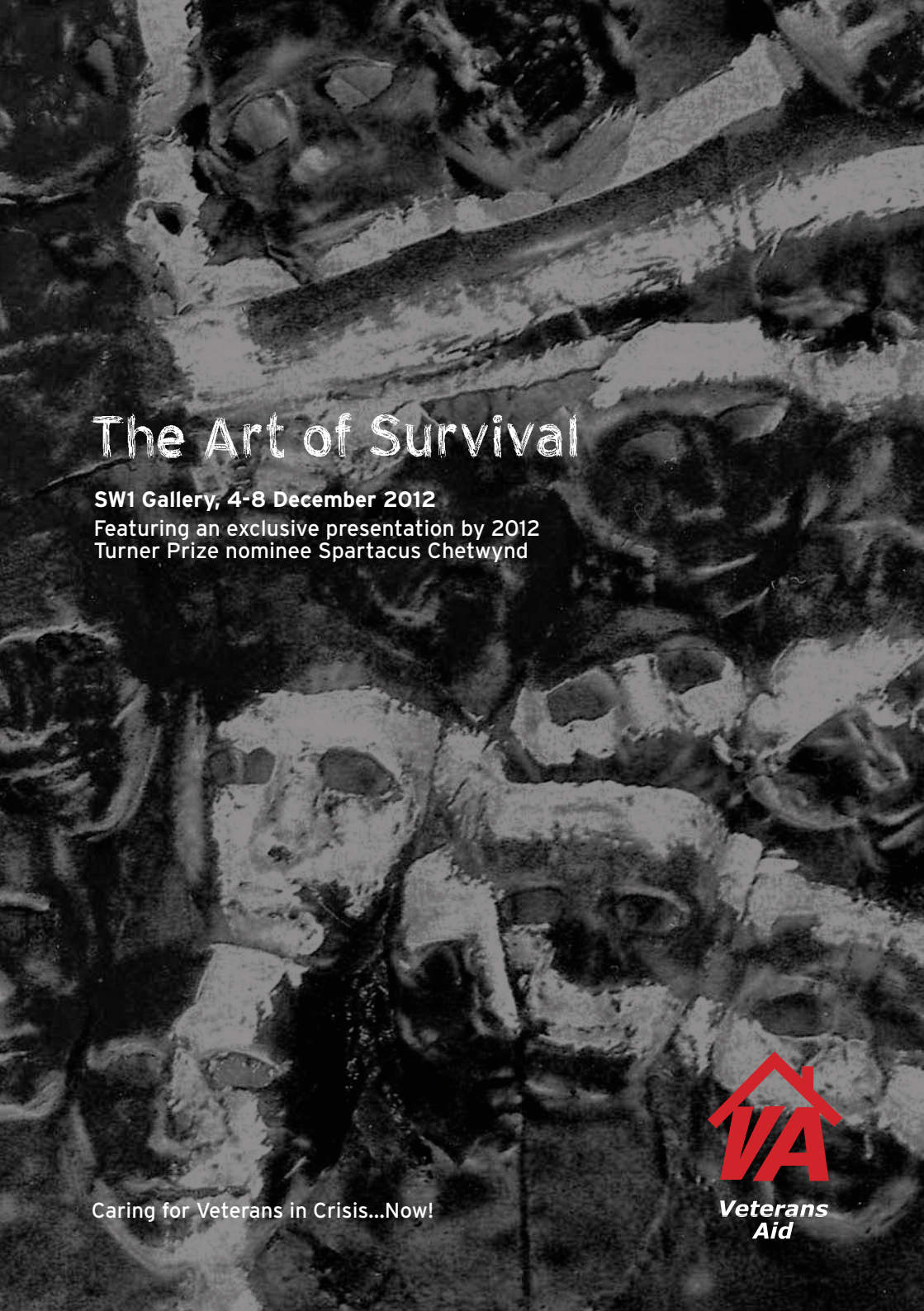




The Art of Survival

SW1 Gallery, 4-8 December 2012

Featuring an exclusive presentation by 2012
Turner Prize nominee Spartacus Chetwynd

Caring for Veterans in Crisis...Now!





