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ssafanews

FOR SSAFA SUPPORTERS | SPRING 2015



ssafa

Lifelong support
for our Forces
and their families



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Dear Friends

Thank you so much for your support which ensures that we can make a difference in the lives of our Forces and their families.

This year, SSAFA marks **130 years of service to our Forces and their families. As the UK's oldest national military charity, we have supported British servicemen and women and veterans, together with their families, through some of the most challenging times in our history. This has only been possible because of the donations, legacies and gifts in kind from our amazing supporters.**

As a former serviceman myself, I know what a challenge it can be when service life throws the unexpected at you and the constant adjustments that have to be made by individuals and their families. In this edition of SSAFA News, you will find inspirational stories of some of the people that

we have been able to help as a result of your support. An example is Tony Harrison, who shares his story with us. As a 21-year-old in the 1970s he was medically discharged from the Army but it was only the beginning of a life-long battle. Tony says, "SSAFA saved my life." This would simply not have been possible without the generosity of our supporters who have enabled us to be there for him and his family. Thank you again for your generosity – it is so important and makes all the difference in our ability to support those that desperately need our help.

Air Vice-Marshal
David Murray CVO OBE
Chief Executive



SPECIAL COMMENDATION

SSAFA's Family Support Group Team received top prize at the 2014 Social Worker of the Year Awards.

SSAFA's Family Support Group Team facilitate national and regional support groups for 575 military families affected by bereavement, serious injury or with a disabled child or dependent, focusing on mutual support between families. The groups are run in collaboration with elected service-

user committees and provide education on coping skills, for grieving and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Jenny Molloy, Patron of the British Association of Social Workers England, whose organisation sponsored the award, said: "The SSAFA Family Support Group Team truly deserve to be commended at this high level for the real, valued difference they are making to the lives of so many people across the country. Creativity and innovation is at the forefront of their practice and as a result they

deliver flexible, user-focused and values-based service. There is no doubt that they are a lifeline for many people."

HOW WE HELP

575

Military families are members of SSAFA's Family Support Groups. Donations to SSAFA help to ensure the families receive support and advice on coping with bereavement and with serious life-changing injuries to a loved one.

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No. SC038056

Cover: Tony Robinson
and Ssafa the dog



CYCLE CHALLENGE

Ride of Britain: 16-20 September 2015

Take part in our five day, 500 mile cycle challenge for our Forces and their families. Start in historic Edinburgh and pedal your way through challenging terrain and beautiful scenery into the heart of London.

To find out more, call our dedicated Ride of Britain team on:

020 7463 9297

teamssafa@ssafa.org.uk

www.ssafa.org.uk/rideofbritain

Entry fee £150. Minimum sponsorship pledge applies.



KEEPING ANTON'S MEMORY ALIVE

Anton Frampton was killed in Afghanistan on March 6, 2012, when the armoured vehicle he and five other soldiers were travelling in was blown up by an Improvised Explosive Device. Anton was only 20-years-old.

His sister Gemma, who was only 25-years-old when she lost her brother, set up the Anton Frampton Memorial Fund to keep his memory alive and to help her cope with the loss. To date, she has raised more than £5,000 in aid of SSAFA by participating in a range of activities, from a sky dive in 2013 to climbing Ben Nevis last year.

Gemma carried a photograph of Anton on the 1,344m Ben Nevis climb. She said: "He was my inspiration, he goes everywhere with me."

Following Anton's death, Gemma and her mum joined SSAFA's Family Support Groups. She has been a member of the SSAFA Bereaved Siblings Support Group

while her mother attends the SSAFA Bereaved Families Support Group. Gemma said, "This support network saved not only my life but I'm sure those of many others too".

Gemma's courage, strength and dedication are an inspiration. We are very grateful for the money she has raised in memory of her brother.

Last year, Memorial Funds and In Memoriam donations raised more than £85,000 in support of our Forces families. If you would like to set up a Memorial Fund, please call Leah Murray on **020 7463 9257** or email inmemory@ssafa.org.uk

SSAFA SAVED MY LIFE

An interview with Tony Robinson

Can you tell us about your time in the Army and what happened after you left?

Tony: I joined the Army in 1973 when I was 15 and served with The Queen's Regiment. I loved it, every single minute of it, and I'd go back tomorrow if I could. But I got injured a few times and a couple of them were quite bad. After one of the injuries, I was told, "You won't be able to continue. You won't be able to carry out your duties. I'm sorry, but that's it. We need to discharge you." I was only 21.

What happened next?

