

# SSAFA NEWS FOR SUPPORTERS

INSIDE



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FALKLANDS 40 YEARS ON

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**ssafa** | the  
Armed Forces  
charity

Regulars | Reserves | Veterans | Families

# THANK YOU

This year we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Falklands War. Inside, you'll hear from veterans Mark and Paul about their experiences in the conflict. We will also be looking back over 130 years of SSAFA Sisters, our trained nurses who have provided crucial care and support to our Armed Forces and their families, a service they still provide today.

The need to support our British Armed Forces community is as strong as ever with our volunteer network carrying out 24,772 visits and cases last year to those in need of our support. As a result of your generosity, we provide multiple services, tackling numerous problems faced by those within the Armed Forces, from casework, to mentoring, housing services, welfare support and mental wellbeing.

In this edition of our SSAFA newsletter you'll catch up with the inspirational fundraiser Chris Lewis and see where his journey has taken him since we last heard from him in our 2021 Spring edition. There is also an update from Gina, who you may

remember from Autumn 2021, and how she plans to give back to SSAFA after the help she received at her time of need.

Our puzzle page is back, and this time we are challenging you to a Spot the Difference puzzle. Can you decipher which image of our Armed Forces trio matches up?

The men and women of our Armed Forces still play as important a role as ever in our society, at home and overseas. They require our help just as much as we need them to defend our nation, so please show your commitment to these courageous individuals now and in the future.



## FUNDRAISING PROMISE

- We commit to high standards
- We are clear, honest and open
- We are respectful
- We are fair and reasonable
- We are accountable and responsible



## CONTACT US

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# CAN YOU FIND THE MATCHING IMAGE?

Do your keen eyes notice anything different?

Following on from our wordsearch and quiz in previous newsletter editions we have a new challenge for you to take on. Cast your eyes over our Armed Forces trio imagery and from the four below can you match the correct one?



ANSWER ON PAGE 11

“When I first started I’d never have believed something like this would happen.”

# A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF CHRIS, KATE AND JET

**Amazing UK coast-walking fundraiser Chris Lewis has had an incredible 12 months, after a life-defining moment that led to his journey changing from a solo walk to an adventure for a soon-to-be family!**

You may remember our piece on Chris in last year’s Spring newsletter and now we are here to provide an update on the last incredible 12 months of his life. From a BBC documentary, to appearing on Lorraine,

and starting a family, Chris has had an amazing year. Chris, an ex-Paratrooper, started his journey over four and a half years ago from Swansea, setting out to walk the entire length of the UK

coastline to raise £100,000, which he thought was ambitious at the time. This was his way of thanking SSAFA for the support we provided him when he left the Forces and found himself homeless.

Things on the journey took an unexpected and happy turn in Scotland when Chris met his future girlfriend Kate Barron who, at the time, was wild camping, doing the North Coast 500. Chris and Kate hit it off instantly and although Kate had to leave shortly after, they stayed in touch. Two months later, she quit her job and went to join him for the rest of the route. Now, along with faithful companion, Jet, they have continued their journey down the East and South coasts of the UK and are thrilled to announce they are expecting the birth of their child!



discovery around the UK coastline. This allowed Chris to share his incredible story with millions of viewers and help raise awareness about how tough the transition back to civilian life can be for those leaving the Armed Forces. It was extremely heartfelt and resonated with viewers as we saw a huge increase in visits to our website that evening. We are exceptionally grateful to everyone who took the time to watch Chris’s story.

As Chris tells us: “The aim was to raise more money for our amazing heroes who serve our country and come home affected by their time in service.”

Following on from the documentary Chris, Kate and Jet also appeared on ITV’s Lorraine to talk about their incredible journey and the impact it has

had in the Armed Forces community. Watched by **1.3 million** viewers, Lorraine even provided them with a baby grow for the impending arrival.

So far, Chris has raised over **£270,000** and has over 109,000 followers on his Facebook page. In his words: “remaining positive, even in adverse conditions and sharing the challenging sides of my journey have helped to create a warm, friendly online community, which I am eternally thankful for.”