***Veterans
Aid***

**40 Buckingham Palace
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E-mail: info@veterans-aid.net

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The Art of Survival

Michael Crossan's arresting installation features two men lying on the ground surrounded by blank, eyeless faces. An arm reaches upwards and a hand is extended towards him through the unseeing crowd. The faces represent people who walked past him when he was homeless and living on the streets. Crossan's work will dominate one wall of a most unusual art exhibition, hosted at the SW1 Gallery in Victoria between December 4 - 8.

Other contributors to this eclectic collection have also been homeless; some have had drug and alcohol problems, suffered from PTSD or mental health issues. But they have one thing in common; they are all ex-servicemen and they have all been helped by Veterans Aid.

The 80-year-old charity operates from a series of crowded rooms above a hairdressing salon in Buckingham Palace Road, not far from the offices of VBID (Victoria Business Improvement District). It straddles the two world's that collide in this lively area - just yards from Victoria Coach Station where so many of the UK's helpless and homeless are delivered to London. It is equidistant from the smart SW1 gallery where curator Owen Ward hosts the work of aspiring and established artists and creatives.

When VBID discovered what its 'neighbour' did it became a supporter, and through its relationship with Land Securities who own the SW1 Gallery, an offer was made to donate a week's gallery time to VA's 'artists'.

Wing Commander Dr Hugh Milroy OBE PhD

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Head of Outreach - Mr John Boyle Dip SW (Funded by SSAFA Forces Help Central London)

Substance Misuse Worker - Mr Phil Rogers BA (Funded by Royal British Legion)

Operational Case Worker - Mrs Debbie Langdon (Funded by ABF/The Soldiers Charity)

Resettlement Support Worker - Mr Jon Fullan (Funded by SSAFA Forces Help Central London)

IT Support Services - Horizon Telecom

Additional Media Support - Mr Torquil Boyd

New Belvedere House

Manager New Belvedere House - Ms Pat O'Connor MBE

Professional Support Coordinator - Ms Alice Mary Servina BSc (Funded by Royal British Legion)

Assistant Managers: Ms Lesley McDonald, Mr Kaedon White, Ms Anna Waylen, Mr Garry Roberts, Mr Sandy Ulrich, Ms Ann James, Mr Denis Murphy

SEAN STAINES

Former soldier Sean Staines is 46. He served for nine years between 1991 and 2000, starting with the Royal Horse Artillery and ending up with the ACE Mobile Force - a specialist in Arctic and Mountain Warfare. Sean served in Northern Ireland, where his unit was mortared, and did four tours of Bosnia.

Years after discharge Sean's life began to fall apart when creditors let him down and his business ventures failed. He was sleeping in a forest in Leicestershire when a call from SSAFA alerted Veterans Aid to his plight. "I thought I'd be able to cope, what with my military background, but it's not that simple. It's really not. You start thinking about the worst that could possibly happen, even taking your own life. That was as low as I could possibly have got."

Today he has clean, warm accommodation in the charity's New Belvedere House hostel where he is rediscovering his love of art. It's a place of humour and hope. "It's wrong to call it a hostel; it's a home."

Sean Staines paints flowers; from peaceful pastels to bold poppies. He re-uses old canvases, collects second hand frames and is regularly found in the hostel's sunny conservatory where his paints and palettes vie for space with the books and DVD's that make up the 'library'.

On June 5th Sean was invited to lunch with the Queen at Westminster. "On the morning of the meal it suddenly dawned on me how special this day was to be for me. Walking down the road towards Westminster was so surreal - no traffic, crowds either side of me shouting and taking photo's - all thinking I must be royalty or someone famous!"



RICHARD GILDEA



Richard Gildea, 62, served with the Royal Engineers. He heard about Veterans Aid via another ex-Serviceman. "I was going through the process of applying for a War Pension at the time. It was a lengthy procedure during which I incurred financial hardship in regard to travel expenses and gathering of medical information.

