



Veterans
Aid

Annual Review 2012-13

Caring for Veterans in Crisis...Now!

"Our commitment remains to being a place of hope for any member of the 4.5 million-strong 'military family' who is in crisis."



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by guarantee no. 4544532



When fast-stream civil servants from MOD decided to do something for Veterans Aid they lived up to their name - the 'stream' was in the Lee Valley and the 'fast' activity was white water rafting.

TRUSTEES AND OPERATIONAL STAFF

President & Chairman

Brigadier Johnny Rickett CBE FInstD

Trustees

Honorary Treasurer - Mr Robert P Clinton BEM FCSI FCT

Honorary Surveyor - Mr Ray Evans Dip Arch RIBA

General the Lord Walker GCB CMG CBE DL

Mrs Margaret Mervis (also Volunteer Advocate)

Col Paul Cummings

Mr Andrew Wallis

Advisors

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

Honorary Housing Advisor - Mr Rick Brunwin OBE CIHCM

Finance & Legal

Legal Advisors - Maclay, Murray & Spens LLP

Auditors - Saffery Champness, Chartered Accountants

Stockbrokers & Fund Managers - 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 Geoffrey Cardozo MBE

Finance Manager - Mr Richard Greenhough B.Com ACMA

Administrator - Flight Lieutenant John Smith

Deputy Administrator - Ms Natalia Dabrowska BA

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

Media & Communications Assistant - Ms Viola Dabrowska BA

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 MCIJ

Facilities Management - JHJ Facilities Support

Facilities Management - MITIE

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 Sandy Ulrich,

Ms Anna Waylen, Mr Garry Roberts, Ms Ann James,

Mr Denis Murphy, Mr Kaedon White

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Our 80th Anniversary has come and gone and, as I mentioned in my report last year, it is sad to note that our services are still needed by so many Veterans. That said, our charity's national stature continues to grow and we are involved on a regular basis with cases countrywide.

Our aim has always been to prevent ex-servicemen and women, as much as we possibly can, from becoming homeless and ending up on the streets. This strategy has been highly successful and we have been working closely with our sister service charities to attain this.

Last year I commented on the number of non-traditional clients, mainly young men, who were failing to find secure and affordable homes; sadly this trend has continued. Luckily we now have a volunteer, in the person of Rick Brunwin, to act as Honorary Housing Advisor. He has been very busy developing new housing links dedicated to Veterans Aid and, thanks largely to his efforts, our 'move on' rate has improved significantly. Our grateful thanks go to him.

"A great deal of effort has been put into breaking the cycle of poverty and chaos, with the aim that those who graduate from New Belvedere House do not fail."

The work that this entails is immense and I can report that this is paying dividends for the individuals concerned, the service charity sector and indeed for the country at large. On the whole, when our Veterans leave us, neither the men nor the women are dependent on benefits or other hand-outs as they take control of their lives again.

This last year we have been incredibly lucky to have had the wonderful support of the Lady R Foundation. It has made the most enormous impact on the way we can carry out our business and we are very grateful indeed.

We have had significant success highlighting the problems encountered by Foreign and Commonwealth Veterans and have been able to raise awareness of these issues to the highest level. Resolution of the Baleiwai case effected changes that will benefit hundreds. Margaret Mervis has continued to work tirelessly on their behalf and we are all so grateful to her for the excellent results she has obtained.

As ever I would like to pay tribute to our wonderful staff, so ably led by Hugh Milroy, who have given so much and worked with such enormous dedication to make this year the success it has been.

Also I must thank our trustees and friends for continuing to give us the help, encouragement and support we need. Together with the Royal British Legion, the RAFBF, Combat Stress, SSAFA and SSAFA Central London we are still able to give our Veterans the assistance and indeed the support they deserve.

Finally I am delighted to tell you that Lady Rothermere has agreed to be our Patron. We are so pleased and truly honoured that she has decided to do this and it will be wonderful to have her now as part of our closely knit family.