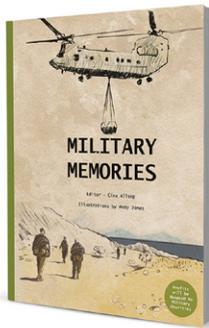
Back in September the BBC documentary, The Long Walk Home, part of the Our Lives series, followed Chris’s journey of self-



To donate to Chris’s challenge, you can visit his page at: [justgiving.com/fundraising/chriswalks](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/chriswalks)

# A PUBLISHED VETERAN

After receiving support from SSAFA, Gina, a Royal Signals veteran is now helping others with her own fundraising from sales of a poetry book.



who join the Armed Forces, showing a lighter side to our families' lives and the trauma we sometimes face. A path taken by many, told by so few. It's a lifetime of memories shared in one little book."

Whilst Gina walked away from the accident with minor injuries, her bike was written off in the accident. SSAFA supported Gina and arranged the funding to provide her with a new bike so she could continue to cycle following the death of her brother.

Gina recalls: "My inspiration for this book also came from a poem I wrote for my brother's funeral. Since it took place under Covid restrictions, we were only allowed ten people, so it was streamed on the internet. My poem was heard by a cancer hospice and they asked me to record my poem for other virtual funerals so it could be played for them. That inspired me to create this poetry book and allow more people to read the work of others."

If you'd like to purchase Gina's book you can find it over on our SSAFA store at [ssafastore.org.uk](https://ssafastore.org.uk)

Back in September we told you about Gina and the help she received from us after being knocked off her bike in a hit and run, soon after the loss of her brother. Well, now she is giving back by publishing a poetry book to raise money and say thank you for the support she received.

The book, titled 'Military Memories', is a collection of poems written by veterans, serving personnel, families of those who have served, and the wider forces family. ITV presenter, Lorraine Kelly, is one of the contributors, as well as radio presenter, Joe Carden.

As Gina tells us: "The poems illustrate the journey taken by those

**"You feel kind of helpless when you lose a family member, and my escape was cycling on a bike."**



**Back in October Katie took on the London Marathon to raise funds for SSAFA, in memory of her father.**

Katie decided to raise money for SSAFA after hearing about the support the charity provides to members of the British Armed Forces, including her father's military comrades while he was serving in the Army and RAF.

She said: "I chose to fundraise for SSAFA in memory of my Dad, Laurie, who died aged 57 in 2018 having served over 23 years in the Forces. He was a daredevil, larger than life character and someone you'd want to be with in a crisis. I thought he would be around forever."

Explaining how she got into running, Katie said: "I've always been sporty since being at Hereford Cathedral School and enjoyed park runs and running alone. When Dad died, running helped, and needing something to focus on I joined Caerleon Running Club. I did a 10km run on my first night and in week two, did a 3 miler with a club-mate training for the Virtual London Marathon, and really enjoyed it."

**"When he died, I received wonderful support, mainly from his Army 'family' and many people mentioned SSAFA's support for the Armed Services, which stuck with me."**

Although Katie was not successful in the London Marathon ballot in 2018, she set her mind to it and was incredibly grateful to be able to take part last year.

Despite setbacks with the pandemic Katie managed to raise an incredible **£4,556.20**, way above her initial target of £3,000.

To create a lasting tribute and celebrate the life of your loved one you can visit: [ssafa.muchloved.org](https://ssafa.muchloved.org)

**RUNNING FOR HER DAD**

# COMMEMORATING 40 YEARS ON

This year we reflect and remember 40 years since the Falklands War and here to tell us their stories are Mark and Paul, two veterans of the conflict.

**On the 40th anniversary of the Falklands War SSAFA volunteer Mark Trainor, who served onboard HMS GLAMORGAN during the conflict, recalls the fateful day that his ship was hit.**

Mark joined the Royal Navy aged 16 and on the cusp of his 21st birthday he set sail, along with 500 other sailors of HMS GLAMORGAN, for the Falklands and war. HMS Glamorgan was one of 127 ships involved in the Naval campaign.

