



Annual Review 2011-12



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Registered charity: 1095308. Charitable Company Limited by guarantee no. 4544532

Caring for Veterans in crisis...Now!

Trustees and operational staff

Our commitment remains to being a place of hope and reassurance for any member of the 5.5 million strong British military 'family' who is in crisis.

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Brigadier Johnny Rickett CBE FInstD

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Honorary Surveyor - Mr Ray Evans Dip Arch RIBA

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Mrs Margaret Mervis (also Volunteer Advocate)

Col (Retd) Paul Cummings

Mr Andrew Wallis

Advisors:

Honorary Psychiatric Advisor - Lt Col (Retd) Ian Palmer, Professor of Military Psychiatry

Honorary Housing Advisor - Mr Rick Brunwin OBE CIHCM

Finance & Legal

Legal Advisors - Ashurst Solicitors

Auditors - Saffrey Champness, Chartered Accountants

Stockbrokers - S&T Asset Management

Bankers - Close Brothers Group plc, Clydesdale Bank plc, HSBC Bank plc, Lloyds TSB Bank plc

Management of the Charity:

Drop in centre & HQ

CEO - Wing Commander Dr Hugh Milroy OBE PhD,

Secretary - Colonel (Retd) Geoffrey Cardozo MBE

Finance Manager - Mr Richard Greenhough B.Com ACMA

Administrator - Flight Lieutenant John Smith RAF (Retd)

Media & Communications - Ms Glyn Strong MA, PGCE, MCIPR, MCIJ

OPS Team

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 Yemie Omomowo, Ms Anna Waylen, Mr Garry Roberts, Mr Sandy Ulrich, Ms Ann James, Mr Denis Murphy



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Chairman's message

As ever, I am stunned that yet another year has passed so quickly and that I am now introducing the 2011-12 Annual Review. By far the most difficult thing when doing this is to be able to pick up themes from the incredibly varied amount of issues and people that VA deals with every year. But the overwhelming feeling I have, as we approach our 80th Anniversary, is one of sadness that we have such a critical role still to play in the lives of Veterans in 21st Century Britain.

While I normally leave discussions about operational matters to my Chief Executive, I was so surprised by one event recently, that I really feel the need to comment. Some months ago I was informed that we had been involved with an 18-year-old female soldier who was being discharged from the Army having served over a year.

We got a call from her telling us she was being discharged and had nowhere to go; more importantly, she was having to sort out her future without any help from her superiors. While this may or may not have been the case, when we looked at her problems, the options were few; and on the due date she was delivered to our door by the duty driver from her Army unit. My staff were stunned to see this tiny girl standing in the hallway of our offices looking absolutely petrified. Suffice to say, she was cared for immediately and has since rejoined the Army. As we move towards yet another round of Armed Forces redundancies, the above story should ring alarm bells for those involved in the management of transition.

"The overwhelming feeling I have, as we approach our 80th Anniversary, is one of sadness that we have such a critical role still to play in the lives of Veterans in 21st Century Britain."

While we have been incredibly busy during the year, we are not seeing any rise in problems related to current operations. Problems with relationship breakdowns, alcohol misuse, general mental health troubles and poverty related matters have dominated. One point to note is that we are seeing a steady rise in younger, non-traditional clients who cannot find secure and safe accommodation.

Sadly, we have seen no let-up in the numbers of Foreign & Commonwealth "leave to remain" cases that we are dealing with and this is worrying. Our advocate, Margaret Mervis, has been working almost constantly on this problem and has had many successes. Finally, I must say thank you to trustees, staff and supporters who all pull together to make this very special charity a highly effective national support system for Veterans in crisis. Together, with our sister charities e.g. The Royal British Legion, The Soldiers Charity, Seafarers, the RAFBF, Combat Stress, SSAFA and SSAFA Central London, we really are making a difference!



Brigadier Johnny Rickett CBE FInstD



Chief Executive's message

Much has happened during the year and there have been many successes, several of which are really notable. For example, my colleague Geoffrey Cardozo deals with the many individual supporters who adopt us and watching him closely over the last year, I have been amazed at how many people are now involved in actively and regularly making donations. To see this level of interest and support is heart-warming and bodes well for our future.

Equally energising has been the consistent rise in the public perception of our work and media profile. For instance, our adoption by the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Susie Burbridge, as one of her chosen charities, and by the Army & Navy Club has been highly effective in spreading the good word about VA.

