

First steps on Dutch soil in 74 years

VETERAN despatch rider Lewis Banham made an emotional return to the Netherlands 74 years after he visited to deliver vital messages to the front line.

Lewis was invited to be part of a special parade for veterans as a thank you for their part in liberating the country.

His son Greg and fellow Royal Signals soldier Bill Ogden accompanied the 95-year-old from Weir on the seven-day trip.

Both Lewis and Bill are members of Veterans in Communities, which is based in Haslingden.

Lewis said: "It was fantastic. We were treated like VIPs. They held a special parade for us and there were 75 Second World War vehicles, along with 25 motorbikes including BSM20s, the same type of bike I rode across Europe when I

was a despatch rider."

The first parade vehicle he was in broke down and so Lewis switched to another jeep, and then spent the rest of the parade accompanied by three young ladies.

He said: "I had a marvellous time. They put the windscreen down and we could see everything. People were cheering like mad and when we stopped they would come over and shake my hand and pat me on the back.

"People said thank you very much for our liberation, I told them they had done a lot for me and they told me I had done even more for them.

"One man gave me an envelope and kept saying thank you, thank you; when I opened it inside was 100 Euros, about £90.

"It was a trip that I will never ever forget. It was very emotional and they were speaking from the heart."

The veterans met and had lunch with the Inspector

General of the Armed Forces Lieutenant General Hans van Griensven.

Lewis said: "While there we also went to a museum and the man who ran it began collecting items when he was just eight and he picked up ammunition from the First World War and added shell casings and rifles.

"From the Second World War he added bullets and clothing.

"Among the rifles was the first gun I was ever given – a Lee Enfield .303 calibre – known as the 'elephant gun'."

Lewis was called up in 1942 and he first served with the 15th Scottish Infantry Division. When he headed over to France in 1944 he was in the 44th Infantry Brigade landing on the Normandy beaches seven days after D-Day.

Bill said: "It was a privilege to accompany Lewis on his return to Dutch soil for the first time since 1944.

"We were met at the airport and from that stage onwards the veterans were



treated like gods. The hospitality of the Dutch people is beyond words. They couldn't do enough to show their gratitude to the veterans who helped liberate them."

In June Greg and Lewis, will be on a coach trip to the Normandy Beaches and Bill is working with

Dutch counterparts to arrange a special tour for Lewis in September to the areas of the Netherlands he visited as a despatch rider.



Free cricket tickets

LANCASHIRE Cricket has kindly donated 20 complementary tickets to watch the team play at the Emirates Old Trafford in Manchester.

Although several of the tickets have been taken, some are still available. To request tickets follow the link on our Facebook page.

VIC
VETERANS IN COMMUNITIES
Return. Belong. Prosper

presents

Veterans and Voices

Friday, 8th June, 2018 at 7.30pm
St Mary's Church, Rawtenstall
Tickets £5

Featuring:
VIC Choir and Haslingden and Helmshore Brass Band

Company Limited by Guarantee No: 8230197
Registered Charity No: 1151194

WHN
St Mary's Church

Shed delight

INFANTS now have their own special play shed thanks to the generous donation from a former pupil to replace one that was vandalised.

Last March, members of VIC refurbished a shed for the playground at St James CE School, Haslingden, but it only lasted weeks before it was vandalised several times and eventually had to be removed.

When former pupil Musfequr Choudhury read about what had happened, his business Hall and Hanley in Manchester offered to fund a new shed.

Operations Manager at VIC Bob Elliott said: "We have been waiting for security

fencing to be fitted around the whole site before installing the shed, but over Easter we were able to get the work completed.

"The shed has been such a success we are now looking to source a slightly larger one that we can refurbish and install for the older children."

Former Royal Engineer Alan Willetts built the shed from a flat pack and was delighted to see the children enjoying it.

He said: "It is fantastic to see the reaction of the children to the shed; I am so glad they like it."

Headteacher Frances Brady



said the children had taken ownership of the shed and put books inside and they used it to aid literacy. They also have beanbags so they can sit outside in good weather.

She added: "The children have raised money to do different things and there is a lot more play equipment to be purchased. The children have really made the shed their own and use it every day."



SHOPPERS in Asda Rawtenstall can support our charity by posting their green tokens into the yellow VIC collection.



Students net VIC £1,500

A BIG thank you to the team of Year 9 students at BRGS who selected VIC as their chosen charity and secured £1,500.