Brigadier Johnny Rickett CBE FInstD Chairman, Veterans Aid

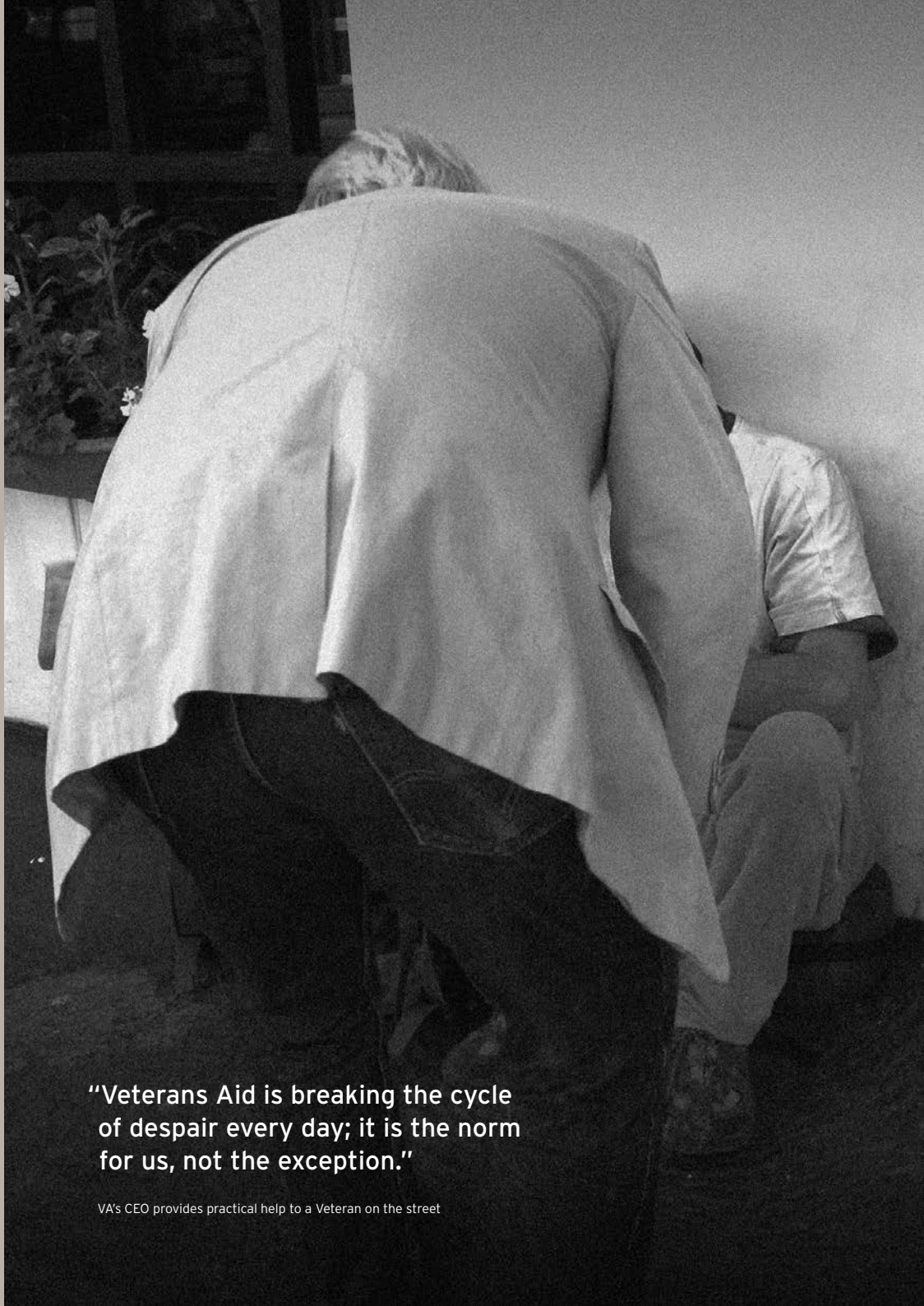
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MESSAGE

No home, no hope, no job, no future, totally alone, anxious, scared, worried about mental health or addiction problems, feeling stigmatised and utterly desperate... all words and phrases that describe the emotions of many of the Veterans who arrive at Veterans Aid's front door during the year. The feelings are not helped by elements of the media – and sometimes sections of the charitable sector – who exacerbate matters by portraying stereotypical images of homeless Veterans and exaggerate numbers for their own ends. Often it seems that reality is an inconvenient truth getting in the way of their ambition and fundraising. I mention this because the ripple effect of these exaggerations involves a great deal of nugatory effort as we try to counter such claims for the benefit of the charity and the Veteran community as a whole.

In such a context, breaking the cycle of hopelessness for the individual Veteran may seem like a dream, but the reality is that Veterans Aid is breaking the cycle of despair every day; it is the norm for us, not the exception! This is done by an astounding team of staff, volunteers and supporters whose tenacity and commitment to the individuals in our care leaves me in total admiration and grateful that they work for Veterans Aid. Their willingness to adopt bold new approaches to helping and the courage to divest themselves of relationships that do not help our Veterans is hugely beneficial for all concerned. Confirmation of our successful approach came from the other side of the Atlantic where we discovered that the Canadian Government was starting to run pilot projects for Veterans in crisis informed by the work of Veterans Aid.

Closer to home, the past year has been, by any measure, hugely challenging for us. We took nearly 3,000 calls for help and became deeply involved in a new area of work concerning Foreign & Commonwealth personnel and their families where we rapidly took a national lead and made a significant difference to their lives by challenging unfair bureaucracy at the highest levels. While this was headline stuff, I'm delighted to say that we didn't forget our roots.

The impact of our policy of swift intervention to prevent situations worsening has done much to ensure, with partner agencies such as the Soldier's Charity, SSAFA and SSAFA Central London, that we are frequently preventing Veterans getting to the streets. At the same time, the lack of recidivism among our graduates from New Belvedere House continues to astonish me.



"Veterans Aid is breaking the cycle of despair every day; it is the norm for us, not the exception."

VA's CEO provides practical help to a Veteran on the street

“It really is a case of not caring how you got to us,
but caring absolutely how you leave us!”

This is testament to the unashamedly holistic approach taken by our highly trained and supportive staff who take time to completely understand the actual needs of the Veterans they care for. To an outsider, our approach often seems like tough love, but the success rate tells me that the approach really works despite the huge and almost insurmountable problems such as addictions that they are presented with on a daily basis. Our system is about truth, which builds trust and supportive connections, which in turn leads to success.

I often say that individual staff members may play a great game, but I am very clear that it is the passionate team that beats the odds. The ‘powerhouse of expertise’ approach enables New Belvedere to be a dynamic place of sustainable change, but that consistent approach starts at the Drop-in Centre in Victoria, London. I defy anyone to sit with our operations team and not be impressed by the relentless level of calls for help and their sheer professionalism as they respond to the often desperate appeals. Most calls come from Veterans, but increasingly we are responding to calls from serving personnel and their families.