It is also clear that when it comes to media questions concerning Veterans in crisis, VA is frequently the first port-of-call. But the key theme of the year has been HOPE.



Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Susie Burbridge

Of course, this doesn't happen by magic. Supporters and staff, be they in the HQ/Ops team or in New Belvedere House, have worked tirelessly to help get our clients back on their feet and to make sure that they stay there.

VA is so fortunate to have such loyal friends and supporters - from those who organised the Big Bus Pull to the amazing carol service held for us in the Guards Chapel. **Together, we are all transforming lives.**

This year we have seen a definite decline in traditional homelessness. Most people understand this term as people sleeping on the street, but we can confirm that there are now only a very small number of 'rough sleeping' ex-servicemen in the capital; this is important because London is the centre for this problem in the UK. Nevertheless, the myth endures that there are thousands of homeless Veterans on the street.

The CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network), which provides fairly accurate data from all the agencies involved, records that only about 3% of rough sleepers in London claimed an ex-service background. So the number involved is now tiny - but that doesn't stop individuals making false claims of military service to the media and the media exaggerating such stories. Our experience is that at any given time there are a maximum of approx. 20-30 ex-servicemen and women on the streets of London. Most of these individuals are well known to us and they have been on the street for a considerable time. Indeed, it has become a way of life and they are resistant to permanent change. The issue of the myth has been noted by a much wider audience now. In a recent article on the subject of homelessness, Jeremy Swain, the Chief Executive of Thames Reach, said:

"The other common image and favourite media story is of the armed services Veteran ignominiously left to fend for himself on the street. Again, the statistics over the past few years, with remorseless regularity, show that only around 3% of rough sleepers were in the UK armed forces, along with a further 3% who were in the armed forces of other nations."

We ensure, where we can, that no one is street homeless and we try very hard to be involved in preventing homelessness from occurring in the first place. For example, we are increasingly seeing a separate category of homeless individuals; clients who are temporarily homeless and who have lost their accommodation. The main reasons for this will be loss of employment, breakdown in relationships, misuse of drugs and or alcohol, untreatable health problems and sometimes just bad luck; such as having their home repossessed. For those who are not destitute, they are helped with clothing and a hot meal.

The age group of the ex-servicemen and women clients' is 18 to 90, mostly male. Lengths of service vary from several months



to 22 years, while the spread of rank is from Colonel to private soldier (or equivalents). Recently there has been a younger age group of clients (18 to 23) coming forward.

Another enduring media myth is that we are seeing lots of cases of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). While we are clear that this is a problem for some Veterans, the VA reality is that such cases are few and far between. We have our own specialist professor of psychiatry to help with the cases that do emerge. However, it is clear that for some of our clients, PTSD 'claims' have come to be used as a passport for sympathy and extra benefits. In reality, a significant number of these clients have major issues with misuse of alcohol and/or drugs and are frequently, self-diagnosed. Dealing with homeless clients is extremely specialised and can be very stressful for those involved.

There is no evidence of an epidemic of PTSD amongst the ex-service homeless on the streets of London nor indeed among the many calls we take from across the country, however for those who are it is a debilitating experience. There is absolutely no doubt that SSAFA's Homeless Division and Veterans Aid have been very successful with their joint model and the ethos 'Action this day' is acknowledged within the ex-service community. But most importantly, this service is particularly well geared to prevention and that, for all of us involved, must be the main aim of our effort.

Wing Commander Dr Hugh Milroy OBE PhD



A time to reflect

This year Veterans Aid is 80 years old – but that anniversary is a milestone, not a cause for celebration. It would be a wonderful thing if we could close our doors and say ‘job done’ – but as long as there are ex-servicemen and women in crisis, that will never happen.

It's a sad fact that as long as there have been fighting forces there have been Veterans in distress. They first became visible after the Napoleonic Wars and the painting by Sir Luke Fildes (above) that has become a potent icon for Veterans Aid illustrates this eloquently. The man in the red coat on the right, begging from those queuing for entry to the workhouse, is a soldier.

Our charity was born of an act of kindness by a woman who nearly drowned in Malta's Grand Harbour. Determined to make tangible recompense for her miraculous escape, military wife Mrs. Gilbert Huggins returned to London in pursuit of a cause. She didn't have to look far. The Thames Embankment was littered with homeless ex-servicemen. The Embankment Fellowship Centre (EFC) was born.

