



ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

March
2026



The Duke of Lancaster's Regimental Association, Fleetwood Branch, recently held its Annual General Meeting on the third Sunday of March 2026.

As part of a long standing and valued tradition, members of the Association took the opportunity to recognise and honour local cadets with awards. These cadets were commended for their outstanding progress, commitment, and active participation within the Cadet Force. Their achievements stand as a testament not only to their own dedication, but also to the exceptional support and guidance provided by their instructors.

The Association President expressed great pride in the cadets' accomplishments and extended sincere appreciation to all members for continuing this important tradition. The recognition of young people within the cadet community remains a cornerstone of the Association's ongoing commitment to fostering development, discipline, and service.





Despite relentless Cumbrian rain, veteran, Paul Unsworth took part in The Great Tommy Sleep Out 2026 and stayed as dry as he could, though he was soaked through by morning. From his own words: it was absolutely worth it.

Between the two Cavendish Nuclear teams, over £2,000 was raised to support homeless veterans. Paul continues to express his heartfelt appreciation for every donation and message of support.

Well done, Paul, an incredible effort for a truly important cause..

The Great Tommy Sleep Out 2026



Honour, Resilience, and Brotherhood

At Memorial Park in Fleetwood, Police Veteran Iain Johnstone, Howard, Christine Parry, and Ian Tomlinson took part in The Great Tommy Sleep Out 2026. All are proud members of the The Royal British Legion, Fleetwood Branch, and bravely endured two cold nights to raise funds in support of veterans.

Throughout the event, they were met with kindness and encouragement from visitors and passersby, who stopped to donate and thank them for their efforts. Officers from Lancashire Police also paid a visit to check on their safety and show their support. Together, they raised over £600, an incredible achievement and a testament to their dedication and community spirit.



Howard gave his time to support veterans, braving the cold as he settled into his sleeping bag and remained committed to this worthy cause. The first night was especially cold, but with extra layers kindly provided by his colleagues, he managed to stay warm through the second night. Despite illness and difficult conditions, he along with the others showed true determination and dedication, committing themselves to raise funds for homeless veterans and those in need.



FLEETWOOD

★ GRAND ★

VETERANS CHARITY NIGHT

AT THE CONS CLUB

ALL IN AID OF THE VET SHED

10TH APRIL 7.45PM

★ STARRING! ★

FLEETWOOD'S TOP FEMALE VOCALIST
Donna G

★ STARRING! ★
MARK "BOMBER"
+ OUTRAGEOUS KARAOKE SHOW

★ FUN QUIZ ★
★ BINGO + RAFFLES

Also looking for Raffle Prizes & Donations

PLEASE CONTACT GARY SMITH ON
07964 666330

THANK YOU, FLEETWOOD!

VET'S SHED

ALL WELCOME

Everyone is welcome to this fantastic event, raising funds for a local veterans group. It promises to be an amazing evening filled with fun and plenty of entertainment for all to enjoy.

Please share this event and invite your friends and family along. Together, we can make a real difference by supporting a great cause that helps veterans in our local community.



THE ROYAL



BRITISH LEGION

FLEETWOOD BRANCH

SOCIAL & FUNDRAISING NIGHT

Thank you Fleetwood Town Council for accepting our Grant Aid Application to go towards Fleetwood RBL Standard.



THE TIA'S CROWN MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS AWARDS HIGHLIGHT THE AMAZING WORK BEING DONE FOR MENTAL WELLNESS ACROSS OUR COMMUNITY.

VETERAN NOMINEE'S



Paul Binns



Eddie Peek



Jimilai Kuruvakadua



The Mental Health Veteran's Champion is a special recognition presented by Tia's Crown. This award is given to a veteran who dedicates their time to supporting others and contributes significantly to the wellbeing of the Armed Forces community.

This year's deserving winner is Paul Binns, in recognition of the incredible work he carries out at the Fylde Coast Arboretum and Memorial Grounds. His commitment and dedication to helping others truly make a difference. A huge congratulations to him and his team for the outstanding effort they continue to put into supporting the veteran community.

MEN'S SHED FLEETWOOD

85 Manor Rd, Fleetwood, FY7 7HY



Dave and his team demonstrate outstanding dedication in supporting others, consistently delivering a vital service despite operating with limited funding. Their commitment is evident in the daily activities and structured support they provide, all designed to create positive opportunities and long-term foundations for those they serve.