Tony: I became a Ranger, and it was a good outdoors job. I enjoyed it. But then I had a fall. It caused spinal and nerve damage. It was a one-in-a-million accident, but a jolt went up my spine and did a lot of damage. I lost my job. We started to struggle. We had to sell almost everything we had. And my condition got worse too. Everything



"A doctor said that I should contact SSAFA. From the moment I called them they were brilliant"

went wrong. I felt like a burden on my wife Tina and our children, and I thought I was letting them down - we only had £15 a week to feed four of us. The doctors asked me if I'd ever been injured before. I told them about my time in the Army. They told me the injuries I had in the Army contributed to the one that finally got me. And there was no chance of me ever walking again. I started to get depressed. I became suicidal. Everything had got on top of me - the constant pain, the bills, the worry. I just felt like a waste of space. It got so bad that I just wanted it to end.



How did SSAFA help?

Tony: A doctor said that I should contact SSAFA. From the moment I called them they were brilliant. They pulled us out of the debt, spoke to the bailiffs and got us back on track. They also helped us find a new place to live and helped with the moving too. I couldn't get up the stairs in our old house - Tina had to help me, or I had to crawl up there. It was bad. The toilet was upstairs, so I had to use a bucket as a toilet. SSAFA has helped our two children too. When they were starting school, they needed school

uniforms and I couldn't afford them. SSAFA bought everything they needed.

What has been the impact on you and your family?

Tony: SSAFA saved my life. When SSAFA helped, it felt like freedom. To say they've given us our lives back is an understatement. It's good to know that if anything happens to me, they'll always keep an eye on Tina and our children. It's a huge thing for me.

What would you say to people who are thinking of supporting SSAFA?

Tony: I'd tell them that I can never thank SSAFA enough. I can never repay them for what they've done for me and my family. I'd say: "Please give whatever you can to support them. Just look at what they've done for me and my family. There are other guys out there like me, and I know that SSAFA will help them too."

HOW WE HELP

OVER 35,000

people in their local communities received direct practical and emotional support last year through personal visits and one-to-one help from trained SSAFA volunteers. The donations we receive help towards providing grants to beneficiaries in need.

**OPERATION
BIG BREW**

UP

**SAVE THE DATE
22-28 JUNE**



To coincide with **Armed Forces Day** why not put the kettle on from **22-28 June** to make a big difference to the lives of our Forces and their families?

The **Big Brew Up** is SSAFA's biggest fundraising event of the year and it's really easy to take part. We're asking you to hold a tea party to raise money for SSAFA and our Forces.

Sign up now to receive a fundraising pack with all the goodies to help make your own **Big Brew Up** a success.

Don't worry if you aren't free in June - you can hold a **Big Brew Up** any time of year!

Visit thebigbrewup.org.uk
call Verity Maylam on **020 7463 9359**
or email thebigbrewup@ssafa.org.uk



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QUALITY OF LIFE SERVICES

A HOME FOR TREVOR

Army veteran Trevor Blake-Morris, 57, lived in a Bed and Breakfast for five years as he was unable to find housing through his local authority. His work as an electrician took him all over the country, but he was forced to live in one-room accommodation.

Trevor joined the Army aged 17 and passed out on his 18th birthday in 1975, serving with Second Battalion The Queen's Regiment before leaving three-and-a-half years later.

He recalled: "I was posted to Belize. It was a bit of a culture shock having grown up in a council estate. I didn't like being shot at. When I was first in Northern

Ireland there was an incident where if I had taken one more step I wouldn't be here today. Sometimes I think how lucky I was.

"When I came out of the Army I had a difficult time settling down. I went from the Army to my wife and from my wife to a bedsit after our marriage broke down. I started having problems with alcohol." This was nine

years ago. In time for Christmas last year, Trevor was finally allocated housing and he has been trying to look to the future. His wife died in 2012 and the news hit him hard.

On getting the keys to his new flat, Trevor called SSAFA to help him make it a home.

He said: "My caseworker, Mary, has been brilliant. She sorted out a washing machine and a freezer, a carpet for my bedroom, a wardrobe, a vacuum cleaner and some other bits and pieces.

"It's so nice to walk into your own place. My kitchen alone is bigger than the room I lived in before. I'm so grateful and it's so nice to be appreciated for what you have done in the past."



MY TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

Terry's Story



“Military life is a bit of bubble, which can make it difficult to adapt when you leave. Whilst I was serving I had all my bills, my home and my job taken care of.

“I wasn't prepared for getting out, even though the MoD had a good transition package in place. It's the next steps that are important”

Terry Whitelaw, 43, served for 22 years with The Rifles, in the British Army. He is married with three children.