"VA helped with some of those travelling costs which also allowed me to keep in contact with my loved ones. Its aims are very close to my heart and now I'm also trying, in a small way, to help others through the creative mediums of writing and art." Richard was invited to read his poetry at Cardiff Castle, and has been invited to share his work with injured servicemen/women hospitals in London and during Pope Benedict's 2010 visit to Crofton Park in Birmingham.

"Knowing that wonderful organisations like VA exist brings hope to many who would otherwise be at a loss. It is staffed by like-minded people who are prepared to give of themselves generously in such worthy pursuit. It is a true 'Blessing' to Veterans everywhere. I hold them all in my prayers."

GORDON LUCAS

Gordon Lucas joined the Royal Engineers where he trained as a cartographer and served in Germany, Cyprus and the UK.

After leaving the Army Gordon found it difficult to settle down and worked freelance for several map companies and civil engineering concerns.

After two years in Baghdad, as senior cartographic technician on the Baghdad Metro Project, he spent a year in Libya as a contract employee for Libyan Railways. Gordon then moved to France and opened a chambre d'hôte in Normandy and running D-day beach tours for the guests.

In 2006 he moved to Spain where bought a bar and restaurant but sadly got hit by the worldwide recession and finished up losing everything. He recalls 'The British Legion in Malaga put me in touch with Veterans Aid and they gave me a place in their hostel in East London. I can honestly say I think they saved my life. When they found out that I enjoyed the calming effect that I got from painting they provided me with materials which have eventually led to this exhibition.'

When he was ready to move on VA helped Gordon secure a flat in Rochester where he has sold several paintings and photographs in the local galleries.

CRAIG ALLEN

Craig Allen went to Kettering Grammar School where he developed interest in physics and particular electronics. He joined the Army at 16 and studied Communications Engineering at the Army Apprentices College in Harrogate. "This was like serving three years in boot camp whilst studying in uniform five days a week to graduate with a very high civilian qualification."

He spent a further six years in both BAOR and NATO followed by a final design and build project for the Home Office which he undertook and completed at 30 Signal Regiment in Blandford.

"After the Army I went straight into a job in the computer industry thanks to contacts from within the military. I had a 15 year career in Business Development, then in IT for some large American companies such as HP, Iomega and Kodak."

Craig reaped both the benefits and the stress that comes with the work. "I launched the world's first portable MP3 player in the UK for a Korean company, working hard for 12 months and never receiving a penny. My final job was with a memory chip manufacturer where I was totally unsuccessful - although the story makes good reading!"

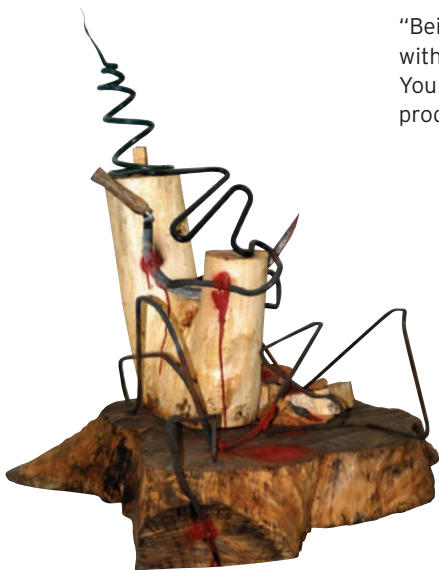
Finally Craig was made redundant. He sold his house, broke up with his girlfriend and went travelling; "Then the money ran out... and that's why I am here, happier and almost fixed."

RICHARD PACE

Richard joined the Corps of Royal Engineers in 1990 aged 16 and trained as a Armored Engineer. He has various positions since leaving the army in 1999 in engineering & construction and came to VA in March 2011. He now responsible for the Maintenance&Facilities at The South London Gallery.

His spare time is used up at the Rural Arts Centre, based at Stepney City Farm in East London, where he works with Artisan Ironwork - a traditional blacksmiths forge - producing commissions, his own sculptures and artistic functional items. He also teaches blacksmithing and carpentry to all ages and abilities. He is passionate about keeping alive the traditional skills that are no longer taught in schools and he feels it can reach out to those of us who ain't academic.

