



VETERANS
ORTHOPAEDIC
SERVICE



The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt
Orthopaedic Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust



REMEMBRANCE DAY P.7

The Veterans Orthopaedic Service at RJAHH held its annual Act of Remembrance Service

ISSUE 7 CHIRON VETERANS' ORTHOPAEDIC NEWSLETTER



MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER P.2

I'm delighted to announce the appointment of Mr Kevin Syam and Mr George Ofanos as fellow Veteran consultants

D-DAY VET MARKS 106TH BIRTHDAY P.4

The Veterans' Orthopaedic Service at RJAHH proudly celebrated the 106th birthday of D-Day veteran Colin Cole



VETERAN SKYDIVES FOR 75TH BDAY P.4

Malcolm celebrated his 75th birthday by completing a 14,000ft tandem skydive

VETERAN MARTIAL ARTS AT RJAHH P.3

Mr Shko Resool, Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery Registrar, has developed the 'Fighting Fit' classes

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

It's been another eventful six months for VOS. I am delighted to announce the appointment of Mr Kevin Syam and Mr George Ofanos as fellow Veteran consultants. They are both highly skilled surgeons, committed to providing Veterans' orthopaedic care. They are exceptional additions to the Veterans team and will make a significant improvement to our waiting times.



The Veterans Rehabilitation Pilot Project starts early next year. Those of you who have had knee replacements know how hard the recovery is. This project provides patients with support pre and post operatively with the aim of helping patients optimise their outcomes.

We now have a Facebook page (Facebook). The NHS is under huge strain with healthcare services competing for fewer and fewer resources. It is essential we remain in the public consciousness and remind the nation of the importance of Veterans Healthcare. As the page develops useful clinical and managerial information will be added. I would be grateful for the support of all Veterans in making this a success.

Finally, I wish to mention our British Military Martial Arts classes. These

were introduced by Mr Shko Resool, orthopaedic registrar and accomplished martial artist. The classes have helped with team morale, improving fitness and letting off steam. A healthy body and mind contributes to better healthcare. Our instructor is Elijah Everill, a multiple kickboxing world champion from Shropshire. I hope all Veterans will join me in supporting him.

Finally, can I wish all patients, veterans and colleagues a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



MESSAGE FROM DAWN FORREST

MANAGING DIRECTOR – SPECIALIST UNIT

As the year draws to a close, we're taking a moment to look back on what has been a truly memorable few months for the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service. From commemorations to celebrations, there has been plenty to reflect on and even more to be proud of.

We were honoured to mark VJ Day and Remembrance Day alongside veterans, serving personnel, patients, staff and visitors – moments that remind us of the importance of the service we provide and the community that surrounds it.

Our fundraising supporters have once again gone above and beyond, with Lt Col Carl Meyer and his daughter tackling the York Marathon and Malcolm bravely taking to the skies for a charity skydive.

And in one of our most heart-warming stories, we joined in the birthday celebrations of an inspirational 106-year-old veteran, whose remarkable life embodies the spirit of service and resilience that inspires us all.



VETERAN VOLUNTEERS AT HEART OF VJ DAY SERVICE

A special service took place on Tuesday 2 September at 10:45am in the Headley Court Veterans' Orthopaedic Centre to mark and celebrate the 80th anniversary of VJ Day (Victory over Japan Day).

The service was held outdoors, where staff gathered to pay tribute and remember this important occasion. Jenny Upshaw, a current volunteer, delivered a moving personal reflection depicting the time her father spent as a prisoner of war during this time.

Following the service, light refreshments were shared, offering the chance to come together and reflect.

This year marked the 80th anniversary of Victory over Japan Day, when Imperial Japan officially offered its surrender on 2 September 1945 - signalling the beginning of the end of World War II.



02.09.45

SURGEON BRINGS VETERAN MARTIAL ARTS TO RJA

A new wellbeing initiative supported by RJA Charity is helping staff at RJA stay healthy, connected and "Fighting Fit."

Developed by Mr Shko Resool, Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery Registrar, the 'Fighting Fit' classes are weekly martial arts sessions designed to boost both physical and mental wellbeing.

Shko said: "I've been doing martial arts since childhood and know first-hand the physical and mental health benefits it brings – with my interest in improving staff wellbeing at RJA, I wanted to bring those benefits to my colleagues."

