



**UNFORGOTTEN
FORCES**

Supporting Scotland's
Older Veterans



News release: Monday, 2nd July 2018; *for immediate release*

2,000 OLDER ARMED FORCES VETERANS HELPED BY £4M COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

A multi-million-pound programme to support older Armed Forces veterans in Scotland has helped around 2,000 people in its first year.

The **Unforgotten Forces** project is a collaboration of 15 leading organisations, led by Poppyscotland, which is delivering a range of services and enhancements in areas including advice, access to healthcare, social isolation, respite and transport, along with creative activities and events for those in care settings. The consortium was awarded £4m of funding from the Aged Veterans Fund to run the project over three years.

Today marks the project's first full year of operating and, with it, the welcome news that almost 2,000 older veterans have received help and assistance in that period. Scottish Veterans Commissioner Eric Fraser CBE, who launched Unforgotten Forces last year, said: "I know from experience that in serving with the Armed Forces you become part of a large family; leaving that cocoon can be daunting in both the short and long term. It is welcoming that projects are being funded to help bridge that gap by providing both practical and emotional help to those that need it. I wish the project every success for the next two years."

The project's co-ordinator at Poppyscotland, Glen MacDonald, said: "Unforgotten Forces has enabled these separate charities to work together far more closely to help older veterans. The front-line staff now know each other well across Scotland and are very knowledgeable about the services that others can provide. As a result, we now have a much more 'joined-up' approach getting staff of different organisations connected to each other at the coal-face.

"All this has resulted in far better co-operation, cross-referral and mutual multi-disciplinary support for those older veterans who need support. In this way, for example, an older veteran referred for support with hearing loss or tinnitus might also benefit from social support, advice on benefits, a free holiday break or help with transport for essential travel. In short, the Unforgotten Forces project is now very well established and successfully delivering support to older veterans on a holistic basis."

Another high-profile supporter of Unforgotten Forces is the star of popular BBC comedy *Still Game*, James Martin. James, who spent seven years in the Royal Navy having joined up in 1949, said: "It's great to see that there is proper and lasting help in place for our older veterans. The funding that has led to the formation of Unforgotten Forces will prove vital as we seek to do the utmost to look after those who served our country with such pride, bravery and distinction."

One heart-warming story to emerge from the project was a trip made last month to Wester Ross by four veterans in their nineties who served on the Russian Arctic Convoys during the Second World War. As well as attending a special ceremony, funding was put in place to allow the veterans to enjoy three nights in a hotel in Gairloch. The veterans described it as "a trip of a lifetime". The break involved several members of the Unforgotten Forces consortium, including Poppyscotland, Fares4Free and the Defence Medical Welfare Service.

ENDS...



**UNFORGOTTEN
FORCES**

Supporting Scotland's
Older Veterans



Notes to editors

- For further information, please contact David A. Findlay, PR Manager at Poppyscotland, on **0131 550 1580** or **079797 35611**, or email at d.findlay@poppyscotland.org.uk.
- For further information on the **Unforgotten Forces** programme please visit: www.poppyscotland.org.uk/get-help/unforgotten-forces/
- The **collaboration** of 15 leading organisations is as follows: Action on Hearing Loss Scotland, Age Scotland, ILM Highland, Citizens Advice Scotland, Defence Medical Welfare Service, Erskine, Fares4Free, Legion Scotland, Luminare, Music in Hospitals & Care Scotland, Poppyscotland, Scottish Older People's Assembly, Scottish War Blinded, SSAFA and the University of West of Scotland.
- **Poppyscotland** provides life-changing support to the Armed Forces community. Money raised from the Scottish Poppy Appeal and Poppyscotland's year-round fundraising enables them to deliver support to members of the Armed Forces community in Scotland by providing tailored funding and assistance. The charity also funds services in advice, employment, housing, mental health, mobility and respite. Please note that we are known as "Poppyscotland", and not "PoppyScotland" or "Poppy Scotland". For more information, please visit us at: www.poppyscotland.org.uk.
- The **Aged Veterans Fund** funds projects that support non-core health, wellbeing and social care needs for older veterans of 65 years and older, including surviving veterans of the Second World War, those who undertook National Service and other voluntary enlisted veterans who may need some focused support in relation to their health and social care needs.
- The application for funding, which was boosted by input from Standard Life's Accelerated Development Support Programme, was made to the HM Treasury grant-giving body funded from Libor banking fines. The money is being used to improve the co-ordination of existing provision and introduce new services aimed at supporting aged veterans.