The media world has changed beyond all recognition from those early days when our first ‘what we do’ film, ‘Smith’, was commissioned, but publicity is still a means to an end and if we are to function effectively in the 21st Century we must use the communication channels of our time.



Homeless Veterans on the Thames Embankment

Today

The spirit of Smith is alive and well and can still be seen, alongside our more recent films, to remind everyone that ‘Veteran helping Veteran’ is not a new phenomenon.

Today there are around 3,000 registered charities in the UK claiming to offer help to Veterans; some provide highly specialised care – to the blind, disabled or mentally ill. Others offer recreational services or accommodation, but none have our record of welcoming those whom even ‘the Big Society’ frequently shuns.

When EFC became Veterans Aid a few years ago it acquired a logo – a symbol of shelter. The charity's strapline changed to reflect the reality of its remit, not just to help homeless Veterans, but also to support those experiencing any kind of crisis.

This ‘brand’ is registered as a trademark and our website hosts a shop where badges, ties, car stickers and clothing bearing the VA logo can be purchased. All who display this brand help in a small way to spread the word about VA's existence and what it can do.

Life in Britain today is hard for many people; addiction, depression, unemployment, legal problems, relationship breakdown – these are things that can strike anyone, anytime, regardless of whether they have done military service or not.

“The charity's strapline changed to reflect the reality of its remit, not just to help homeless Veterans, but also to support those experiencing any kind of crisis.”



Oliver Tillard cycled more than 3,000 miles and is on course to raise more than £3,000 for Veterans Aid by cycling solo across North America

Thankfully, Veterans Aid is able to make swift interventions and tap into a wonderful network of support – not just from organisations, but also from individuals who share our commitment to providing immediate and bespoke help.

VA's advertising budget is small, but the viral effect of its films and networking initiatives is paying dividends. The proactive ‘show and tell’ approach we have adopted is holistic and collaborative – and would not be possible without the co-operation of the people who once came to us for help and now generously operate as employees and/or ambassadors.

A platform to reach new audiences came two years ago through a magnificent Carol Concert at the Guards Chapel organised by one of our staunchest young supporters and attended by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. For two Christmases it has touched hearts and opened minds.

This year VA became one of three Westminster charities supported by the Lord Mayor who proudly wears our badge at many public events. We welcomed former CDS General the Lord Walker to our Board of Trustees and forged even stronger links with British Forces Broadcasting Services (BFBS) who have, yet again, made us a beneficiary of The Big Salute.

"We will continue to tackle head-on all those who insist that 'Nothing is done for Veterans'."

We now have an Honorary Psychiatric Advisor in the form of Professor Ian Palmer (an expert in PTSD/mental health issues), two new trustees who bring energy and vision to the charity - Mr. Andrew Wallis and Col (Retd) Paul Cummings.

Elsewhere in this publication acknowledgement of some of the wonderful new friends and fund-raising activities that have brightened the last 12-months are referenced; the Victoria Business Improvement District team (VBID), the Royal Chelsea Hospital, the Metropolitan Police (particularly Waltham Forest Safer Transport Unit), the band Northfield, The Grosvenor Hotel and more recently our 'Rock to Clock' duo who cycled 1,600 miles from Gibraltar to Big Ben to raise money for us.

There are many others too, whom we can't always honour or thank as publicly, but the money they contribute is every bit as important. Those we are able to showcase represent only the tip of a support iceberg that is truly 'awesome'.

Today VA is positioned as the leading charity for Veterans in crisis in the UK. Its model is referenced worldwide. VA's prescience in identifying trends and flagging up the unforeseen consequences of events has resulted in agenda-setting contributions to the media and public debate.

The short films that now feature on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter are made to give our Veterans a personal and direct voice. As a result we have attracted some

remarkable sponsors whose contributions are acknowledged in this publication and on our website.

Tomorrow

Since our last AGM the death toll in Afghanistan has passed 400 and if some of the more alarmist media reports are to be believed the spectres of PTSD, prison and homelessness are looming over every man and woman leaving the Armed Forces.

Happily this is not our experience - nor is it that of the King's Centre for Military Health Research, the Howard League for Penal Reform or the Combined Homeless Action and Information Network.

