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VETERANS
ORTHOPAEDIC
SERVICE

NHS

The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt
Orthopaedic Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

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VOS Representatives and Volunteers joined in the action, at Armed Forces Family Fun Day.



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Veterans' staff & volunteers abseiled 150ft from a crane, to raise money for charity

MESSAGE FROM LIEUTENANT COLONEL CARL MEYER, O.B.E.

The Veterans' Orthopaedic Service (VOS) is fully funded by NHS England, and it is the first veterans service to achieve this.

N HS England provides funds to 42 Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) across England, which pays for clinical care of patients, including veterans.

Last year, NHS England changed their funding rules which affected funding from ICBs, outside of Shropshire, with lower volumes of referrals. For these patients funding was "anchored" at historical levels. This disproportionately affected VOS as we have a national service which has grown rapidly, and the result being that VOS is underfunded for the care it provides. This will result in an estimated £4million deficit by the end of this year – a major threat to VOS which, if left unresolved, will cause VOS to close.

NHS England values our service and is concerned to hear of the unintentional impact their funding changes. They have suggested we contact all ICBs across England to alert them to this matter and to

seek reimbursement for each veteran we treat. This is a temporary measure, and we wait to see how successful this is.

**THIS WILL RESULT
IN AN ESTIMATED
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We have strong support from our local MPs and other interested parties, such as Professor Tim Briggs, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon and Chair of the Getting It Right First Time Programme, who are working on our behalf to find a definitive solution. In the meantime, VOS will do everything it can to maintain services and keep putting veterans first.



MESSAGE FROM HARRY TURNER CHAIR OF THE NON-EXECUTIVE TRUST BOARD



Greetings from the hospital and welcome to the latest edition of the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service (VOS) Newsletter. The summer has been an excellent and busy time for the VOS team, participating in numerous events and activities, and bringing VOS to the wider community.

I was pleased to note on June 6, that we marked the occasion of 80 years since the D-Day Landings. As part of the Commemorations, Lt Col Meyer commissioned Telford College students to deliver a highly successful art exhibition.

The wonderful series of portraits acknowledges and recognises the valuable contribution of all our Veterans' Staff and Volunteers. By displaying these artworks in a prominent position in our main entrance, we are also reminded of the bravery and sacrifices made by so many men and women of the Armed Forces. We pay tribute to them and give thanks.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to offer our congratulations to the Head of the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service, Lt Col Meyer, for receiving an OBE in The King's Birthday Honours List. It is his drive, vision and commitment that have made the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service a reality, very well deserved.



HONOURING OUR HEROES WITH ART EXHIBITION

Students from Telford College were invited to a prize-giving evening and art exhibition at The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital (RJAH), on June 6, as part of events to mark the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings.

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eld in the main entrance, the cheese and wine event celebrated the culmination of a project between the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service and Telford College.

Since the start of 2024, students from Telford College have been working to create wonderful one-of-a-kind pieces of artwork, representing Veterans' Staff and Hub volunteers.

The exhibition, called Honouring Our Heroes, features 52 portraits in various sizes and media including: paint, print, digital, textiles, mixed media and ceramics.

Lt Col Carl Meyer OBE, founder of the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service, commissioned the students at Telford College to create portraits covering a broad range of staff – from surgeons, doctors and nurses, to veteran volunteers, League of Friends and cleaning technicians.

Carl said: "It was an absolute pleasure to host Telford College and to commemorate D-Day in such unique way – the evening was a huge success, showcasing the work of truly talented individuals."

Tutor Anna Bartlett said the college was very proud of the exhibition and all the hard work the students had put in: "We were all overwhelmed by the welcome we received at the hospital, the students loved the experience to create artwork for the staff and veteran volunteers, and it was a privilege to meet them face to face on the 80th Anniversary of D-Day."



VOS IN ACTION AT ARMED FORCES FAMILY FUN DAY

VOS Representatives and Volunteers joined in the action, at Shropshire Armed Forces Family Fun Day. The event was held at Shrewsbury Castle on June 29 and was a great success!