Their work particularly empowers men to embrace inclusivity, develop a strong sense of identity, and build effective coping strategies. This approach not only supports immediate wellbeing but also fosters lasting personal growth.

The impact of their efforts is profound and far-reaching. Dave and his team are truly deserving of recognition for the difference they make in people's lives.



What's on @ Mens Shed



Men's Shed is a community-based, non-commercial organisation that is open to men. Men's Sheds provide a place where men can feel included and safe. The aim of Men's Sheds is to improve the health and wellbeing of their members.

<p>MONDAY 11-00am - 1.00pm Help, Advice and Support Help completing forms, benefit help and housing issues</p>	<p>TUESDAY 5.00pm - 8.00pm Social Night Join us for a Brew, Banter and Food (when available)</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY 10.00am - 12.00pm Veterans Breakfast at St. Davids Church Hall Larkhome Lane</p>
<p>THURSDAY 12-00pm - 2.00pm Friendly Lunch Group Mixed Group All Welcome</p>	<p>THURSDAY 5.00pm - 8.00pm Social Night Join us for a Brew, Chat, Games and Food</p>	<p>FRIDAY 5.30pm - 8.00pm Music Group</p>
<p>SATURDAY 5.30pm - 8.00pm Sober Saturday Mixed Group help & Advice</p>	<p>SUNDAY 10.00am - 12.00pm Breakfast Club Join us for a Brew, Chat and Cereals</p>	<p>Tuesday and Thursday evenings are MEN ONLY GROUPS</p>

HELP AND SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES, SPEAK TO THE EVENT HOST

VISIT US 85 Manor Road, Fleetwood, FY7 7HY
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Email: mensshedfleetwood@gmail.com
www.mensshedfleetwood.org.uk

FIND US on and
@MensshedFw



Kerryanne

**Kerryanne Wilde MBA MIOd MIOl –
Defence Relationship Manager for
Cumbria & Lancashire**

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you, as the Ministry of Defence’s representative for the Armed Forces Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme in Cumbria and Lancashire. It is my role to engage with businesses/organisations in the Private, Public and Third Sectors across both counties.

Please see information on my role and some further information on the AFC and DERS”.

Defence Relationship Managers: The Essential Link
Defence Relationship Managers (DRMs) serve as the crucial bridge between the UK’s Armed Forces and the broader civilian world. Representing the Ministry of Defence’s Defence Relationship Management division, these professionals connect military personnel, veterans, and their families with local employers, councils, and communities. Through advocacy, advice, and support, DRMs champion national initiatives such as the Armed Forces Covenant and the Employer Recognition Scheme, helping to build mutual understanding and practical partnerships.

By raising awareness, organising events, and guiding employers on Defence-friendly practices, DRMs ensure that the value of supporting the Armed Forces community is recognised and embraced throughout society. Their work not only upholds the principles of fairness and respect, but also delivers real benefits for employers, service members, and the wider economy strengthening the ties that keep the nation resilient and united.

Building Bridges Between Defence, Employers, and Communities

The Armed Forces Covenant - AFC

Since June 2013, thousands of companies have publicly pledged their support to the armed forces community by signing the Armed Forces Covenant. By signing the Armed Forces Covenant, organisations pledge to honour 2 main principles:

- no member of the armed forces community should face disadvantage at work or in the community compared to other citizens
- in some circumstances special consideration is appropriate for those who have given most, such as the injured or bereaved

Find out which employers in your region or industry have pledged their support to the armed forces community on the Armed Forces Covenant signed pledges page.



Sign the Armed Forces Covenant and make your pledge - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Once you have signed the Armed Forces Covenant, please email a copy of the document, company website, company registration number and company head office address to afcovenant@rfca.mod.uk

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme - DERS

Organisations who take positive action to make their workplace more reservist friendly and support the wider Defence People requirements may be eligible for Defence Employer Recognition Scheme - GOV.UK awards.

These awards are a public recognition by the MOD of an employer’s efforts to pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to the armed forces community. If you are a reservist you can thank your supportive employer with public recognition, nominate them for an ERS award.