Our commitment remains to being a place of hope and reassurance for any member of the 5.5 million strong British military 'family' who is in crisis. We will continue to operate swiftly, with a light but agile footprint; we will continue to seek new and innovative ways of providing help - and we will continue to tackle head-on all those who insist that 'Nothing is done for Veterans'.



BFBS Radio - who yet again made us beneficiary of The Big Salute

All in a day's work

Each year Veterans Aid receives about 2,000 calls for help from vulnerable Veterans - and increasingly from serving soldiers and their families. Each year the charity places between 150-200 people into accommodation. Typically it cares for 60-70 Veterans each night, but numbers are only half the story.

Below is a snapshot audit of where people were on one day:

10	had only just arrived and were still undergoing their stabilisation and assessment period	5	were either on Engineer Apprenticeship, Interior Landscaping, Pest Control or Security course
3	were on Open University courses were on Building courses with East Potential	2	were on Art courses had joined the TA
1	had completed IT training at Ruskin College, Oxford and taken up a work placement had just completed his first year at Plymouth University reading for an English degree was reading for a Law degree was on a trainee solicitor's course was on a Gas Engineering course was on a Tree Surgeon's course was on a Driving course		was on a Football Referee's course was training to be a Prison Mental Health Nurse was on Scaffolding course in Wakefield was on a St. John's Ambulance Emergency First Aid course.

Presently excused work and/or training:

- 4 who were about to graduate from the hostel to their own accommodation
- 5 who were engaging in treatment for drug or alcohol misuse
- 4 who were suffering serious mental health problems
- 3 who had physical health problems.

Expertise available to our male and female Veterans is provided by a psychiatrist, barrister, addiction counsellor, mental health social workers and case-workers who are all willing to call on additional specialist services as necessary to meet the needs of the individual in crisis.

Spotlight - Making a difference

For 80 years this charity has been extending the hand of friendship to ex-servicemen and women in crisis. Initially its focus was on homelessness during times of economic hardship. Today its remit is wider. Veterans Aid has become a 'one stop shop' offering pathways to education, retraining and employment. It provides food, clothing, legal advice, mentoring and refuge.

These pages focus on just two of its areas of expertise.

Mental Health



Veterans Aid Honorary Psychiatric Advisor - Lt Col (Retd) Dr Ian Palmer. Professor of Military Psychiatry

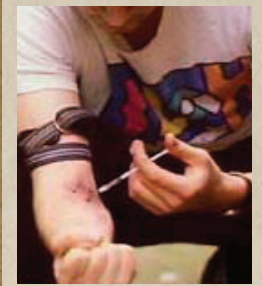
When people talk about mental health many really mean mental illness; after all, all ex-service personnel must have been damaged by their service, surely? Not!

The problem with mental illness is the stigma it creates in the mind of the sufferer, which has been described as 'self-stigma'. Shame, guilt, pride can all get in the way of accessing help. It requires courage to overcome feelings of 'weakness', or perhaps of being overwhelmed by emotions.

It's like most things - if you don't seek help, you can't be helped. The point is that there are now numerous effective treatments for mental illness. Although medications are effective, access to talking therapies is now much easier. The old idea that it's about laying down on a couch and taking about your mother for hours is just untrue. While it is true that our upbringing leaves its mark on us (for better or worse) therapies nowadays focus on the here and now and practical steps to improve your situation.

Most common problems in mental illness relate to unhelpful thoughts, thoughts we find difficult to ignore. But they're just that, thoughts - nothing more, nothing less. Thoughts can change, usually through action, doing things (even when scared or anxious). But most of us need a little help to keep going, to get the right advice and remember, as Winston Churchill said, "When you're going through Hell, keep going".

Take the risk of asking for help and sticking with it; it works.



Addiction

"I've seen people walk in (to VA) with eight cans of Skol Super in their system, using four rocks of crack, eight bags of heroin a day."

Phil Rogers - Veterans Aid Substance Misuse Worker

The average age of Veterans meeting Phil for the first time is 43. The average length of service is six and a half years. The average length of time since discharge is 18 and a half years; the breakdown of clients by service is: Army 85%, Royal Navy 7%, Royal Air Force 3.5%, Royal Marines 2.75% and Reservist 1.75%.