“Although you know what you’re signing up for when you join the military, whether it’s Navy, Army or Air Force, nothing ever really prepares you until you’re actually there and you see the devastation that it will cause.”

“It wasn’t really until you started hearing the first aircraft that you couldn’t see. . . it was pretty scary, to be honest, because we can hear them, you can’t see them, and then you wonder, ‘Is it friend or foe?’”

On the morning of 12th June 1982, just two days before a ceasefire was called to end the war, HMS Glamorgan was hit in an Argentinian air force attack.

“All we heard was a thud...there was a big hole on the deck in front of the hangar...The ship’s engines were stopped...The Exocet missile

didn’t explode but it caused total devastation...”

Thirteen people would die on the ship that day, with a further sailor Mark knew very well, Jock McCann, dying from injuries later.

“I always think about our shipmates who never returned to port with us. The families of those people that sadly died are still very much part of the Glamorgan family...It’s very hard to believe it’s 40 years, but it changed me and it changed the person I am today...We must never forget.”

A total of 255 British service men lost their lives, with a further 755 wounded, during the 10-week war on land, at sea, and in the air.

Mark is now Divisional Secretary of the SSAFA’s Grimsby & Cleethorpes Division in Lincolnshire, and he urges fellow veterans, members of the Armed Forces and their families to not suffer in silence. “Let SSAFA help you.”



**Under the cover of darkness on Friday the 11th of June 1982, Paul Moore, an airborne Royal Engineer and 3 Para, fixed bayonet and walked into a minefield on the slopes of Mount Longdon.**

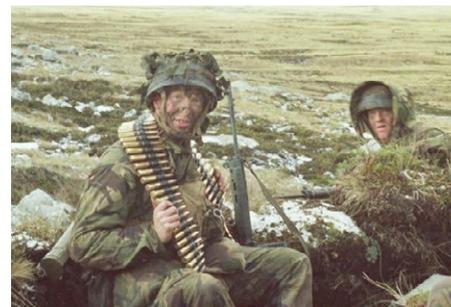
“We’re all laid there on the ground and the sergeant major of B Company went along and basically in the dark, very quietly, he said, ‘If you want to have a word with the man upstairs, do it now because some of us might not have another chance.’”

Twelve hours of fierce fighting ensued during which Paul and his fellow soldiers had to search in the dark and under sniper fire for a corporal who had stood on a landmine. They were bombarded by grenades with one going off right by Paul and his unit lost track of each other in the dark.

It was a night filled with confusion, danger and great losses.

“It was very much like the First World War. Fix bayonets, stand up, walk forward.”

The battle ended with 3 Para taking the Argentinian position atop Mount Longdon, but the skirmish



had cost them the lives of 18 Paratroopers, two as young as 17.