Watching this activity at close range I can say with absolute confidence that the stereotypical rough-sleeping Veteran is thankfully, almost a thing of the past. Demand for our services is not slowing down, but the reasons we see people are far more complex and difficult to deal with - and there are rarely quick-fix answers.

The Drop-in Centre remains the A&E of the Veterans’ world in the UK, despite the many initiatives for ex-service personnel such as the Military Covenant and number of new Veteran charities springing up seemingly every day! The operations staff are continually amazed at how frequently Veterans Aid is used as a dumping ground for cases that no one else can handle. These come from a wide range of organisations that are supposed to be helping Veterans and range from charities that spend a great deal of time and money telling everyone what a good job they do looking after Veterans, to statutory agencies such as probation services, prisons and mental health units, who don’t even attempt to fulfil their legal obligations to provide safe discharges.

Despite all of this, the motto of the operations team is “no first night out”, something that we have been actioning for many years! Does our swift

intervention work? As I write this a young man (who had served just a few months) called to say that he was sleeping rough as his parents, who were serving in the Army, could not take him on their next posting to Germany. Within an hour he was been taken to our hostel and will be safe tonight. He wasn’t a traditional rough sleeper so, with any luck, his spell at New Belvedere House will give him back his future. Local authorities also let Veterans down, notwithstanding the Military Covenant. One such case was the outrageous treatment of a 64-year-old ex-army nurse with mental health difficulties who was told by her local authority to go and sleep on Clapham Common, so that their outreach team could find her and start looking after her as a rough-sleeper. We intervened and with the help of the operations team and our outstanding partner, Scottish Veterans Residences, she is now safe and well.

Looking forward, I am filled with hope about our future. Our Board is really enthusiastic and our reputation for national frontline delivery goes from strength-to-strength. We are building and planning our services on a strong view of what works and what doesn’t work for our Veterans. That message is clearly attracting a huge and growing range of dedicated supporters such as Danny Buckley, who provides really practical support to the Dowager Viscountess Rothermere who, much to my personal delight, has agreed to become our Patron. Thank you to each and every one of those supporters who believe in what we do. It is only because of their vital support that we can continue to transform the lives of those Veterans in crisis who need a hand-up, not a hand-out.



Wing Commander
Dr Hugh Milroy OBE PhD
CEO, Veterans Aid

Sunday afternoon, out shopping, the phone rings - it's a journalist from The Independent. "Sorry to bother you, but I need a comment from Veterans Aid on today's announcement"

Philip Hammond's 'soldiers vs scroungers' (sic) speech (03.03.13) has opened a tangential debate about whether some people are more deserving of benefits than others. It rapidly segues into a discussion about what is done for those who leave the Armed Forces... the reporter has done some online homework and quotes figures about 'Veterans in prison' and 'Veterans suffering from PTSD'. What are 'our' thoughts on the subject?

A few years ago no national newspaper newsdesk would have a Veterans Aid contact number. Today we are routinely one of the first organisations called. Often we are the first.

VA has never spent money on formal media monitoring or evaluation. We are, after all, a lean operational charity. But from time to time a phrase springs out of a newspaper or TV report that speaks volumes. And when we are described by BFBS as "the leading charity for Veterans in crisis" the point is made eloquently, that this message is going to the serving community as well as to Veteran and wider public audiences. Last year more than 80 media outlets referenced us or publicised our work.



Barred from Britain: Commonwealth
Soldiers treated as slaves, says charity
OUR BOYS
Life on Civvy Street: Homeless
problem is overstated says charity

Does this matter? Of course it does - it matters to all these people:

Potential clients: Those who need our services have to know that we exist and the sooner the better if their problems are acute. Their families and friends also need to know so that they can be guided to us.

Donors: Those who support us, so that they can help fund the vital work that we do.

Communicators: Journalists, students, politicians, opinion formers and families of those in need, so they can spread the word about us and educate others about the realities of the 'Veterans' world.

Most people today get their information through the media, in 'bites' of variously digestible size. Most of those who 'make and break' the news have no experience of military service, no memory of war or conscription and often no understanding of what the designation 'Veteran' means. No wonder then that their views are shaped by stereotypes. Many who come to VA are surprised to learn that women with as few as three weeks service, or men who have never done an operation tour, are as much 'Veterans' as Chelsea pensioners or those recently returned from Afghanistan.

Does this matter? Not to VA.

Glyn Strong
Media & Communications, Veterans Aid

ART OF SURVIVAL

ChapmanCreative's pro bono catalogue introduced The Art of Survival to an eclectic audience in December – among its number was Turner Prize nominee Spartacus Chetwynd who participated in the private view. Featuring information about all the contributing artists and exhibits the catalogue can be found at www.veterans-aid.net/art

"I was introduced to Veterans Aid by the Victoria Bid. After a meeting with Glyn I knew this was an exhibition that needed to be staged and made available to the art world and general public.

We arranged a meeting, for me to visit the Veterans at the charity's New Belvedere House hostel. The guys were nervous and, if I'm honest, I thought that the majority thought it was all talk!

Some of the Veterans showed me the rooms where they produced their work and the mural that brightens up the outside space. We came up with an exhibition date for December, which at that stage was in nine months time. During that period some of the guys came meet me at the SW1 Gallery and on many occasions in the run-up to 'D-Day' we got together to discuss their work and ideas for the exhibition.