Facts

- VA has around 25 active clients at any one time (not necessarily living in its hostel)
- VA has put 125 clients into treatment since May 2008
- Average age when clients first present is 44
- Average length of service is 7 1/2 years
- Average length of time since clients left the armed forces is 19 years
- Primary substance of choice is alcohol for two thirds of clients
- Nearly a third of clients are poly-substance users (combining alcohol with heroin/crack/powdered cocaine/methadone/illicit meds)
- VA has seen a rise in problematic gamblers over the past year
- Cannabis and cocaine are problem substances for many of our clients under 30.

Recent client profile

- A 44-year-old male with 44 convictions and 23 prison sentences
- Served for 3 years (from 1991 to 1994) with an infantry regiment
- Alcohol user - drinking 8-9 cans of 9% lager (around 36 units) daily
- Heroin user - injecting in arms twice daily
- Crack user - injecting with heroin 3-4 times per week
- Methadone - purchases illicitly from friend and uses 10ml daily.

What it costs

- One week's alcohol detox costs £110 - average stay two weeks
- Opiate detox costs £1,800
- Residential rehab costs £450 per week - average stay 12 weeks
- Aftercare costs £250 per week - typically 12 weeks.

A place of hope...

"It's not how you arrive at Veterans Aid that matters..."



Chelsea pensioners Marjorie Cole and Dorothy Hughes turn out to support 'The Big Bus Pull' organised by the Metropolitan Police



People go to great heights to raise funds for VA as this Everest team proved!



Toby Cable, 11, is one of our youngest supporters



HMS Westminster members help make 'The Big Bus Pull' a truly tri-Service event.

Victoria Head Office staff Jon, Natalia and Kaidon cheer on the 'Rock to Clock' cyclists



The RAF Regiment supports Veterans Aid



The band 'Northfield' dedicated their song 'Make it Happen' to VA and told BFBS listeners all about it.



...it's how you leave."

Wing Commander
Dr Hugh Milroy OBE PhD



Trustee General the Lord Walker, MP Patrick Mercer, the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Chelsea Pensioners, friends, family, VA staff and supporters welcome the 'Rock to Clock' team's safe return.

E-volution

Social Media & the website

Around the time EFC (The Ex-services Fellowship Centre) became VA (Veterans Aid) the charity had a cheap and cheerful website, largely populated by stock images and generic material. Its 'E-identity' was not strong and it's photographic archive was non-existent.



From top left: VA on Twitter, VA on You Tube, VA on Facebook, VA website & the VA blog for BFBS.

The 5-million strong Veteran community includes men and women of all ages. Many read books and newspapers, listen to the radio or watch films and TV, but our communication channels have to be targeted to all audiences and many now go straight to the internet for their information.

Our expansion of online activity has relied mainly on creative use of existing resources, but it has enabled us to engage with new and old audiences more speedily and efficiently. Our growing archive of film and imagery enables us to 'feed' these media

with a constant supply of fresh material and showcase more imaginatively the activities and events that make up the daily life of the charity. Look for the links to all of these on www.veterans-aid.net

Many of our supporters use JUST GIVING websites to fundraise and advertise. We may be 80 this year - but we are as post-modern in our communications as we are in our core business.

CARING FOR VETERANS IN CRISIS . . . NOW!

Looking forward

How classic scooters, wounded animals and art put three men back on their feet

Travis Freeman moves as he talks, touching tools, picking up cloths to polish already gleaming chrome. Skeletons of vaguely familiar outlines hang from hoists in his Edgeware workshop, like ghosts 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 the prospect of becoming a father and building an exciting niche business restoring classic scooters.

When Travis walked into the Victoria offices of the charity Veterans Aid two years ago the former soldier was in a bad way, and he knew it. "I'd probably be dead now if it wasn't for VA" he says, with a wistful gaze at the red scooter beside him.

"It's a 1958 Vespa 125L - they originally made it for the female market. It was the first one that they made with four gears - the earlier ones only had three."

Pride of Travis's current stable is the scooter used in Brighton Rock; its owner Simon Mason recognised a kindred spirit when he entrusted the cherished bike to him. Used in a photoshoot with Helen Mirren, in the 2010 remake of the film, it first appeared in the 1947 original.



India and Pakistan - where they have managed to survive."

"These scooters are now very hard to find in good condition and are becoming extremely rare. Sometimes they turn up in gardens or barns - they can be very valuable. Around 75% of those manufactured went to Asia -

Travis restores Vespas and Lambrettas. All are works of art to him and he talks non-stop about their technical capabilities, differences and evolutions.