Bronze award

Bronze award holders:

- are self-nominated by employers who pledge to support the armed forces, including existing or prospective employees who are members of the community
- must have signed the Armed Forces Covenant
- promote being armed forces-friendly and are open to employing reservists, armed forces veterans (including the wounded, injured and sick), cadet instructors and military spouses/partners
- receive an electronic certificate and logos to display on their website, stationery and other collateral
https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ERS_Bronze/

Should you require any further support, advice or Guidance, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Email: NW-Lan-Reed@rfca.mod.uk

Mobile: 07525-184422



HMS Dasher Remembrance Weekend: Remembering Those Who Served



Tony Mac

A wonderful day in Scotland on the 29th March 26, with the weather clearing just in time for the parade and service. What made the occasion even more special was the attendance of Anne, Princess Royal and her husband, Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence.

Her Royal Highness took the salute, attended the service, and laid a wreath on behalf of King Charles III. Following this, Princess Anne presented medals to the families, creating a truly memorable and meaningful moment.

Before departing, Princess Anne was presented with a posy by a lovely young lady named Chloe, who looked splendid in her spring dress.

Wreaths were laid by Dasher family members and other dignitaries in attendance. Fleetwood was represented by Merchant Navy veteran Tony Mac, who laid a wreath, and Fleetwood RBL was also recognised.

Cadet forces were present, alongside large numbers of the public, all coming together to pay their respects.

Thank you Tony.



Gregg Norton & Sarah Taylor



The Cutting Disc and the Wind

Not so long back, while walking along the beach, I saw something glistening in the morning sun, an old cutting disc lying in the sand...Rusted....Worn... Completely out of place.... So naturally I did what any curious adult pretending not to still be a child would do. I gave it a kick and what happened next caught me off guard and really made me stand and think The wind caught it - Not lifted it into the air - but caught its edge just enough to send it rolling down the sand for ages It wasn't graceful...It wobbled violently from left to right, threatening to topple over at any second.... Several times it nearly did...But just as it looked like it was about to fall over another gust of wind met it - and pushed it forward again.... Left....Right...Almost down.... Big wind PushI just stood there watching this rusty disc battle the elements and I realised I wasn't really watching a piece of scrap metalI was watching us - people ... Life rarely rolls in a straight line....We wobble...We lose balance....We veer off course... and some days we feel one small setback away from collapsing altogether.... what struck me then was....The disc only kept moving because of the wind...Without it, it would have fallen and stayed exactly where it landed - no momentum...no direction....no progress - The wind in that moment became a powerful analogy for something we often underestimate - our support network... The people behind us....The ones who check in...The ones who encourage....The ones who steady us when we lean too far one way... The ones who give us a push when our energy dips.... We like to think resilience is a solo act and that strength means standing firm without help....But watching that disc roll down the beach reminded me of something simple and important... Even the strongest forward motion often comes from something - or someone - behind you....It doesn't matter if you wobble...It doesn't matter if your path isn't perfectly straight....It doesn't even matter if you nearly fall...With the right people in your corner - the right "wind" at your back - you keep rolling.... When it did fall I picked the disc up and filmed it And made a short motivational clip because it felt like a snapshot of how progress really works... Not smooth....Not controlled...Not flawless....Just supported... So maybe the lesson from a rusty cutting disc on a windy beach is this - Choose your wind wisely...Because with the right support behind you - you'll go further than you ever could alone.... Smiling is healing baby.



Armed Forces Champion's Volunteer of the Month



John Bradshaw

Our Veteran Volunteer of the Month for March 2026 is former Queen's Lancashire Regiment, RSM (Retd), Mr John Bradshaw.

Working tirelessly behind the scenes, John is dedicated to supporting veterans and their families. Whether he is organising trips for parades or sourcing discounted items from car boot sales to support the veterans' garden, he is always finding ways to give back. His commitment to reaching out and helping others never goes unnoticed.

John also serves as our local representative for The Not Forgotten, an organisation that transforms the lives of veterans and serving military personnel living with injury, illness, or isolation. By bringing people together, it lifts spirits and helps restore dignity and confidence.

Through a varied, year-round programme of social events, day outings, respite and challenge breaks across the UK and abroad, as well as prestigious royal events at Buckingham Palace and St James's Palace, these initiatives improve physical and mental wellbeing, reduce isolation and loneliness, and rebuild the camaraderie and peer support that many veterans deeply miss.

This vital work enables beneficiaries and their families to live happier, more sociable, and more confident lives.

Congratulations and thank you, John, for your outstanding dedication and service.



THE NOT FORGOTTEN