The nine months passed rapidly and on the eve of delivery and installation I was nervous, anxious and questioning my judgment! The delivery / installation day arrived and it seemed like Xmas morning; unwrapping quality works of art in all manner of materials executed to such a professional standard – I couldn't stop smiling with pride for them!

The quality of work showed through and the response from the guests and numerous buyers at the private view was amazing. I think the Veterans work even outshone the contribution of Turner Prize nominee Spartacus Chetwynd who officially opened the exhibition.

It was a memorable event and want to thank all the contributors and wish them a bright creative future, especially the Veterans and staff at VA who all worked so hard."

Owen Ward, left of picture. Artist and former Curator of SW1 Gallery



IT'S ACADEMIC

By Professor Jay A. Mancini

I am struck by the historical significance of East London, that place where over time any number of individuals and groups have come for a new beginning, for a place to start on the path to better lives; if you will, a staging area for recovery, renewal, and resilience. These “three R’s” of well-being are alive and well at New Belvedere House (NBH), a current and meaningful example of new beginnings in East London. In a world where programs intended to lift individuals and families to a better place are more likely to fail than not, NBH stands tall by making a difference that is sustained.

It seems to me there is one fact in the prevention and intervention sciences world, that social networks, connections, and relationships have an enormous effect on physical and mental health. If there is one fact in the world of social programs that makes a real difference, it is that taking action now, rather than later, is what counts. A drowning man or woman needs a lifebelt immediately, rather than when it may be convenient.

Situated on a relatively quiet street, it is easy to miss this vibrant place of new beginnings. Men of all ages come and go, helping professionals of all sorts come to make a difference, and social exclusion begins to decline. In an environment of positive change, men see examples of new ways of thinking and of behaving; old ways of thinking and behaving are challenged without apology.

Trust grows, slowly at first; then at a point this trust is significant and persists long after a NBH resident “graduates” to what is next, very often his own or a shared flat. Skills for daily living are taught and practiced, as are employment skills. Addictions are dealt with directly and forcefully; the rules are clear and unbending, the support from NBH staff is unwavering.

“If there is one fact in the world of social programs that makes a real difference, it is that taking action now, rather than later, is what counts.”



I view NBH as a network of men with vulnerabilities, who also have the capacity for resilience; as a network where caring professionals unabashedly take action; a place where important connections between NBH staff and the men, and between the men, are made that lead to healthier living practices; a place where positive relationships develop that persist.

NBH is a structured, no-nonsense, and caring environment that brings ex-Service Members from social exclusion to social inclusion, from hopelessness to hopefulness, and seeks to reduce vulnerabilities and increase resilience. In a sense it is built on networks, connections, and relationships. Isolation is not the norm at NBH, certainly not from the vibrant people who staff it. Intervention is not a spectator sport, nor is it passive. That NBH is about fostering positive networks, connections, and relationships, is significant because our lives are lived in a social and relational world. Resilience is about bouncing back, and moreover, about bouncing back better than ever.

Jay A. Mancini is the Haltiwanger Distinguished Professor of Human Development and Family Science at the University of Georgia (USA). He has been a colleague of VA CEO Dr. Hugh Milroy since 1999. Milroy and Mancini have collaborated on military and Veterans community and well-being matters in places such as the UK, Canada, Switzerland, Ireland and the Netherlands. Dr. Mancini is a fellow of the National Council on Family Relations. He has conducted research with the men and the staff at NBH, which is the basis of these observations.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

We take nearly 3,000 calls for help each year from people with all kinds of problems. We solve most of them!

Veterans Aid provides:

Accommodation: We currently provide accommodation or support for around 90 men, women and children – 55 men in our own hostel, which is always full.

Detox: We buy instant help from the best facilities. Residential rehab costs £480 per week (average stay 12 weeks). Aftercare costs £250 per week (average 12 weeks £2,880).

Employment, education & training: After addressing immediate needs VA supports people until they are independent. It provides access to every kind of education, vocational training and personal empowerment courses.

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.

A one-day snapshot

10	had only just arrived and were still undergoing their stabilisation and assessment period were on scaffolding or construction courses
3	were employed full-time; one as an engineer, one as a landscape designer and one on a security contract.
2	were on driving courses.
1	had completed his IT training at Ruskin College, Oxford, and is now on placement; about to be employed by SSAFA Forces Help, working for us was on a course at Ruskin College, Oxford, also on Open University course was reading for a law degree was on a trainee solicitor's course was on an Open University course (studying surveying) was on training with MITIE (a facilities management group) and on an Open University course was on an art course has joined the HAC was on a gas engineering course was on a tree surgery course was on a football referee's course was training to be a prison mental health nurse was on a St. John's Ambulance emergency first aid course

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“Self-respect is an essential step in rehabilitation and restoration of normality to shattered lives.”

Mental health

Stereotypes and urban myths about the mental health of serving and ex-serving personnel abound. Research, predominately on serving members of Her Majesty's Forces, appears to have had the unfortunate consequence of erroneously linking military service, in the public's mind, with the entire range of difficulties Veterans encounter on leaving service.

Another less reported consequence is the creation of a group of individuals who falsify or exaggerate their military service in order to access veteran specific services.

The mental health of serving and ex-serving personnel has become politicised. This has occurred against a background of an increasing tendency within society to 'explain' what many would see as normal human emotions and behaviours in psychiatric terms. Many Veterans become naturally distressed by poverty, debt, unemployment, lack of education or skills including literacy and homelessness the treatment of which is action not self or prescribed medication.