The students all researched different charities, met members and spoke to them to find out

what the charity did and how it works.

Sam, Scarlet, Daisy and Mollie then delivered a presentation and explained how the money would be spent, should their charity be selected.

Admin Officer

Amanda Walton said: "When I got the call to say VIC had won, we were on the Whitehough teambuilding day. I had to tell everyone to stop climbing the Jacob's ladder because I wanted to share the good news."

Spotlight on Armed Forces Covenant

VIC members attended a discussion and question and answer session on the Armed Forces Covenant with the Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham.

Chief Executive Liz Hamilton, Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth and Project Worker Jaqui Collins attended the session and posed questions about future plans and funding that will be

available for veterans with Mental Health problems and how to introduce therapy including art and singing.

Mr Burnham has invited VIC to attend an Armed Forces Covenant Summit in May.

VIC courses

A TWO-day mindfulness course was attended by 11 people.

The course, which was run by Lancashire Adult Learning, was very useful.

Three VIC members, Operations Manager Bob Elliott, Admin Officer Amanda Walton and Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth also completed a three day First Aid course delivered by John Watters from First Aid North West.

Open all hours

LIVING up to our promise of being there when veterans need us, VIC opened its doors on May Day for food and banter.

The centre aims to be open when other services are closed and we will be open again on Bank Holiday Monday May 28.

Breakfast club

VIC was well represented at the Cross Axes Breakfast Club in Great Harwood.

Pat O'Reilly and Jimmy Elsworth brought the Living Museum, and Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth and Project Worker Jaqui Collins also attended.

Prize appeal

AN APPEAL is being made for prizes including toys, games and books in good condition for a prize every time tombola to be held at VIC's stall at Trawden Show in August; donations can be left at the VIC Centre.

Singing total

OUR Singing Group raised a superb £407.89 at their performance at Tesco Bury.



Digging in at the allotment



Horse help

VETERANS will be helping out the Only Foals and Horses Sanctuary in Oswaldtwistle by creating raised beds for planting.

VIC members John Edwards and Guy Walker got the chance to meet Trigger, Solomon and Gizmo at the centre and learnt how equine therapy can help.

VETERANS have been hard at work preparing our allotment at Holcombe Road Helmshore.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We worked four long hours to make sure the allotment was ready."

"We moved soil to fill new raised beds, and we weeded the

old beds to prepare them to be ready for planting.

"The furniture has been repositioned and we removed an old greenhouse."

Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth is also project leader at the allotment.

He said: "Stubbylee Community Greenhouses are donating vegetable plants and we are inviting local primary and secondary

schools to go to our allotment because it is for the community."

He also appealed for donations of vegetable plants anything from potatoes, onions and broccoli, to cauliflower, beetroot and parsnips.

Steve added: "We are also hoping to get some fast growing, brightly coloured flowers."

To donate plants please leave them at the office in Bury Road, Haslingden, or call 01706 833180.



Raising awareness

A JOINT Armed Forces awareness week was held in Colne to alert veterans to the services available.

Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth said: "It was a joint effort between VIC and the Pendle Armed Forces Covenant, the new Pendle Armed Forces Support group, Colne Armed Forces Breakfast Club, and Burnley FC in the community."

"It allowed them to raise awareness of their services and many left knowing more about what is available."



Turf treat

A SPECIAL day to remember was organised for veteran Degs at Burnley's Turf Moor.

VIC was offered free tickets to Burnley v Brighton as a thank you for the work that members have carried out on the new community café for Burnley Football in the Community.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We spoke to

Health and Wellbeing Officer Naomi Greene and she organised for us to watch the players warming up, to watch the match, then go into the press conference with Sean Dyche and even meet some of the players.

"We also had a collection beforehand and had bought Degs a special mug and a sapper rugby top because he had not been able to attend the Army v Navy rugby match.

While we were watching the football he was talking about getting himself a top, little did he know when he got back to the VIC Crew Van he already had one."

Degs said: "What a fantastic surprise. Thank you so much cheered me up no end. The football wasn't great but the day was."

VIC staff also treated Degs' wife to an afternoon tea.



Wood course

STUNNING wooden creations have been made by veterans and members attending a six-week wood carving session.

VIC member Dave Jodrell ran the sessions and such has been the popularity, a new course started on May 17,

The sessions, which cost £3, run from 10am until 3pm. Tools, wood and tea/coffee is provided.