He recalls "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 discharge because of deafness."

"I had various jobs after I left the Army - It was quite hard to decide what I wanted to do because I'd joined so young. I started plastering and working around the country in the building trade. Then 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."

His problem was rootlessness and he started drinking heavily. "I was all over the place - living in Margate, Scotland, until 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 a charity like them existed."

"They really helped me. Phil Rogers, the charity's addictions counsellor got me into rehab and now I'm 15 months 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 where I am now."

"We were very impressed by the way Veterans Aid gave people second chances and our faith in Shaun has paid off."



"I love working with animals. They are trusting and they need you. And they don't let you down."

Shaun Lassey

Craftsman Shaun Lassey REME served for six years in the UK, Germany, Northern Ireland and Belize. The boy from Thirsk who had grown up wanting to be a vet ended up taking a very different path in life, but it's one he's recently returned to.

Shaun left the Army as a skilled mechanic with an HGV licence and prospects, but as the years passed things started to go wrong - to the point where he found himself drunk and homeless on the streets of Toulouse.

A phone call from SSAFA alerted Veterans Aid to Shaun's plight and he still recalls the Friday evening he arrived in London at the charity's Victoria drop-in centre - and received instant help.

Today, in the early Spring sunshine, as he walks a nervous young dog along the canal bank in North London, Shaun is at peace. He's just started a 14-month CSF Training course in animal care - thanks to Veterans Aid and The Mayhew Animal Home.

Each day he cycles a 15-mile round trip, from The Big House, where he lives, and admits to looking forward to work every day.

Shaun's rehabilitation was not plain sailing and he had relapses as recently as Christmas, but neither Veterans Aid nor The Mayhew gave up on him. Mayhew CEO Caroline Yates said "We were introduced to Veterans Aid through the Lord Mayor of Westminster who adopted us (and Kidscape) as her charities for 2011/12. We were very impressed by the way Veterans Aid gave people second chances and our faith in Shaun has paid off."

Dear Veterans Aid,

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved with making it possible for me to do the Portrait Anatomy Course on the 8th-10th March that I took part in.

The course was simply quite amazing and what I got from it will not only help me to create better paintings but has also given me a great confidence boost mentally. It has been over 1 year since I have done any painting and this course has really inspired me to start working again.

It was a very professional course, run by an American, Scott Eaton, who is very well respected worldwide in his field of expertise. His instruction was excellent and the knowledge I gained in the three days was more than I got in all the studies I have done over the years from books. It was basically learning about the complete structure of the human head, the muscles, features etc. - done working from a skull, and in clay, building up all the muscles and features. It was hard work as it was from morning until evening demanding full concentration. But the result was worth it.

It was also good to be among other creative people of all ages. There were another nine people on the course and we all had a lot to discuss and share. I will be keeping in touch with the instructor as we had a lot in common.

I think this highlights an important part of taking part in such courses and that is the interaction with other people who are not military which can go a long way in helping to see your focus on what you should be doing to move forward in civil street.

This course has now given me the confidence to approach portraiture as a way of generating an income as well as helping with other paintings I will be developing. I am already planning an exhibition for the autumn such is the fire burning inside me now as a result of this course.

My next step is therefore to set up business and get in a studio so I can begin to achieve my potential to become a successful artist.

I thank you all once again. I really appreciate what you have done.

My best regards

Steve Bindon



In December 2012 the SW1 Gallery will be donating its sought after space to Veterans Aid for a week. The exhibition hosted there will feature work by men and women who have come to the charity both to seek help and to offer it. Steve is one of the many ex-servicemen and women who have found art to be therapeutic, enjoyable and of practical help. The items displayed will represent all art forms and abilities - and some contributions loaned or offered for auction by well-known artists and photographers. Steve's work will hopefully be amongst it and on display between December 3rd-8th. Watch the VA website for further details.