The sessions are led by Elijah Everill, the world's most decorated kickboxing champion of his generation, who teaches locally for British Military Martial Arts (BMMA) – a veteran-run organisation.

Held in the Physiotherapy Gym and subsidised for staff, the classes have already proved popular, encouraging colleagues from across departments to get active together.

Supported by the Veterans' Orthopaedic Centre and RJA Charity, this initiative not only promotes staff wellbeing but also strengthens RJA's ties with veteran-run organisations, reflecting the hospital's commitment to the veteran community.



D-DAY VETERAN CELEBRATES 106TH BIRTHDAY AT RJAH

The Veterans' Orthopaedic Service at RJAH proudly celebrated the 106th birthday of D-Day veteran Colin Cole from Oswestry on 6 June.



The event took place at the Headley Court Veterans' Orthopaedic Centre and featured music, cake, and shared memories with friends old and new.

Colin served five years in the RAF sea rescue, taking part in Dunkirk, D-Day and VE Day, despite never learning to swim. After the war, he became a teacher, helping children with learning difficulties to read, and remains a long-standing member of the local British Legion.

Asked about the secret to his long life, Colin credited his "misspent youth."

Lt Col Carl Meyer, Clinical Lead, said: "It was an honour to celebrate such an incredible man and his remarkable life of service."

It runs in the family!

Congratulations to Lt Col Carl Meyer and his daughter Lottie for completing the Altra Yorkshire Marathon in October. Together they raised over £1,300 to support the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service at RJAH.



VETERAN SKYDIVES FOR 75TH

On Friday 11 July, Malcolm Moran celebrated his 75th birthday in spectacular fashion – by completing a 14,000ft tandem skydive to raise money for the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service at RJAH.

A former army vehicle mechanic, Malcolm has had multiple joint replacements and underwent a leg amputation at RJAH in 2024. Just over a year later, he took to the skies, inspired by his father's service as a WW2 paratrooper.

"The whole experience was absolutely fabulous," said Malcolm, who made the leap on a scorching summer day at Langar Skydiving Centre.

Malcolm's jump has raised an incredible £1,500 for the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service, with all proceeds supporting the care of fellow veterans.



JOHN SEAN PAUL HAINES

We caught up with Paul Haines about serving in the Royal Navy as a Commander, and why he enjoys working in the Veterans' Hub so much.

Why did you join the Royal Navy?

I was 16 years of age, and I was keen to get into engineering. I was raised in Coventry which couldn't be more landlocked, but I wanted to see the world. So, when the Navy offered a 4-year apprenticeship, I saw it as an amazing opportunity to fulfil my ambitions, and I signed up.

I joined the Navy at HMS Fisgard (which closed in 1983) ending my training in Portsmouth. The apprenticeship created so many opportunities, and I quickly became a Chief Petty Officer at 23. My second ship was HMS Liverpool, where I sailed through the Mediterranean, Caribbean, and the Falkland's.

How long did you stay in the Navy?

Only 46 years! I became a Weapon Engineer by trade and because I became a non-commissioned officer quite quickly, I wanted a new challenge, so I took a commission to become an Engineer Officer which created new career paths. Throughout my time serving in the Navy, I undertook many roles including looking after the Navy's public relations, helped sell ships to Asia and the Thai Navy and looked after all MOD's cadet forces.

So why did you leave the Navy?

Age and feeling that my time in the Navy was done, I moved to Wales because I love the outdoors. Living in North Wales, I came to the Robert Jones, Agnes Hunt hospital as a patient and after an appointment I stumbled across the Veterans Centre. I started talking to fellow volunteer Jim and decided I really wanted to give something back to the Trust and fellow Veterans.

How would you describe the Hub?

Friendly and safe. Everyone, not just ex-military personnel receive a warm welcome here and we speak their language. The Military is one big family. And the coffee is good too.

And why do you enjoy it so much?

If I can help people that's terrific. I feel very blessed and honoured that I can help people and bring a smile to a fellow veteran's face. It's very humbling being here. So, if I can make a difference in anyway, that means a lot to me; from holding the door open for someone, chatting to veterans on the Wards and signposting Veterans to various support services. Volunteering is very rewarding, I don't think people realise how rewarding it is.