He developed arthritis in 2003, which has got increasingly worse over time. His joints were stiff, painful and swollen, and he was reduced to using walking sticks and crutches to get around.

He also developed psoriasis on his knuckles and elbows.

In February last year, Terry was introduced to SSAFA's Mentoring Scheme whilst he was in the MoD Personnel Recovery Unit, preparing for medical discharge from the Army.

Terry said: “I didn't initially want to accept help, I was a little dubious. It's a mixture of being a man and being in the Army, I was too proud - I wanted to do

it on my own.

“But I went into the mentoring partnership with my eyes open and actually getting to know my mentor, Jane, has been a good experience.” Jane is a trained SSAFA volunteer, specialising in mentoring.

“My family is always there for me but they let me just plod along, as long as I'm happy. Whereas with Jane, she motivates me, she sets me goals that I have to meet. I can turn to her for advice and guidance. She will get things set up for me off her own back, like booking interviews to discuss options for employment. She's very helpful.

“That's why SSAFA's Mentoring Scheme has been so crucial for me. It's been great to have Jane on my shoulder, keeping me on track.”

“Military life is a bit of bubble, which can make it difficult to adapt when you leave”

LIVING MY DREAM

In 2006, Siobhan Weller made the decision to leave the Army. She had signed up at the age of 17 and served as Supply Controller in the Royal Logistics Corps for eight years.



Since leaving the Army, Siobhan has worked for Lincolnshire Police taking 999 calls and also for local government. Last year, she applied for a Parliamentary Intern Scheme through the Social Mobility Foundation which aims to get those from less privileged backgrounds into politics. Siobhan successfully secured a nine month internship with Conservative MP for Brentford and Isleworth, Mary Macleod.

Siobhan said: “I have always been interested in how decisions are made that affect people's lives. I think back to when I was a 19-year-old serving in Kosovo with a fully

“It was so nice to know someone was there for me even 10 years after leaving the Army”

loaded rifle and I think: “Who made the decision to put me there?”

Siobhan got in touch with her local SSAFA Branch when she needed financial support to help with her relocation costs from Lincolnshire to London. She said: “It was so nice to know someone was there for me even ten years after leaving the Army. I have been able to use SSAFA as a stepping stone to get me where I need to be. SSAFA has helped change my life and made my dream of working in central government come true.”

FUNDRAISING FOR ST VINCENT'S

Last summer former soldier and SSAFA Trustee Alastair Gornall took to the seas around Britain on his RIB power boat to help raise vital funds for SSAFA's St Vincent's Residential Care Home on the Isle of Wight.

On the epic 1,600-mile journey, Alastair was accompanied by his friend marine boat builder and engineer Adam Pethick.

Together, they raised more than £25,000 towards installing specialist bathrooms for residents with mobility difficulties who live at St Vincent's.

The bathrooms in the main part of the home, which were last refurbished in the 1990s, have been in desperate need of modernisation in order to accommodate the needs of the elderly residents.

St Vincent's is home to 25 veterans. The Victorian building has been used to accommodate servicemen and women



Alastair Gornall, right with Adam Pethick



since 1950 when it was opened as a home for those convalescing after World War Two.

Over 90% of residents have mobility issues and over a third also have sight and hearing impairments and dementia. Most have additional and complex needs including mental health problems, diabetes and Parkinson's Disease.

"I am personally thrilled to have made this adventure happen and at the same time raised money to help install the much needed new disabled bathrooms for the deserving veterans at SSAFA's St Vincent's Residential Care Home."

Alastair Gornall

Normandy veteran Ron Crisp, aged 95, a resident at the care home said: "St Vincent's ex-service connection is very important to me. I had supported SSAFA myself when I served, both donating and raising funds. The bathrooms are old, just



Alastair inspecting the old bathrooms

like me, and are in much need of a makeover. I speak on behalf of all the residents when I say that new bathrooms will make a real difference to our home."

HOW WE HELP

25

Elderly residents, who have a service connection, live at St Vincent's Care Home. Their average age is 90. Thanks to the donations and gifts in Wills we receive, SSAFA is able to provide them with a comfortable and fulfilling place.

There are thousands of ways you can support SSAFA's work and make a difference to our Forces and their families.



From organising your own garden party, challenge event or arranging a quiz night, we are here to help make your fundraising a success. To request a fundraising pack contact Sofia Cetta on **020 7463 9310** or email communityfundraiser@ssafa.org.uk

ALAN'S STORY

When Alan Tall, 86, fell seriously ill, SSAFA was there to look after him.

Alan joined the RAF aged 17 as part of National Service, and served with Bomber Command from 1945 to 1949.