Time is money. The current preoccupation with auditing and rationing time through the use of questionnaires, rather than face-to-face contact time, can cost more in the long run. There seems to be a focus on the process of providing care rather than listening in order to identify what is actually needed.

Making time to listen shows the respect so vital in helping anyone connect with support and begin to regain his or her self-respect. Self-respect is an essential step in rehabilitation and restoration of normality to shattered lives.

It is wrong to inappropriately 'label' naturally distressed individuals as mentally ill as this can undermine self-respect. Equally, it is wrong to ignore active mental health problems and substance misuse issues, which should be pursued aggressively and managed appropriately. No two Veterans are the same; neither are their needs. Veterans Aid understands this – which is why it is successful.

Ian Palmer
Mental Health, Veterans Aid



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Addiction

Substance misuse continues to present an enormous problem to British society, and while Veterans display no greater proclivity to addiction, they are equally not immune to the temptations of drugs, alcohol and gambling.

For those clients who arrive at the charity with such issues, our focus continues to be around motivating and supporting them into appropriate treatment, and continuing to work with them until they reach the point of independent living.

The addition of Jonathon Fullan to the team in a resettlement capacity has had a profoundly positive impact, meaning that we're able to do more with the increasing number of Veterans Aid clients who have completed rehab but who still require guidance, be it emotional support or help with training/education schemes and general tenancy issues.

The general make-up of this client group remains largely unchanged; 63% identify alcohol as their primary issue, although 29% admit to polysubstance use (misusing both drugs and alcohol) and 3% with an addiction to heroin. Problematic gambling continues to feature for around 5% of these clients, and though that number may appear relatively small its effects are utterly devastating.

Mostly ex-Army their average age is around 42, having been out of the armed forces for around 15 years before they present to our service.

Despite media reports of the military taking healthy young men and spitting them out onto the street as traumatised alcoholics, our experience has been very different - for the vast majority their time in the military represents a major point of light, inspiration and pride in an otherwise extremely difficult journey.

Such journeys often lead to our door, yet it remains a source of constant inspiration to see these men and women making positive decisions and entering into an entirely new future in recovery, leading healthy and responsible lives away from the grip of addiction.

25 The number of active clients VA has at any one time (not all living in its hostel)

163 Clients Veterans Aid has put into treatment since May 2008

42 The average age when a client first presents

6 Years, the average length of service

15 Years, the average length of time since a client left the armed forces

Relapse is a reality of our work and we still see clients return to us having 'fallen off the wagon.' There are, sadly, no quick fixes to such an age-old problem, but our refusal to give up on those who wish to turn their lives around continues to reap rewards.

VA has around 25 active clients at any one time (not necessarily living in its hostel)



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

That is not to say that any journey is easy, or straightforward. Relapse is a reality of our work, and we still see clients return to us having "fallen off the wagon." There are, sadly, no quick fixes to such an age-old problem, but our refusal to give up on those who wish to turn their lives around continues to reap rewards.

Clients who were previously in the depths of addiction are now studying at college or university, bringing up their children, starting their own businesses, returning to work, living independently, helping others. It is a testament not only to the expertise and dedication of all the staff at Veterans Aid, but to those individuals who take the courageous and challenging steps towards addressing their issues and following a path into recovery.

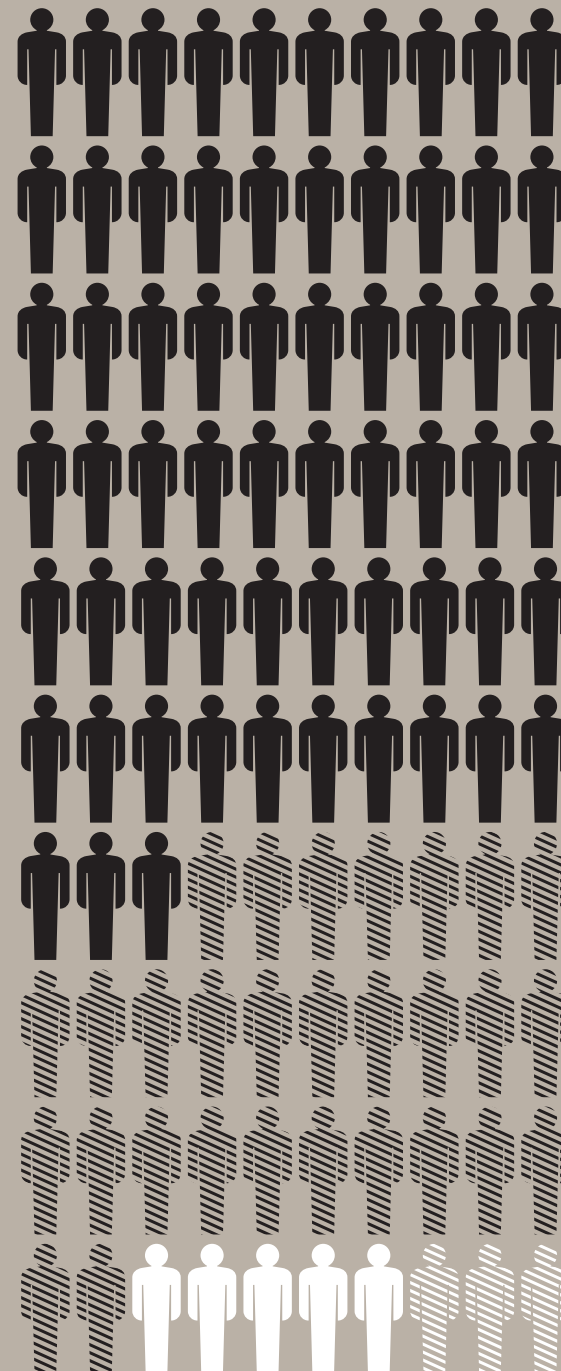
A recent client profile

A 49-year-old male, living in a homeless hostel in Taunton but looking to access treatment