The VOS team held a colouring competition for children, aimed at drawing in families to the stand. As the young artists took their time to complete their entries, helpers utilised the opportunity to engage with members of the public, sharing information about the services available at the Headley Court Veterans' Orthopaedic Centre and Veterans' Hub.

A wonderful selection of prizes for the competition were kindly donated by Merrythought Bears of Ironbridge and Golden Bears Toys of Telford, and the winners will be announced shortly.



VOS TAKES A LEAP IN TO THE UNKNOWN

Brave Veterans' Staff and Volunteers joined in the RJAH Charity Abseil on June 8 and 9. The fundraising event, a 150ft abseil from a crane, was held outside the Veterans' Centre and raised over £13,000 for renovation the RJAH children's ward garden.

Hospital teams, individuals, charities and local businesses joined forces to take part for a good cause.

Veterans' Simulation Technician Alice Aymes took the opportunity to record a bird's eye view of the 150ft ascent, capturing some fantastic images of the Veterans' Centre from above using a 360 link, some the latest camera technology available in the simulation suite. Footage of this amazing experience is available to enjoy using the following link:

Enhanced Recovery Lead and Military Reservist Rebecca Warren stepped out in style as she ascended the 150ft drop with ease.

RV Hub Coffee Shop Manager Manon Kilpatrick, who took part with her daughter, said: 'It was a really lovely event, it's so nice to have everyone coming together to raise money for what is such a wonderful cause.'

Click this link to watch one of our team members descending 150ft!



SUSAN HEER- BEDFORD

VETERANS' VOLUNTEER

Susan Heer-Bedford spoke to us about volunteering for the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service, and her deep family history with the armed forces.

You never served in the Military, but you have a strong association with the forces?...

Well, my Grandfather was in the RAF and my Father was in the Royal Navy for 22 years, he served on over 40 ships and submarines. My Brother joined the Para Regiment and then left after 12 years and joined the Royal Army Medical Core. My oldest son is Army, and my eldest daughter is still in the Army and my youngest son joined the Royal Navy and then signed up to the Army. So, you could say that my whole life has been associated with the military. I'm so proud of all of them.

What was it like growing up in the Navy?

Well, wherever dad went, we went. We moved every two years. I was born in Gosport, but my first home was in Malta, then we moved back to the UK and lived in Scotland, then onto Cornwall, then Plymouth and back to Gosport. Dad eventually got posted to Hong Kong ... mum was furious ... I was 16 years old. I started my Queen Alexander Army Nurse training whilst we lived there and I loved it, but I had to leave because my mother became ill and we returned to the UK, where I started employment and became a mother.

You must have lovely memories growing up in the Navy?

I do. I remember when my father was posted to HMS Lochinvar and was awarded the Medal for Long Service. During the ceremony the Captain of the ship he was serving on pinned the

medal onto on my mother, he said "you deserve this". Both my parents never forgot that and she loved it. Military personnel cannot have the career they have without their loved ones.

What inspired you to be a Volunteer?

I moved to Shropshire in 2009, close to the Orthopaedic and I became a Volunteer through the League of Friends. During the pandemic I volunteered in the vaccination centre, as I felt I had to do something to help. It was then I heard about the Veterans Centre; Sarah Kerr the Armed Forces Outreach Support Coordinator encouraged me to become a Veteran Volunteer, even though I have never actually served. Sarah said that I understood military life and that experience is of great value to all.

How would you describe the hub?

It's a safe haven, where we (the Veteran Volunteers) can help people, support them and sign post them to the services they need. I think the fact that we are there for everyone is important.

What do you enjoy about Volunteering in the hub?

The banter and friendships you forge with people. I like the fact that Veterans come in and feel comfortable. A visitor to the hub said to me, *"it's like sitting in my own front room talking to you."* Strangers become friends, and visitors always come back ... we encourage it! It's not just for people who have medical appointments. We say *"just come back and talk to us and they do"*



TO VIEW THE EXTENDED INTERVIEW WITH SUE, [CLICK HERE!](#)

VOS FORCES

Each edition we introduce members of the veterans' team who tell us about their roles.