Who has helped us this year

Donations for general (as opposed to specific) assistance to homeless Veterans

9 Regiment RLC	Guards Museum	Chaplaincy
Admiral Codrington, South Kensington	Hereford Cathedral School	Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
Allied Facilities	Honourable Artillery Company	Royal Warrant Holders Association
Amhuinnsuidhe Castle Estate	Howden Insurance Brokers Limited	RRF Aid Society
Anonymous Donors	Innholders' Company	Safer Transport Team, Waltham Forest Borough - Metropolitan Police
Anonymous Charitable Trusts	Joint Services Command and Staff College	St Peter's Church, Ightham
Army & Navy Club	John Slater Foundation	Savoy Investment Management Ltd.
Army Officer Selection Board, Westbury	Kennedy Coup's school, Francis Combe Academy	Screaming Eagles Living History Group
Artemis - City Charity Dinner Night	Leadenhall School	Share Gift, The Orr Mackintosh Foundation
BAE Systems plc, Stirling Square.	Lloyd's Patriotic Fund	Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation
BAE Systems, Head Office	London District TA & Army Boxing Club	Smith & Williamson Investment Management
Bob Wilson Funfairs	London Scottish Regiment HQ	SSVC/BFBS
Cavalry & Guards Club	Lord Mayor of Westminster and City Hall	Supreme Council 33rd Degree
CESSAC	Merton Court Prep School	Towergate Charitable Foundation
Chaplain to the Household Division	Miller Insurance Services Ltd.	Tylers' and Brickmakers' Charitable Trust
Chapter House, Westminster Abbey	St Peter and St Paul church, Mitcham	Veni Partners
Daily Telegraph	Murray Beith Murray	Veterans Heroes
Delmar Charitable Trust	New Jubilee Lodge 7056	Victoria Business Improvement District
Deltek UK	NM Rothschild & Sons Ltd	Welsh Guards
Defence Section, British Embassy Kabul	Noon Foundation	Westminster Foundation
E-Goat, the Unofficial RAF Rumour Network	Noon Products (Sir Gulam Noon)	William Martin CoE Jnr School
Ebury Wine Bar	Not Forgotten Association	Women's Institute, Ox & Bucks
Farne Trust	Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem	Company of Scientific Instrument Makers
Fidelity International	Prince of Wales PH, Plumstead	Numerous garrison churches
Grenadier Guards	Renault UK Limited	
Grenadier PH, Belgravia	Royal Air Force Club	
Grocers' Company	Royal Artillery Charitable Fund	
Grosvenor Foundation	Royal Dragoon Guards OC Association	
Guoman Hotels' Grosvenor Hotel, Victoria	Royal Engineers Association	
	Royal Hospital Chelsea,	Members of the public, relatives of homeless Veterans, friends and associates of Veterans Aid

Specific assistance on individual projects and work

Supporting People funding to hostel:	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Direct assistance from Drop-in Centre:	Queen Mary's Roehampton Trust
Emergency Fund for immediate operations:	Dulverton Trust
Supporting VA's Alcohol & Drugs treatment work:	Royal British Legion, Rufford Foundation, ABF The Soldiers' Charity
Assistance with rent deposits & furniture & Hostel Professional Support and Substance Misuse Worker:	Royal British Legion
Assistance with tri-service cases:	SSAFA Forces Help & Officers Association
Drop-in Centre Outreach work:	SSAFA Forces Help (Central London)
RN and RM homeless Veterans:	SEAFARERS UK, RNRMC and RN Benevolent Trust
Drop-in Centre Outreach work & Army homeless Veterans:	The Soldiers' Charity (ABF) & Corps and Regimental Associations
RAF homeless Veterans:	RAFBF and RAFA
Ex-Merchant Navy homeless seafarers:	Merchant Navy Welfare Board
Hostel maintenance including re-roofing:	Compton Housing Association
Hostel Communal Area planning:	Oliver Burns
Cross-trainer gym equipment for hostel:	BAE Systems, Stirling Square
Giving our hostel a fabulous Christmas:	Vitol Group
Providing cleaning materials for our hostel:	Citrica
Hostel Christmas presents:	Ministry of Defence (Kate Aziz)
Education and Training courses:	Merchant Taylors' Company
Carpentry and joinery courses:	Carpenters' Company
Clothes, shoes & bedding:	Hedley Foundation, Queen Mary's Clothing Guild
Training VA ex-servicemen:	Mitie Business Services Ltd
Higher Education:	Ruskin College, Oxford
Horticultural therapy, Royal Hospital Chelsea:	Gardening Leave Project
Emergency Accommodation funding in Victoria:	Victoria Business Improvement District
Food for hostel:	Waste Not Want Not Charity and EAT
Mental Health:	We badly need a sponsor for this!
VA Carol Service:	Philippa Windridge
Hostel Working Trip to Paris:	The Not Forgotten Association
Assistance with real estate for hosting:	Greater London RFCA
Rumble in the City:	Charles Sincock
Aid in kind: household goods, cutlery, knitted goods, new clothes, toiletries, Easter eggs etc.:	Countless thoughtful individuals, businesses and organisations
Sustained help and encouragement from:	Victoria Business Improvement District, Royal Hospital Chelsea, Victory Services Club, Union Jack Club, London Scottish Regiment, HQ London District, Guards Museum, Army & Navy Club.