- Served for 2 years with an infantry regiment from 1982 to 1984
- Drinking 1 bottle of vodka (30 units) & up to eight pints of beer (22.5 units) per day
- Mixing alcohol with medication all purchased illicitly on street - 20mg of Diazepam daily, 20mg of Amitryptiline daily, Oramorph occasionally
- Smoking 1-5 joints of skunk daily



Phil Rogers
Substance Abuse, Veterans Aid



Heroin users
 Problematic gamblers
 Polysubstance users
 Alcohol abuse

A PLACE OF HOPE

1. Belgian students visit VA to study the charity's model | 2. Turner Prize nominee Spartacus Chetwynd and Lady Rothermere join contributors to the Veterans Aid Art Exhibition | 3. CEO Dr Hugh Milroy talking to a Veteran whom he has found on the doorstep of the Drop-In Centre in Buckingham Palace Road | 4. A BEM in the New Year's Honours List for Honorary Treasurer and Trustee Robert Clinton helped raise VA's profile | 5. New friends from the Union Chapel helped VA's artists learn the art of picture framing | 6. Prime Minister of Fiji, Commodore Frank Bainimarama (left) and Dr Hugh Milroy | 7. VA 'on air' at the new BBC studios | 8. and 9. The first New Belvedere House / Royal Hospital Chelsea bowls match | 10. The early morning fitness session at NBH is not for the faint hearted!



"It is a great honour and a huge pleasure for me to accept your request to be Patron of Veterans Aid. This will be my life's work. I am so happy to be a member of the Veterans Aid family."

The Dowager Viscountess Rothermere

THE LADY  FOUNDATION

VETERANS AID WELCOMES NEW PATRON

On 13 March 2013 The Dowager Viscountess Rothermere accepted an invitation to become Veterans Aid's first Patron. This appointment formalises a relationship that has grown stronger by degrees since it was initiated in 2012 and has been welcomed with delight by all who have participated in its development.

Every once in a while a benefactor comes along who makes a life-changing difference to an organisation. Last year Veterans Aid was lucky enough to be discovered by just such a person, in the form of Lady Rothermere.

Many people donate money to VA, and every penny enables us to do something, for someone. A few people perform inspirational and challenging feats of endurance to raise funds, and their efforts are particularly valued.

Occasionally our charity is 'discovered' by VIPs and New Belvedere House has hosted visitors from The Royal Household, the Houses of Parliament, various Livery Companies, the Royal Hospital, banks, clubs, commercial organisations and universities. All leave with a warm feeling about what they have seen and words of praise for Pat O'Connor and her team.

What is less common is for them to come back...

- to come back bringing gifts
- to come back with a home cooked meal
- to come back with Christmas presents
- to come back and support our art exhibition
- to come back with a 'party' invitation

Lady Rothermere has done all these things, her Foundation and wonderful 'Team Lady R' have helped raise money to support our work, but most importantly they have 'touched' us – staff, Veterans, residents and 'graduates'.

Thank you from us all!

LOOKING FORWARD

John Bryant

John Bryant left the Royal Regiment of Scotland in October 2011. He'd served in Afghanistan and completed a full tour in Helmand where he was the youngest soldier in theatre. He was also the 'accidental star' of a BBC documentary. Headly days.

"Afghanistan was crazy," he recalls. "When I did my first patrol we were briefed to watch where we were walking - we were told there'd be IEDs. Then you look at the maps and they have all these red dots where IEDs have been found - there are thousands of dots - they're everywhere."

When John left the Army he was 19. "I had no mum or dad or family to go home to and no qualifications other than what I had learned as a soldier. I went back to Glasgow, but I knew that, if I stayed there, I'd end up in trouble."

With £100 in his pocket John left for London. But he knew no-one, had nowhere to live and soon ended up homeless. Eventually he found Veterans Aid.

"I joined the Army at 16 with no qualifications and left with no qualifications - apart from how to shoot a rifle and a GPMG (general purpose machine gun). I can't put that on an application for a job at Marks and Spencer. Most of us, when we leave the Army, are OK - but for those of us who get into difficulties it can be hard and it can be frightening."

John is fine now but it has taken time. "At Veterans Aid I've seen people go from having nothing to having something. They have hope that their lives can get better. And in the months since I came to Veterans Aid I've seen myself change - I've learned how to manage money and how to cook my own dinner. I've qualified as a scaffolder... and I've got my confidence back."

"Veterans Aid can put a stop to the problems that happen when people have no families to turn to, or face hardships that make them turn to alcohol or drugs"

"All this is because of Veterans Aid - yet when I left the Army, I didn't even know they existed. This charity changes lives and that's why I feel so strongly that people should know about it - so that other ex-servicemen and women don't have to go through the pain and misery that some of us did.

Veterans Aid can put a stop to the problems that happen when people have no families to turn to, or face hardships that make them turn to alcohol or drugs. I've seen how the money that supporters donate is spent. Some of it has been spent on me. And I can tell you, Veterans Aid is unique. Not just because of what it does, but because it does it immediately. Within hours of someone walking through the door they can be provided with food, new clothing and accommodation. And that's only the beginning..."