"Being a blacksmith is great in allows you to disconnect with your problems and just creative and imaginative." You can sometimes tell his mood in the pieces he produces.



DAVID NADEN



David Naden served in the RAF between 1968-1973. He has enjoyed a life-long love affair with aviation and holds a private pilot's licence. He has worked with VA's media team - Glyn Strong and Torquil Boyd - on many defence and military projects including a four part TV series on RAF Cranwell.

David studied art and paints when his work as a freelance TV cameraman permits.

PETER DODDS

Peter Dodds is 60. He has served in the Royal Navy and the Army. While taking part in a sailing competition in rough waters in 1969 his boat capsized. One of the 12 man crew died and Peter spent many hours in the water with his colleagues. They were eventually picked up by a minesweeper.

Because of the incident Peter left the Navy to join the Army. He joined the Royal Corps of Transport, 19 Tank Transport Regiment, in 1971 stationed in Bulford, Wiltshire. He then became senior staff car driver utilising his skills in close protection. Peter left the Army in 1983 but continued to drive - travelling as far afield as Russia and the Far East.

He came to VA in May 2012 where he pursued his hobby of painting and sailing. Peter has recently bought a boat called 'Yassu' which is a 30ft sloop. He and his son Tom are currently restoring it.



MICHAEL CROSSAN



Michael Crossan is 48 and comes from Bellshill. Many years ago he served in the Royal Highland Fusiliers; an experience that he recalls fondly. "After leaving I travelled for years. I spent five years in Greece, painting huge murals in theme clubs."

When his drinking got out of hand Michael sought help and while in detox rediscovered his love of art. He also hooked up with Phil Rogers who was later to become VA's addictions' counsellor. When Michael 'came in' from the streets it was to the charity's East London hostel, which became home until he got on his feet again.

"When I was in rehab one of the counsellors told me I'd got a talent," he recalls.

Like many of the veterans at New Belvedere House he was helped to beat his demons through a re-connection with something creative. Art, in its various forms, is encouraged by the charity whose philosophy is to explore bespoke solutions to individuals' needs. Some paint, some sketch, write poetry, draw cartoons, build models, take photographs or build furniture.

"The main piece I have submitted is an installation. I wanted it to represent what Veterans Aid stands for and how, when you are homeless, you get lost in the crowd; you are there, in broad daylight, but you are invisible. Art too was a 'helping hand'."

Today, thanks to Veterans Aid, Michael has a home, a passion for art and photography that has already led to sales - and the display of a signature work in a London gallery.





TRAVIS FREEMAN

Travis Freeman's passion is resurrecting scooters; in his workshop he moves as he talks, touching tools, picking up cloths to polish already gleaming chrome - skeletons of vaguely familiar shapes waiting to come back to life. A few years ago Travis was like them. A hopeless alcoholic, he had lost his identity.

Today he's restored - and restoring; energised by a stable relationship, fatherhood and the challenge of building an exciting niche business restoring classic scooters.

"I joined the Army in 1987 in Stoke on Trent. After training I served with 1 Staffords until 1990 deploying to Hong Kong, Ireland and the UN in South East Asia and Cambodia. I enjoyed the travelling, the good bunch of friends I met and just getting about and doing things. In the end I was medically discharged because of deafness.

"I had various jobs after I left the Army - I started plastering and working around the country in the building trade. The later I went travelling on my own to Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Eventually I came back to England to work again but was a bit of a lost soul, just trudging through life really.

"I ended up on a park bench in East London drinking methylated spirits. I slept on people's couches and my drinking escalated. I got into some horrendous relationships! Veterans Aid found me when I was living rough. I was amazed, I never knew such a charity existed."

"They really helped me. Phil Rogers got me into rehab and now I'm sober and clean. I dread to think what would have happened if Veterans Aid hadn't been there for me. I could be dead, or still drinking and sleeping rough. One thing's certain, I wouldn't be here today."



Triona Holden – who admits to being ‘over 21’ – enjoyed a distinguished career as a war reporter with the BBC for more than 20 years.