SQN LDR DAVID CAIN

REGISTRAR

S

qn Ldr David Cain is a registrar working within the Trauma & Orthopaedics training programme at RJA, collaborating closely with Lt Col Carl Meyer and Mr Tony Smith. As an ST5 out of eight, he is roughly halfway through his training. His role is split between clinics, theatres, and ward work. David runs pre-operative clinics for consultants, oversees the veterans' new patient clinic on Thursdays and performs hip and knee surgeries in theatre.

David began his placement at RJA in August and will continue until the following August, with plans to return to Stoke before potentially coming back to RJA. His training journey has spanned Leicester, Birmingham and Shrewsbury – including time as a General Duties Medical Officer working with RAF units during the COVID pandemic.

David said: *"Working with veterans and serving personnel is the most rewarding part of my role. Military doctors sometimes lose that sense of belonging in civilian hospitals, but here you get that identity back. Veterans often say it feels different being treated by someone who understands the military system."*

He is also contributing to upcoming projects, including supporting Lt Col Meyer in overseeing the orthopaedic element of a residential physiotherapy programme for patients five weeks post-total knee replacement. This one-week residential stay is designed to optimise recovery and improve functional outcomes.

Reflecting on his journey into medicine, David shared: *"I didn't always plan to be a doctor. I grew up in a military family, left school at 16, and briefly joined the Navy before becoming a personal trainer. Eventually, I discovered medicine and pursued an Access to Medicine course, which set me on this path."*

Despite his serious career focus, David has a surprising creative side – he once auditioned for Britain's Got Talent and appeared on the BBC kids' TV show Young Dracula.

David's approach to work is grounded in dedication and practicality. He values the efficiency of RJA, the opportunity to learn from leading surgeons and the chance to make a real difference to veterans' care.



ACT OF REMEMBRANCE SERVICE AT RJA 11.11.25

The Veterans Orthopaedic Service at RJAH held its annual Act of Remembrance Service.

The service brought together staff, patients, and visitors from across the hospital, taking time to pause, reflect and remember those who have served. The setting outside the Veterans Orthopaedic Centre provided a fitting backdrop for this occasion, as attendees gathered in quiet respect.

Hospital Chaplain Simon Airey led the service with a prayer, followed by readings given by Non-Executive Directors Lindsay Webb and Enhanced Recovery Team Lead Rebecca Warren.

Before observing the two minutes' silence, those gathered listened to a performance of 'The Last Post', played by a local bugler. Following the silence, wreaths were laid by Veterans' Volunteers Jim George for the RAF, Steven Milgate for the Army, Susan Heer-Bedford for the Navy and both Julie McCabe and Brian Kilty for the Headley Court Veterans.

After the service, attendees were invited indoors to share warm soup and bread rolls, kindly provided by the hospital's catering team – offering a moment for companionship, reflection and shared stories.

Adding a special touch to the occasion, a beautiful arrangement of poppies had been carefully displayed around the Centre and adorning the plaque outside, adding a poignant visual tribute. Organised by Veterans Volunteers, the display featured hundreds of hand knitted poppies that had been lovingly created and sent in, with some travelling from as far as Denmark.

Through events such as this, we reaffirm our ongoing commitment to supporting veterans and the Armed Forces community, ensuring that their service and sacrifice are never forgotten.



Veterans' Plaques



Visitors to the Veterans Hub at Headley Court, enjoy browsing through the many military plaques that are on display in our Veterans Hub. The plaques have been donated by Veterans from all over the UK and each has a history and fascinating story to tell.

This Royal Navy plaque has been donated by Mr Case and can be seen on our Plaque wall. HMS Fisgard was the Royal Navy's training establishment, founded in the 1840's.

Located in Torpoint Cornwall, it was a base for the Navy's apprentices called Artificers, including our Veteran Volunteer Paul Haines, featured in this publication.

Sadly HMS Fisgard closed in 1983, with much of the base transferred to HMS Raleigh, which is located on the other side of the main road.

The plaque is a reminder of all the Naval personnel who started their careers at HMS Fisgard.



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.

T

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



Follow us on X (formerly twitter) @vosrjah