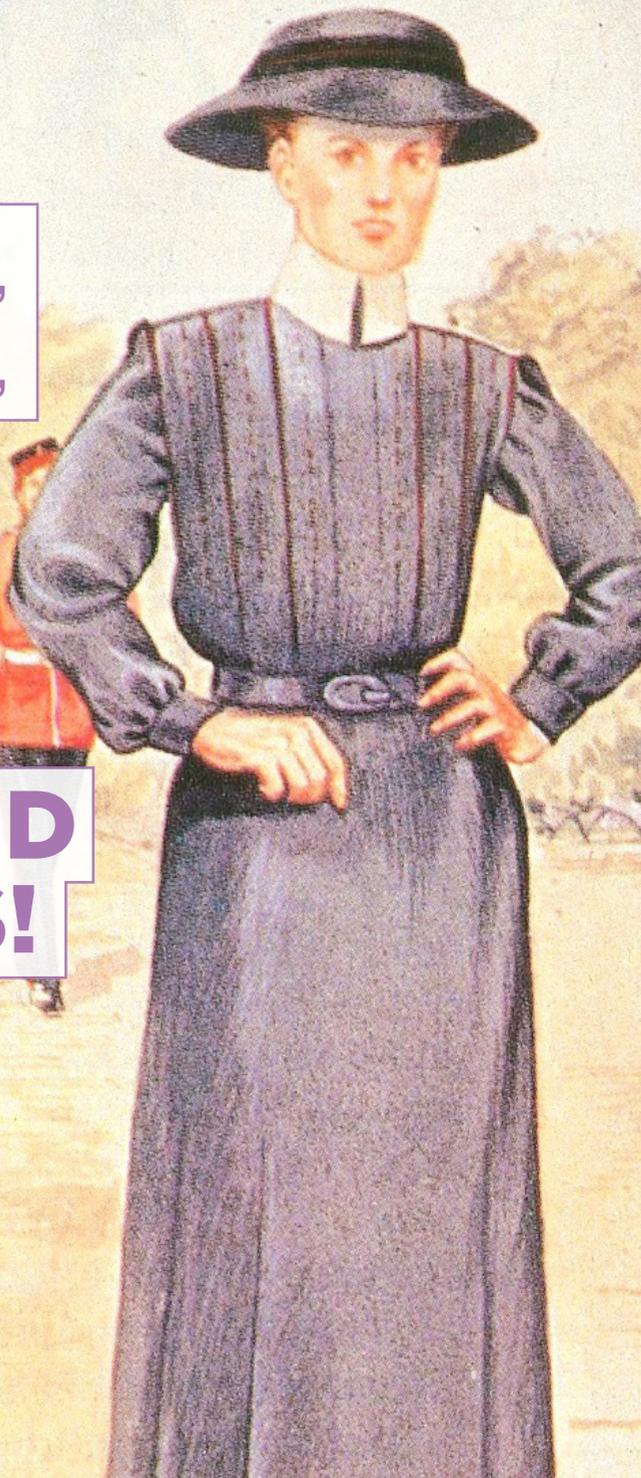
The mental toll of the battle has never left Paul. Years later, whilst on the ranges Paul found himself considering turning his gun on himself. This moment led him to seek help from a local SSAFA volunteer. From then on, Paul set himself on a path of understanding; to know more about PTSD, learning to understand and cope with his triggers, whilst educating himself and those around him on how to live with the scars of war.

Paul is now the branch chairman for the County Durham SSAFA branch and is part of the four-man team that organises the Falkland’s Ride of Respect; a yearly motorbike ride created to visit all Falkland war graves in the UK.

In 2022, for the 40th anniversary of the conflict, Paul plans to visit the 15 graves located on the Falkland Islands as a mark of respect and remembrance.

Discover more about the Falklands War at [ssafa.org.uk/falklands-40](https://ssafa.org.uk/falklands-40)

SISTERS,  
SISTERS,  
THERE  
WERE  
NEVER  
**SUCH  
DEVOTED  
SISTERS!**



Since 1885 our charity has marked many memorable anniversaries and one that SSAFA is particularly proud to celebrate takes place this year.

This year sees the 130th anniversary of the inauguration of SSAFA nurses – then called the Alexandra Nurses. Established in 1892, they provided professional care to the wives and families of soldiers and sailors in garrisons and seaport towns across the world.

They had such a huge success in their work that the UK's National Health Service adopted the Alexandra Nurses' practices for the District Nursing Service when it was set up in 1948.

SSAFA nurses are still at work today as part of our Community Health Care Team. These dedicated professionals provide first-class nursing and midwifery services to British Armed Forces personnel and their families posted overseas in Cyprus, SHAPE, Gibraltar, Brunei, Kenya, and BATUS in Canada.

After exploring the archives, we have included these wonderful photographs to show the incredible work these women carried out and continue to do so for our Armed Forces and their families.



“I think personally one of the most valuable things you can ever give somebody is your time.”