“Unfortunately all this came to an abrupt end when I became seriously ill whilst filming in the godforsaken orphanages of Romania. I developed a viral illness that triggered an auto-immune condition called Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, more commonly known as Lupus.

“It was a crushing blow. Lupus destroyed the life I had worked so hard to achieve but it opened my eyes to a new world and careers. Firstly, I turned to writing. To date I have had four books published.

“I came across Veterans Aid through my husband who has worked with the charity for a number of years now. In my work as a BBC Correspondent I have covered wars and have fond memories of my times with UK Armed Forces.”

Her husband, Professor Ian Palmer, is Veterans Aid’s Honorary Psychiatrist, a veteran and former Head of the Medical Assessment Programme which set up in the 1990s to investigate both physical and psychological symptoms manifesting in veterans of the first Gulf Conflict.

Triona and Ian now live in Whitstable where she works as an artist. “I have been blessed with the opportunities that have come my way in my life to date. I have witnessed wonderful and terrible events in the world and nearly died on at least three occasions. I have a lot to say and through my art I have found my voice. I am now the message; no more a mouthpiece for the message. I hope that my story can inspire veterans in crisis by illustrating that it is never too late to start anew.”

DAVID JOHNS

David Johns, 36, is a sergeant in the Metropolitan Police and presently works with the Waltham Forest Safer Transport Unit.

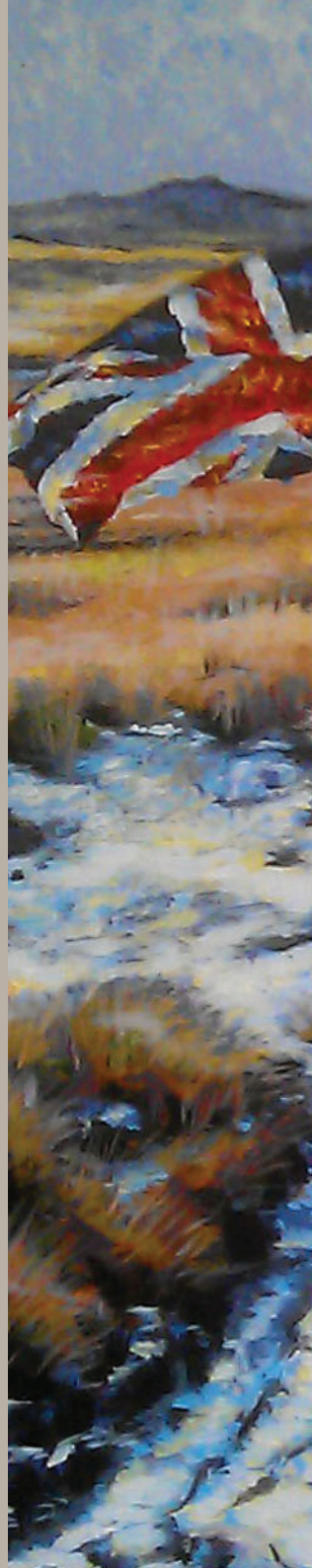
"I have participated in a number of events in support of Forces charities but wanted to find one which had relevance to the work undertaken by my team with regards to homelessness. One of my colleagues suggested Veterans Aid and after my first phone conversation with them I knew I had found a very deserving cause.

"Veterans Aid is not a massive commercial machine churning out advertising and merchandise; it is a small group of very dedicated and selfless individuals who make an extraordinary difference to the lives of the ex-Forces personnel whom they support.

"In 2011 my team organised and participated in two events in support of VA - The Waltham Forest Borough Run, and The Big Bus Pull. As soon as I explained the valuable work VA undertakes to prospective commercial sponsors, they couldn't do enough to help."

David was one of the first artists to offer work in support of The Art of Survival and plans to organise a group visit to the exhibition for young people in his borough.

"I've met some of the veteran's who have benefited from this charity and seen first hand how proud they are to be involved with it. Many of these people had hit rock bottom and VA restored their dignity, confidence and drive. I will be a life-long supporter of this great charity because I know that every bit of money raised yields a tangible result."







The theme of victims of conflict runs through in several aspects of the work of Scottish artist and stage designer Jane Frere.