DR SOPHIE SHAPTER Consultant Anaesthetist

The Veterans' Centre is a world class clinical facility with training at its heart. The VOS Centre Medical Training Suite is designed to benefit trainee nurses, allied health and therapy trainees, doctors in-training and medical students who can come together for innovative tuition.

"Investing in staff and trainees generates positive staff engagement. The training gives delegates a greater understanding of challenges faced by veterans and prepares them to sensitively manage patient care," says Dr Sophie Shapter.

The Training Suite facilities include an Immersive Simulation Lab to provide realistic training. The Lab (AI) technology replicates real-life situations to expand student awareness through simulated scenarios including emergencies outside the hospital.

The large multi-disciplinary team (MDT) room allows clinical teams to plan veteran patient care. The MDT room and training rooms are linked by a learning platform. The platform maximises learning opportunities enabling collaboration across the integrated care system with universities and other centres using the same technology. The learning platform is particularly useful for hospital infection meetings, as well as revision hip and knee meetings.

The learning platform facility is not available locally due to the challenge of access in remote areas. It extends education opportunities in the wider community to cross boundaries in healthcare and primary sectors.

Funding has been sourced from Health Education England and the West Midlands Workforce Development Team, who are keen to support this kind of training.

"A state-of-the-art training space in the VOS Centre benefits the challenged rural health economy whilst developing the care delivered to patients," adds Dr Shapter.

MEL BYGRAVE Veterans' Volunteer Manager

Melanie Bygrave is the latest appointment to the Veterans' Hub Team. Melanie is the Veterans' Volunteer Manager and will be responsible for the co-ordination of volunteers across the Veterans' Hub.

Mel said: *"I am delighted to be taking on this role, which is an extension of the work that I am currently delivering, as part of my position within the League of Friends. Coming from a military family, I believe that I am well placed to understand the needs of the Veterans' Volunteers and our patients."*

Melanie will be available Monday to Friday in the League of Friends office, her contact details are as follows:

Email: melanie.bygrave@nhs.net or Phone: **01691 404401**

COMING FROM A MILITARY FAMILY, I BELIEVE THAT I AM WELL PLACED TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF THE VETERANS' VOLUNTEERS AND OUR PATIENTS.

LT COLONEL MEYER RECEIVES AN HONOUR



We would like to offer our congratulations to Lt Col Carl Meyer, Clinical Director and founder of our Veterans' Orthopaedic Service, who has been named in the King's Birthday Honours.

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arl has been named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire – more commonly known as an OBE. The honour is in recognition of his service to the British Army and to the Veterans' community.

Carl said: *"It was a huge shock when I found out that I was to be recognised with this honour. I am both proud and extremely honoured."*

"I see it as recognition for the importance of supporting our veterans, to whom, as a nation, we owe a debt of gratitude. Receiving this honour strengthens my desire to ensure we continue to develop our Veterans' services here at RJAH as well as helping other hospitals to develop their own services."

CHELSEA PENSIONER

TREVOR JOHN

W

e were delighted to welcome Chelsea Pensioner Trevor John to the hospital for his hip replacement procedure recently.

Trevor participated in our Enhanced Recovery Programme and during his stay entertained staff with his truly inspirational stories of his service, including his time spent in Korea.

Enhanced Recovery Lead Rebecca Warren said: *"What a privilege it's been to meet and care for one of our Chelsea Pensioners, Trevor, following his operation at RJAH."*

We wish him well with his ongoing recovery.



Trevor on Clwyd Ward



HOW WE WORK



The Veterans' Orthopaedic Service continues to develop and grow in response to the needs of our patients.

Supported by the RJAHS Charity, with a fund reserved especially for veterans.

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he hospital is grateful to every individual and organisation that has contributed to the building of the Headley Court Veterans' Orthopaedic Centre, built entirely with charitable donations. Sincere thanks to all involved.

To learn more about the work of the charity, to volunteer or if you want to support us you can contact:

Email: Victoria Sugden (Charity Director)
v.sugden@nhs.net

Tel: Central Office – 01691 404527

Web: www.rjah.nhs.uk/veterans
www.rjah.nhs.uk/charity



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