In his early 50s, doctors discovered he had a cancerous bowel tumour which had to be operated on three times over the next 15 years. Following each operation SSAFA was there to support him. We arranged a period of recuperation for him

at the Princess Marina House in West Sussex. We also provided Alan with a reclining chair at home to ensure he was comfortable recovering after his operation.

When Alan was unable to work and faced financial difficulties, SSAFA stepped in to provide guidance on what benefits he was entitled to. More recently, when Alan had a fall and broke his thigh bone, SSAFA was there

to provide support in the home. Talking of the support he has received from SSAFA, Alan said: "When I was ill they just told me to relax and get well - they arranged everything for me."

He added: "They are some of the best people in the world. They gave me their time and their assistance. There are a lot of people who wouldn't be where they are today if not for SSAFA."

COMING HOME IS ONLY HALF THE BATTLE



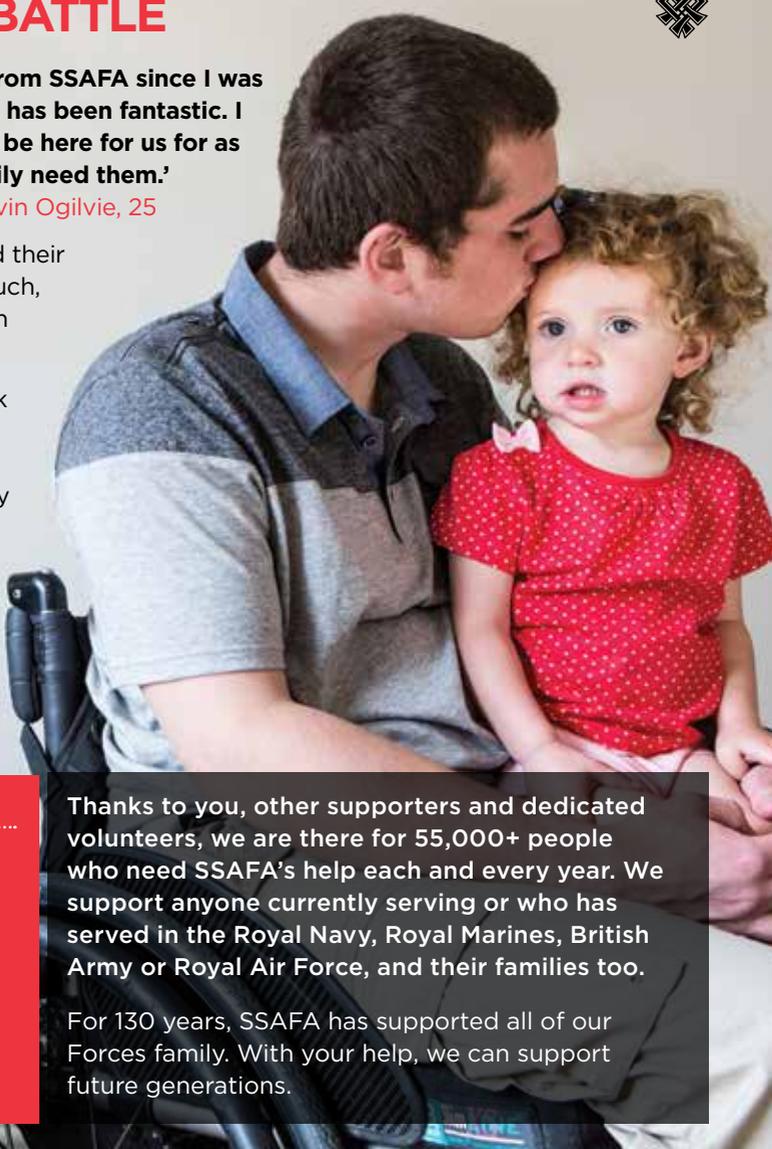
'The support we got from SSAFA since I was injured in Afghanistan has been fantastic. I know they will always be here for us for as long as me or my family need them.'

Senior Aircraftman Kevin Ogilvie, 25

Our Armed Forces and their families sacrifice so much, please remember them in your Will.

If you would like to talk to us about including SSAFA in your Will, please call Leah Murray on **020 7463 9257** or email **legacies@ssafa.org.uk**

Thank you.



HOW WE HELP

55,000+

Every year, thanks to your support, we help more than 55,000 people providing practical, emotional and financial support.

Thanks to you, other supporters and dedicated volunteers, we are there for 55,000+ people who need SSAFA's help each and every year. We support anyone currently serving or who has served in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, British Army or Royal Air Force, and their families too.

For 130 years, SSAFA has supported all of our Forces family. With your help, we can support future generations.

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