After studying at Central St Martin's College of Art and Design and the Slade School of Fine Art, she returned to Greece, where she had earned her living as a painter for several years, to create a poignant series of images for a theatre project, Women and War, dealing with the Bosnian conflict.

As a well travelled international producer, she has staged performances around the world, including in Tehran where she introduced an acclaimed Polish outdoor theatre production, Carmen Funebre, itself inspired by the Bosnian conflict, to stunned Iranian audiences. Her art has taken many forms from video and multi-media installation to painting, etching and photography, usually related to wider projects. Her major installation, Return of the Soul, developed from the Nakbah Project which she undertook in Palestinian refugee camps, was shown in Jerusalem, Amman and Beirut, and received acclaim at the Edinburgh Art Festival in 2008.

Her design for the 2009 theatre production, Go to Gaza, Drink the Sea, staged in response to Israel's Operation Cast Lead onslaught which claimed more than 1,400 lives, was a sculptural installation comprising 5,000 shoes.

A solo painting exhibition, In the Shadow of the Wall, was a reflection on her troubling experience living behind the Israeli apartheid wall in the West Bank. She also screened her short film on being tear gassed alongside Palestinian farmers as occupying Israeli soldiers barred them from their olive groves at Bil'in. The exhibition opened in conjunction with the world premiere of a musical piece Emails from Palestine by composer David Ward inspired by Jane's dispatches.

Her largest canvas to date, a triptych entitled What is the Colour of Occupation, was unveiled at Testbed 1 in Battersea last year before being included in the Passport to Palestine exhibition at London's La Scatola Gallery.

Jane continues her artistic journey from her Highland studio to develop new work and devise another large scale installation project. Her work has been exhibited in galleries and arts venues at home and abroad, and hangs in several private collections.

www.janefrere.info

MALCOLM CROWTHERS

Malcolm Crowthers specialises in portraits of celebrated musicians, composers, artists and others – including parliamentarians and churchmen. His subjects have included pop singer-songwriter Sting, violinist Yehudi Menuhin, American pop artist Roy Lichtenstein, David Hockney, the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

His connection with Veterans Aid is a peculiarly close one because he lives above it's Victoria HQ. In fact Malcolm is passionate about the charity's work and did a 100 mile swim to raise funds last year.

One of the country's leading photographers of classical music, he has produced more than 150 CD covers for all the main labels, especially Sony and Hyperion – even designing and making stained glass and other images for their covers. He has exhibited at major concert venues including the Royal Festival Hall, Barbican, Royal Opera House and Wigmore Hall.

Malcolm's work features prominently in the BBC Proms, in international music magazines and on the walls of VA's offices. In addition, the National Gallery has just acquired its eighth photograph.

Also recognised for his architectural photography, often shot from vertigo-inducing vantage points, he has illustrated books on St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament and Durham Cathedral.

Malcolm's striking image of the composer Sir John Tavener, surrounded by ikons, is in the National Portrait Gallery collection, along with six others including the actor Sir Ian McKellen and Churchill's daughter Lady Mary Soames.

www.malcolmcrowthers.com





Ian Hamlett, Veterans Aid
by Tom Stoddart®

Tom Stoddart is one of the world's most respected photojournalists. He works closely with Getty Images to produce features on serious world issues.

In 1978 he left his native North East of England and moved to London where he started to regularly supply national newspapers and magazines. In the eighties he worked for the Sunday Times newspaper.

Stoddart was in Beirut in 1982 when the Israeli forces bombed Yasser Arafat's besieged PLO base and again in 1987 shooting a world exclusive on the horrific conditions inside the Palestinian camp of Bourj el Barajneh, where Dr. Pauline Cutting was trapped.

Stoddart has witnessed many international events including the Romanian Revolution and the massing of alliance troops in the Middle East for the Desert Storm conflict with Iraq. He has subsequently spent time with British Royal Marines on more recent operations in Iraq.