## FROM CORPORATE PARTNER TO VOLUNTEER

After working in the Defence Sector for over 10 years HR Director, Rachel Evans decided to become a SSAFA Mentor to help support those transitioning to civilian life.

For over 15 years, Sodexo, Rachel's employer, has supported SSAFA with its partnership raising over £350,000 for the charity, including funding SSAFA's Homelessness Fund through Sodexo's Stop Hunger Foundation.

Rachel discovered SSAFA and the work we do for the Armed Forces community upon joining the Defence Sector.

As she tells us: “I first came across SSAFA when I was working out in Cyprus and during that time my connection with the military community became much closer. I had an incredible opportunity to observe and understand how the military works together, and subsequently the impact this has upon families.”

Following her work in Cyprus Rachel decided to become even more involved with the charity and took part in our D-Day Cycle Ride to help raise funds. After the event Rachel decided to volunteer and train to be a SSAFA mentor, a service that supports forces

leavers with their transition back into civilian life.

Rachel explains: “I found out about SSAFA Mentoring through my regular email updates and by following their social media channels. I decided to become a Mentor because of my connection to the charity.”

As part of becoming a Mentor, individuals are required to complete an application form and a formal interview, as well as a three-day training course.

Rachel tells us: “I would say to anybody considering becoming a mentor, if you can give your time to support them through a transitional period in their life and you have the skills and experience to do that, then do it.”

Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation has donated **£45,544** to help provide food, clothing, rent and debt relief since the start of the pandemic.

To discover more about volunteering visit: [ssafa.org.uk/volunteer](https://ssafa.org.uk/volunteer)



## MAKING A LIFETIME COMMITMENT

After meeting a SSAFA caseworker, and seeing the vital work carried out by his local branch, former Merchant Navy sailor James Clasby bequeathed part of his estate to SSAFA.



In 1964 James joined the Merchant Navy, serving on a variety of ships as a steward, including the Rangitoto, Ruahine, Orsova, Taupo and Melbourne Star. After leaving in 1970, he continued to sail on a cruise ship, before settling into a lifelong job in hospitality.

James met his wife Julia at a Rock and Roll dance club. After marrying, the couple lived in London, and despite divorcing in 2004 remained friends. After their divorce Julia moved to a new home, where she befriended her neighbour Barbara, the pair bonding over their shared professional interest in mental health. Julia and Barbara were

neighbours for over 10 years, but it wasn't until Julia's unexpected passing in 2017 that Barbara met James.

“Jim was devastated when he found out she had died alone,” explained Barbara, who had been the one to notify him of Julia's passing. James greatly appreciated her support during that difficult time and they stayed in touch long after probate was complete.

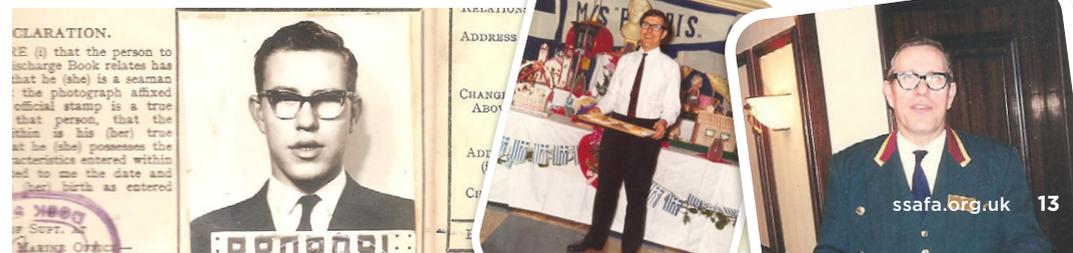
When he discovered that Barbara had been volunteering for SSAFA, since 2014, he was suitably impressed, donating the proceeds of a car boot sale of some of Julia's possessions to SSAFA Sutton & Kingston Division.

After rewriting his will following Julia's passing, James decided to share the proceeds of his estate and SSAFA was one of the beneficiaries.