"There really is nothing else like it."

*Since this was written John has found a job thanks to the scaffolding qualification that VA made possible. He still lives in New Belvedere House but, again with help, hopes to move into new accommodation of his own in East London. At the fundraising dinner hosted by Lady Rothermere at St. John's, Smith Square, he told his story to 300 people in an eloquent appeal to support VA. It was greeted with thunderous applause.



LOOKING FORWARD

Stephen Chikoore

Stephen Chikoore first came to Veterans Aid for help in December 2008, seeking advice about his immigration status. He had left the Armed Forces without Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK, which meant he was unable to access benefits or secure work.

Veterans Aid, with generous assistance from the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund, was able to provide Stephen with some funds for food while he was waiting for a decision from the Home Office. In May 2009 he received confirmation of his Leave to Remain in the UK, meaning that he could work.

However, alongside his issues with immigration, Stephen was also struggling with a serious alcohol problem. Initially he'd been able to hide the extent of the problem, but eventually his drinking extended into the workplace.

In July 2010, when he came back to VA, Stephen had lost his job, fallen behind with his rent and become homeless. He was referred to New Belvedere House and the team began working with him on a weekly basis to support him into treatment.

Phil Rogers recalls "He engaged fantastically well with all of the support offered to him at the hostel and made it clear that he felt his best course of action with regard to his alcoholism would be to access residential detox and rehab."

In October 2010 Stephen entered into detox and rehab with the Kairos Community Trust in South London. He progressed brilliantly, completing their 12-week programme and remaining clean and sober.



Despite his impressive work, it was felt by everyone involved in Stephen's case that he would benefit from further treatment at a long-term residential rehab in East London called Charis. Thanks again to generous assistance from the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund and ABF/The Soldiers Charity, Veterans Aid was able to fund this, and Stephen was admitted in February 2011.

End of story? Far from it. Graduating from the programme was only the beginning. After two years of sobriety Stephen then went on to complete his Certificate in Mental Health Studies through the Open University. This allowed him to apply to Ruskin College for their degree in Social Work. He passed the interview and was offered a place on the course.

On 3rd October 2012 Stephen moved up to Oxford and into halls of residence to officially begin his degree. He is embracing all the challenges that come with full-time education, thoroughly enjoying the course and is well on his way to becoming a qualified social worker.

LOOKING FORWARD

Michael Crossan

Michael Crossan, 48, is an artist, a photographer and a student. He's also a Veteran and the work described above was bought by a former Guardsman who hopes to see it occupy pride of place at the Veterans memorial museum in Staffordshire. Today Michael is in a good place; his work is attracting attention, he has a home - but rewind a few years and things were very different.

Michael served for three years in the Royal Highland Fusiliers, an experience that he recalls fondly. "I didn't serve anywhere dangerous like Northern Ireland; UK, East Berlin, that was it. I was medically discharged and after leaving I travelled for years. I spent five years in Greece, painting huge murals in theme clubs." It was a lifestyle that went hand in hand with drinking.

When things 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 substance misuse worker. 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.

Like many of the men 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.

Michael is uncomfortable talking about his drinking days. His focus now is on the future which, incrementally, is getting better. Each time he sells a work of art, upgrades his camera, buys a new lens or takes part in an exhibition he moves further down the road to the life he wants to live.