Financial Summary

Financial Summary for the year ended 30th September 2012

Income £1,307,945 (2010 : £1,146,733)

	2011	2010
	£	£
Local Authority payments	505,692	520,761
Charges to hostel residents	29,521	31,323
Grants	246,062	136,280
Donations & Legacies	304,528	360,623
Donations in Kind	29,800	-
Fundraising & Sundry	122,980	52,748
Investment Income	69,362	44,998
	£1,307,945	£1,146,733

Expenditure £1,342,670 (2010 : £1,186,579)

	2011	2010
	£	£
Hostel running costs	604,707	551,195
London Relief Centre	597,946	485,836
Governance costs	61,362	57,749
Fundraising & Event Costs	73,373	54,341
Development of National Centre for Homeless Veterans	5,282	37,458
	£1,342,670	£1,186,579

Net decrease in funds £34,725 (2010 : £39,846 decrease)

Excluding: unrealised loss on investments of £91,227 (2010: gain of £90,909)

Reserves at 30th September 2011

	2011	
	£	
Hollenden House Endowment Reserve	1,878,335	Permanent endowment reserve
Restricted Funds	2,031,183	Funds donated for specified purposes
Designated Reserves	334,202	Funds for the development of the National Centre for Homeless Veterans
		Represents six months operating costs
General Reserve	670,000	
	£4,913,720	

Trustees' statement

This financial summary has been prepared to illustrate the main areas of ongoing expenditure by Veterans Aid, the principal sources of its income and the funds available.

The Board of Trustees confirms that this financial summary is taken from the draft accounts for the year and is subject to audit. The summary does not contain all the information necessary to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of Veterans Aid. Copies of the full accounts, once the audit is complete, will be filed with the Charities Commission and may be obtained from: Veterans Aid, 40 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 0RE.

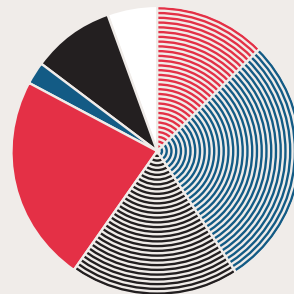
Signed



Robert Clinton, Honorary Treasurer

Statistics

Income Breakdown

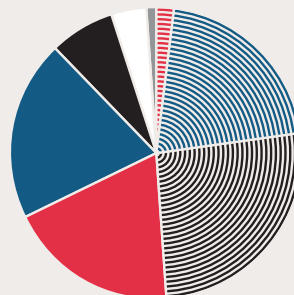


Supporting People	12.53%
Rent & housing benefits	28.39%
Grants	18.81%
Donations & Legacies	23.28%
Donations in Kind	2.28%
Fundraising & Sundry	9.40%
Investment Income	5.30%

Veterans Aid has a well-balanced mix of income, with contributions from local government in the form of Supporting People and Housing Benefits paid on behalf of our hostel residents, a steady income from our investment portfolio, grants from other military charities, and growing support in donations from the commercial sector and the general public and from fundraising events.

Clients

Age Breakdown

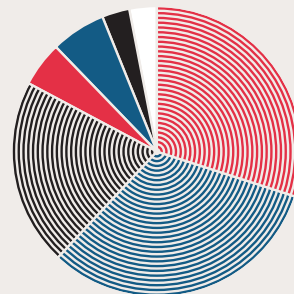


Under 18	2%
20 - 29	21%
30 - 39	26%
40 - 49	19%
50 - 59	20%
60 - 69	7%
70 - 79	4%
80 Above	1%

Please help

If you would like to make a donation by credit card or direct debit please visit our website: www.veterans-aid.net

Length of Service



0 - 2	12.53%
3 - 5	28.39%
6 - 9	18.81%
10 - 12	23.28%
13 - 16	2.28%
17 - 22	9.40%
23 Above	5.30%