“Jim wrote SSAFA Sutton & Kingston Division into his new will because he found out that I was a caseworker for the division and approved,” explains Barbara.

Gifts in Wills like James's help to ensure SSAFA's vital work to support our Armed Forces community-regular, reserve, veteran and families-continues.

To find out how to leave a gift in your will and more about our free will writing services visit: [ssafa.org.uk/legacy](https://ssafa.org.uk/legacy)





## MEET DARREN

**“Now SSAFA is everything to me. They look after people in the services and family members from the minute they join. They are part of the military family.”**

for me. If SSAFA hadn't been there, I'd have been on my own 75 miles away, knowing that my wife would be struggling. It's great I can now watch my children grow up.”

To give back to the charity Darren wanted to raise £1,700 over 3 years, the amount of time he had left in the RAF. He achieved this target in just 63 days! But that hasn't stopped him from continuing to fundraise for SSAFA.

Two years ago he devised the 'SSAFA 2020 Challenge' which was to include ten marathons (including London), two ultras, one long distance triathlon, six half marathons, five 100-mile bike rides and a parachute jump. Sadly, everything was put on hold due to the pandemic, but Darren was determined to complete his epic challenge. He has now run five marathons around his village, received amazing support from his local community and has so far raised a fantastic £2,329!

When Darren Pipe was moved to RAF Wittering in 2018, after 19 years in the RAF, he was worried his wife and young children would struggle without him. SSAFA helped to relocate his family so they could be together.

As he tells us: “When I was moved to Wittering it wasn't classed as a posting, so the RAF didn't move my family too. My wife is American, and she doesn't know many people in the UK. At the time she was at university and our children were one and three years old.

After getting in touch with SSAFA we were able to secure £1,700 to help the whole family move together.

As Darren recalls: “It was massive

## MEET SALLY

**“To be able to continue to break down the stigma of mental ill health in a fun and creative way is the reason I do it.”**

Sally Orange, a former Army Major, Mental Health advocate and UK Ambassador for the Army Cadet Force, has now completed over 70 marathons, the most recent one dressed as a Jacob's cracker to raise money for SSAFA.

She holds multiple Guinness World Records and world firsts, has completed eight full Ironman triathlons and has completed 22 years' exemplary service in the Royal Army Medical Corps as a Physiotherapy Officer.

Last month Sally was recognised at the Palace of Westminster with the prestigious British Citizen Award (BCA) in recognition of her extraordinary endeavours.

Sally is no stranger to taking on challenge events with food themes, having been the only person in the world to run a marathon on every continent dressed as a piece of fruit. Sally uses her fun costumes to break down barriers to change the conversation on mental ill health and raise money for charity, even

getting others to join in her amazing costume ideas. This even includes SSAFA's own CEO, Sir Andrew Gregory, who dressed as an orange alongside Sally to take on our iconic 13 Bridges challenge across London in 2021.

Having faced her own challenges with severe depression and chronic anxiety, Sally speaks openly to remove the associated stigma. She encourages others to manage their own mental wellbeing through healthy eating, physical activity and a positive mindset.

As Sally tells us: “I can't believe I've done 70 marathons! This means more funds raised to support SSAFA, helping those having difficulties with their own mental health, which is more important than ever.”



# FUNDRAISERS OF THE YEAR

If you're looking to start your own fundraiser visit: [ssafa.org.uk/fundraise](https://ssafa.org.uk/fundraise)

At SSAFA we are lucky to have some incredible supporters fundraising for the Armed Forces and today you can meet Darren and Sally, who have achieved tremendous results!

# TAKE PART IN LONDON'S ARMED FORCES DAY EVENT

# 13

## BRIDGES CHALLENGE

JUNE 25 2022



Join us on **June 25 2022**  
and **June 24 2023**

# SIGN UP!



# ssafa

the  
**Armed Forces**  
charity

Regulars | Reserves | Veterans | Families

Registered as a charity in England and Wales Number 210760, in Scotland  
Number SC038056 and in Republic of Ireland Number 20202001. Established 1885.