Dementia tour

ANYONE who missed the chance to experience the virtual dementia tour can sign up a tour being organised at the VIC Centre.

The cost will be around £25 and anyone who wants to attend should contact 01706 833180. Names will be forwarded to organiser Community Champion Colette Butler at Tesco.

Outdoor fun

FOLLOWING the huge success of the two team-building days held at Burnley Football in the Community's facility at Whitehough, a further day will be held on June 28.

On Thursday August 30, VIC will be also be Canadian Canoeing on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at Foulridge.

To book places contact 01706 833180.



ROSSENDALE

Activities are held at the VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL, unless otherwise stated.

Outreach Service

MONDAY-FRIDAY

10am-3pm

For a home appointment call 01706 833180

MONDAY

Crafty Chatters

10.30am-12.30pm

TUESDAY

Allotment in Helmshore

Volunteers are being sought to help Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth with the allotment on Holcombe Road, Helmshore. Contact 01706 833180.

WEDNESDAY

Community Arts and Crafts

10am-noon

Art Class

2pm-4pm

Jubilee Court, Jubilee Road, Haslingden, BB4 4DD.

THURSDAY

Singing Group (weekly)

6.30-8.30pm

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

Art Group and drop-in

10.30am-3.30pm

SECOND SATURDAY

Veterans' Breakfast Club

10am-12-30pm

Bumbles' Cafe, Haslingden Community Link, Bury Road, Haslingden BB4 5PG

Walking Group, Social Outings and Outdoor Activities

These are held every **THURSDAY**. Please visit the *Events* section on our VIC Facebook page or log on to the VIC website and follow the link to *Projects and Activities*. Places must be booked.

Positive Art

Our art shop is now based at the VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL, contact 01706 833180 for details.

HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

The Sandbag Cafe and drop in

TUESDAY

10am-noon

Sandon House, Taylor Street, Heywood OL10 4EF.

TUESDAY AND SOME FRIDAYS

FROM MAY 11am-3pm

Allotment, Lattrigg Crescent, Langley, Middleton M24 4LU.

Check with VIC 01706 833180

THURSDAY

9.30-10.30am Rochdale Breakfast Club, Rochdale Town Hall Bistro OL16 1AB.

10.30am-noon

VIC Outreach

1 Riverside, Rochdale OL16 1UB.

THURSDAY

11.30am-1.30pm

Lighthouse Project, Unit S6b/c Middleton Shopping Centre, Limetrees Road, Middleton M24 4EL.

Check with VIC 01706 833180

HYNDBURN

Outreach Service

MONDAYS

1-3pm

Ground floor near cafe Accrington Market.

VIC – 01706 833180 Contacts

Chief Executive Liz Hamilton

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07961 554 006

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Volunteer Outreach Worker Carole Mills

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Volunteer Outreach Worker Liz Davies

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Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick

ivylimbrick@vic.org.uk

Singing Group Bookings Barry Hyde

barryhyde@vic.org.uk

Combat Stress Helpline

0800 138 1619

NHS Military Veterans Psychological Therapies Service (NW)

0161 253 6638

The Royal British Legion

0808 802 8080 7 days a week 8am - 8pm

SSAFA

email Lancashire@ssafo.org.uk

01772 260 462

Rossendale Citizens' Advice

0300 456 2552 Mon to Fri 10am-4pm

The Samaritans

01706 830999 Freephone 116 123

Mental Health Helpline

0800 915 4640 Mon to Fri 7pm - 11pm Sat & Sun 12 noon to 12 midnight

Royal Air Forces Association

01772 426930

Veterans UK Free Helpline

0808 1914 218

East Lancashire Single Point of Access via GP or self-referral

01282 657116

Bolton Armed Forces Centre 4 Veterans

www.ba4v.org 01204 776628

PENDLE

Outreach Service

10am-noon

MONDAY - first week only

Place de Creil, near Wilkos, Nelson.

MONDAY - second week only

Market Place Car park, Town Square Colne.

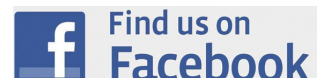
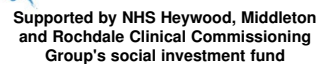
Contact 01706 833180 for dates of outreach at the Armed Forces Support Group, Holmefield Mill, Gisburn Road, Barrowford.

Want to help?

To donate to support the work of Veterans In Communities please visit our website and click on the secure BT MyDonate page

www.vic.org.uk

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