In July 1991 he travelled to Sarajevo to document the civil war that was engulfing Yugoslavia. His work from there was published around the world. Returning a year later for The Sunday Times Magazine, he was seriously injured in heavy fighting around the Bosnian Parliament buildings. After a year of recovery, Stoddart threw himself back into photojournalism, producing a powerful feature on the aftermath of the Mississippi floods and, later that year, an award-winning photo-essay on the harsh raining regime for Chinese Olympic Child Gymnasts.

In December 1993 he returned to Sarajevo to report on the hardship of life in the city during a freezing winter under siege. This trip confirmed his fascination with a place that he was to return to on a dozen different occasions until the Dayton Peace Accord in 1995. Earlier this year he revisited the city with journalist Glyn Strong, on the 20th Anniversary of the lifting of the siege. Stoddart's acclaimed in-depth work on the HIV/AIDS pandemic blighting sub-Saharan Africa won the POY World Understanding Award in 2003. In the same year his pictures of British Royal Marines in combat, during hostilities in Iraq, was awarded the Larry Burrows Award for Exceptional War Photography. A year later his book iWITNESS was honoured as the best photography book published in the USA. In summer 2012 during the Olympic and Paralympic Games his Perspectives exhibition on the South Bank attracted around 250,000 visitors.

GLYN STRONG

Glyn Strong's media career began at The Guardian in the 1970s. Since then she has worked for a wide variety of publications and visited more than 45 countries. In 1994 she left journalism to work for the Armed Forces, spending lengthy periods in hostile environments, running civilian/military news teams in Bosnia and Kuwait and operating in the Falkland Islands, Hungary, Kosovo, Germany, Italy and Holland.

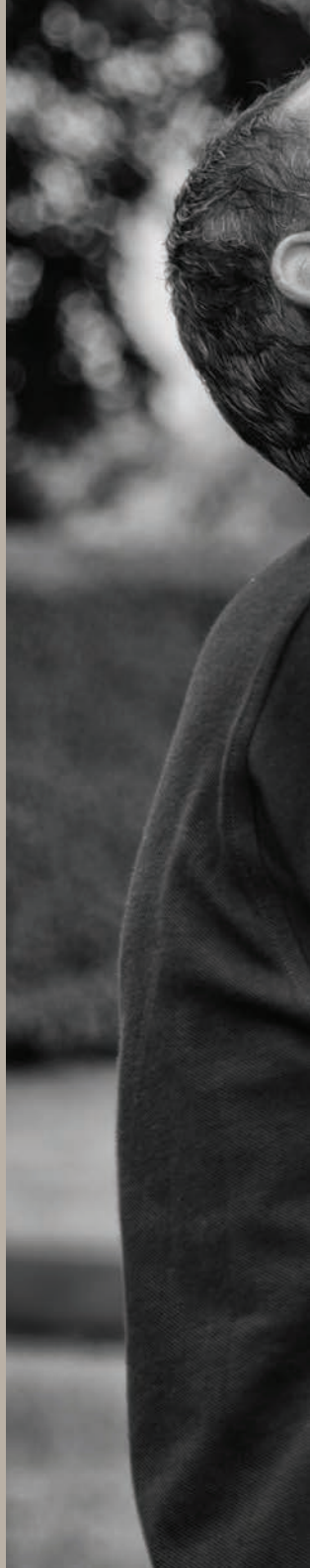
After several years with the Army she became Head of External Communication for the Royal Air Force before being appointed Assistant Director of Public Relations at the Ministry of Defence, responsible for non-news media and documentaries. She left Whitehall in April 2007 to return to independent journalism reporting from Belarus, Lebanon and Afghanistan.

Today she operates as a freelance writer, photographer, project manager and consultant . Although her interests are eclectic she specialises in ethical, gender, military, travel, human rights, general interest features and veterans issues. She collaborates with broadcasters and distinguished photographers, contributing to national and international publications and documentaries.

Glyn also provides media support to Veterans Aid. With her TTV Pictures colleague Torquil Boyd she produces all the charity's films and takes most of its photographs. 'Sean and Rita' was taken after the first New Belvedere House v Royal Hospital Chelsea bowls match earlier this year.

www.glynstrong.co.uk

www.ttvpictures.co.uk









SPARTACUS CHETWYND

As part of the opening reception of 'Veterans Aid Veterans Art', Chetwynd will give a talk aimed at introducing her eclectic body of work to an audience beyond the art world, one comprised of figures who have come to artmaking by unconventional routes.