Picture by Malcolm Crowthers



WHO HAS HELPED US THIS YEAR

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

The Lady Rothermere Foundation
Veni Partners
Bob Wilson Funfairs
The Admiral Codrington
Amhuinnsuidhe Castle Estate
ShareGift, The Orr Mackintosh Foundation
The Tom Hall Charitable Trust
BAE Systems plc
The Screaming Eagles
The Westminster Foundation
The Royal Warrant Holders Association
Anne Duchess of Westminster's Charity
Frognal Trust
St Judes Over 50s Club (Westminster)
The Fresh Hope Trust
Battle of Britain Memorial Flight
Placid Gonzales & Associates
Inner Wheel Club of Chelsea & Westminster
London Group of The Guild of St Helena
Artemis and City Boxing Dinner/Auction
Lloyds TSB Foundations
Canal Zone Club
Chairman Westmoreland Triangle Residents' Association
Daimler Ferrec SC Owners
Franco-British Foundation of Sillery
Shire Heroes
State Street Global Markets
SSVC/BFBS, The Big Salute
Chapter House, Westminster Abbey
Lord Mayor of Westminster
Prior & Partners
Jack & Ada Foundation
Fareshare
Beattie McGuinness Bungay
Excalibur Unit Charity
Welbeck College
The Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers
Commanding Training Support Unit, Worthy Down
BP Shipping Ltd
Defence School of Transport, Leconfield (RLC)
Worshipful Company of Fruiterers
Polizzi Charitable Trust
Joint Improvised Explosive Device Analysis Centre
Waitrose, Motcomb St, Belgravia
BAE Systems, Stirling Square, London
Potential Officers at Army Officer Selection Board, Westbury
New Jubilee Lodge
Veterans Heroes Organisation
Merton Court Prep School
William Martin C.of E. Junior School
Hereford Cathedral School
Birkhamsted Churchwomen's Fellowship
Supreme Council 33 Degree
RAF Club
Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem
RF/MAX Toronto
Tactical Imagery Intelligence Wing HQ
Stratford-upon-Avon College
Westminster City Hall
Honourable Artillery Company
Taunton RFC Under 13s
Coldstream Decorations Ltd
Leadenhall School, Salisbury
St Peter's Parish Church
Canvey Island Town Council
Unipart Rail
REME Arms School, Arborfield
Elm Valley Stores
RMP (CPU) KABUL
ARUP
St Helen's Church, Cornhill on Tweed
Women's Institute
Wyggeston and QE1 College, Leicester
Stitch-a-Logo Ltd
Yateley Manor School
St Mary Magdalene Church, Chippenham
Thomson Reuters
RRF Aid Society, Tower of London
Royal Military Chapel (Guards' Chapel)
Leicester Branch, Coldstream Guards Association
Royal Artillery Charitable Fund
The Blythe Sappers
Royal Hospital Chelsea
Home HQ Royal Dragoon Guards
The Royal Engineers Association
Numerous anonymous Trusts & Foundations
Ebury Restaurant and Wine Bar
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 to homeless Veterans from Drop-in Centre
Queen Mary's Roehampton Trust
Supporting VA's Alcohol & Drugs treatment work
The Royal British Legion (2012 only) Rufford Foundation
Supporting work of Professional Support Worker at Hostel
The Royal British Legion (2012 only)
Assistance with tri-service cases
SSAFA Forces Help & Officers Association
Drop-in Centre Outreach work (2 posts)
SSAFA Forces Help (Central London)
RN and RM homeless Veterans
RNRMC, SEAFARERS UK, and RN Benevolent Trust
Drop-in Centre Outreach work & Army homeless Veterans
The Soldiers' Charity & Corps and Regimental Associations
RAF homeless Veterans
RAFBF
Ex-Merchant Navy homeless seafarers
Merchant Navy Welfare Board
Hostel re-roofing
Compton Housing Association
Hostel Communal Area planning
Oliver Burns
Hostel re-roofing
BAE Systems
Giving our hostel a fabulous Christmas
Vitol Group (Vitol Charitable Foundation)
Hostel Christmas presents
Ministry of Defence (Chief of Air Staff's Office)
Sponsoring a room at the Hostel
Kensington & Chelsea Branch, Royal British Legion
Activities and Educational Visits for Hostel
Ministry of Defence (Fast Stream)
Education and Training courses
Merchant Taylors' Company
Carpentry and joinery courses
Carpenters' Company
Clothes, shoes & bedding
Hedley Foundation, Queen Mary's Clothing Guild
Skills and training VA ex-Servicemen
MITIE Group Plc & MITIE Business Services Ltd
Higher Education
Ruskin College, Oxford
Horticultural therapy, Royal Hospital Chelsea
Gardening Leave Project
Reflexology therapy at Hostel
Kate Rayer
Immediate provision of Mattresses and Furniture for Hostel
Jean Notman, The London Furnishing Company Limited
Awareness support and Carol Concert costs
Victoria Business Improvement District
Food for hostel
Fareshare, Waste Not Want Not Charity and EAT
VA Carol Service
Philippa Windridge
Hostel Working Trip to Paris:
The Not Forgotten Association
Assistance with venues for hosting VA activities
Greater London RFCA
Gloves for Veterans
Worshipful Company of Glovers
Alcoholism
The Rufford Foundation
Mental Health
Merchant Taylors' Company
Refurbishment of two Hostel bedrooms
John Slater Foundation
Refurbishment of Hostel kitchens
Company of Cooks
Refurbishment of two Hostel bedrooms
Bullough Tompson Charitable Settlement
Education and Training
Haberdashers' Company
Visits to Hostel residents
Royal Hospital Chelsea In-Pensioners
Addiction & Substance Misuse
Towergate MCGF/Towergate Charitable Foundation
Care of Elderly at Hostel
Grocers' Company
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
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 £1,413,871 (2011: £1,307,945)

	2012 £	2011 £
Local Authority payments	515,047	505,692
Charges to hostel residents	43,521	29,521
Grants	308,797	310,520
Donations & Legacies	355,561	304,528
Donations in Kind	58,688	29,800
Fundraising & Sundry	57,495	58,523
Investment Income	74,761	69,362
	£1,413,871	£1,307,945

Net decrease in funds £29,462
(2011: £34,725 decrease)

Reserves at 30th September 2012

	2012 £
Hollenden House Endowment Reserve (permanent endowment reserve)	2,024,312
Restricted Funds (funds donated for specified purposes)	2,010,809
Designated Reserves (funds for the development of the National Centre for Homeless Veterans)	282,935
General Reserve (represents six months operating costs)	720,000
	£5,038,056

Expenditure £1,443,333 (2011: £1,342,670)

	2012 £	2011 £
Hostel running costs	619,970	604,707
London Relief Centre	699,745	597,946
Governance costs	60,767	61,362
Fundraising & Event Costs	62,851	73,373
Development of National Centre for Homeless Veterans	-	5,282
	£1,443,333	£1,342,670

Excluding unrealised gain on investments of £138,798
(2011: loss of £91,227)

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

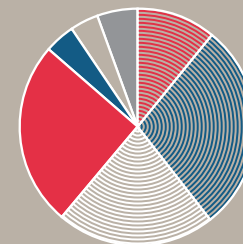


Robert Clinton, Honorary Treasurer

STATISTICS & CLIENTS

Where does our income come from?

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.



PLEASE HELP

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



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Web: www.veterans-aid.net

Registered charity: 1095308

Charitable Company Limited

by guarantee no. 4544532