Spartacus Chetwynd (b. 1973, London) is a British artist whose practice intertwines performance, sculpture, painting, installation and video. Her performances resemble folk plays or street spectacles, involving a fluid troupe of friends and family members. Their improvised props, costumes and scenery often form sculptural installations in their own right. Addressing subjects as diverse as Adam and Eve in the poetry of John Milton (*The Fall of Man*, Tate Britain, 2006) or ancient and modern systems of democracy (*Odd Man Out*, Sadie Coles, London, 2011), the performances strike a darkly carnivalesque note, and tread an ambiguous line between melodrama, arcane ritual, and pop-cultural spoof. Spartacus Chetwynd has been nominated for the 2012 Turner Prize.

Spartacus Chetwynd studied Social Anthropology at University College London before studying art at the Slade and the RCA. She has performed and exhibited internationally. Major solo exhibitions include *Help! I'm trapped in a Muzuzah Factory*, Le Consortium, Dijon, France, 2008, and *Spartacus Chetwynd*, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, Switzerland, 2007. Recent performances include '*Odd Man Out*', Sadie Coles, London; (for which she was nominated for the Turner Prize); '*Home Made Tasers*', New Museum, New York, 2011; '*The Visionary Vineyard: Dreaming of Free Energy*', Hayward Gallery, London, 2011, and *A Tax Haven Run By Women*, Frieze Art Fair London, 2010. In 2010 she was shortlisted for the Jarman Award for video artists.

THANK YOU

Saying 'thank you' is a frightening task when so many people are involved; the person or organisation inadvertently omitted, the name accidentally misspelled. I hope that those who know and support Veterans Aid, and are not recorded here individually, will understand and forgive.

This exhibition was made possible in the face unimaginable odds, against the background of a major campaign and alongside the heavy demands of 'business as usual'.

Many of the veterans whose work is featured once faced homelessness, hopelessness or utter despair. Today, through Veterans Aid and a connection with art, they all have a future. To their amazement they also have the chance to display their work in a prestigious London Gallery - alongside that of well-known artists and photographers, and contributions from supporters and friends.

The Art of Survival was made possible by the efforts of more people than I can remember or name, but significant amongst them are:

- **CEO Ruth Dustan and all the team** at Victoria Business Improvement District and Land Securities - for making this gallery space available and this exhibition possible.
- **Curator Owen Ward** (SW1 Gallery) - for his patience, kindness and mentoring.
- **Liz Walker** (Union Chapel) - for helping get so many works framed and mounted.
- **Edward Chapman** (Chapman Creative) - for sponsoring, producing and designing this wonderful commemorative catalogue.

- **Viola Dabrowska** for keeping me sane and providing outstanding administrative support.
- **Jane Frere, Tom Stoddart, Triona Holden, Malcolm Crowthers, David Naden and David Johns** for their support, encouragement and contributions.
- **Andrew Wallis** (Curator, Guards Museum) - for once again providing catering support.

Finally, a very special thank you to Turner Prize nominee **Spartacus Chetwynd** - who has helped introduce this simple exhibition to a wider audience than Veterans Aid could ever hope to reach - and to her father Rupert, a veteran and a dear friend. When I first mentioned The Art of Survival to him at The Frontline Club many months ago, it was no more than an inchoate thought. Now, in no small part due to his encouragement and support, it is a reality.



Glyn Strong

Media & Communications, Veterans Aid



ChapmanCreative

Please help

Although the focus of this exhibition is awareness and not fund-raising, it would be remiss of us not to provide details of how to make a donation for those who wish to do so.

By cheque: Please send a cheque made payable to Veterans Aid to 40 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0RE

By credit card or direct debit: please visit our website www.veterans-aid.net

Thank you.





**40 Buckingham Palace
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E-mail: info@veterans-aid.net

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