Signal

Autumn 2016

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This issue of Signal has been kindly sponsored by MANICMANC PHOTOGRAPHY

Welcome to the second edition of Signal

Tameside Armed Services Community (TASC) were delighted by how well the first edition was received and we hope you enjoy this one just as much.

Tameside Armed Services Community is the voice and representative organisation assisting the Council with the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Two key areas where TASC continue to make progress are health, business and work opportunities.

There has been some excellent work at Tameside Hospital, making people aware of the services on offer. This has been particularly useful for the over-55s.

All the work placements made available through Tameside Council have been filled, and we are promoting free or reduced-price travel for those starting work. A lot of time has been spent ensuring this news reaches ex-service personnel who are making the transition to Civvy Street or who have been unemployed.

TASC recognises that the business community plays an important part in Tameside's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, so we are pleased to welcome onboard Phill Brown of Benchmark Building Supplies and thank him for his support.

Over the Summer of 2016 we have been heavily involved in our 2016 Covenant funded project 'Reach for the Stars' you can read more about this on Pages six and seven.

TASC is all about you – its members – and Signal is no different. If you have any stories, news or pictures you would like us to include, please get in touch: 0161 342 4144 / **www.tamesideasc.org.uk**

Enjoy the read.

Setting The Benchmark

Benchmark Building Supplies, the Audenshaw based supplier to the building industry are known for their partnerships with Tameside Council, Tameside College and supporting local causes.

Now they are championing a new cause and are proud of it. Phill Brown MBE, the Managing Director has led the company to its position as a leading Tameside business.

Phill is a massive supporter of the drive for new business opportunities, for not only his company, but for the economy of Tameside in his role as President of the Tameside Chamber of Commerce, and Chairman of the Tameside Prosperous Board. It's a role he's passionate about.

But now Phill is backing TASC in the drive for a fair deal for ex-servicemen and women.

"I want to help the team at TASC make the most of the opportunities for people who have served their country" says Phill. "We have employed ex-servicemen here at Benchmark and they bring skill and commitment to the job".

"But it's not only about jobs and business, it's about the business community here in Tameside getting behind this and signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant. By adopting the principles of the Covenant in the first place we demonstrate that support and then the practical application is also good for business, good for jobs and good for the Tameside community".

"Count me in, count Benchmark in".

Honour Our Fallen

We will name new streets constructed in Tameside after local service men and women who lost their lives in service.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough

TAMESIDE PLEDGE 2016

Flying High

Tameside Armed Services Community were guests of the RAF on Thursday 29 September when they visited the home of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

We were given the guided tour of the hangar, which contained a Dakota, Lancaster bomber, Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft.

Veterans talked to the Wing Commander, whose grandfather had flown on a mission over Holland with Jeff Brown, one of the veterans that was with us.

It was a magnificent day and the fact that some of the veterans who came with us, flew in the Lancaster made the trip even more special for us. The RAF were fascinated by the stories the veterans told, and in fact took a very personal interest in what they had to say. The fact that we got up and personal to the flying machines that saved the war made our trip very poignant and a privilege.

We would like to thank Flight Officer Ali Thomson for helping to organise the trip and ensuring our veterans had the most memorable day. The day was complete when a Typhoon fighter did a fly-past above us as we left.

Sunderland Air Show

During the Summer, a party of Tameside Armed Services Veterans travelled to Sunderland for the annual air show with a troop of local Scouts, and the two widely different generations got on extremely well.

On arrival in Sunderland we settled on to grassy terraces with a grandstand view out over the bay, eating our packed lunch waiting for the show to begin.

The assault ship, HMS Bulwark, recently returned from operations policing migrant movements in the Med, was anchored out at sea and an amphibious beach assault was launched.

The Air Show then continued with a great variety of aircraft displaying over the bay. Among these were a Soviet Mig fighter, a Fairey Swordfish, complete with torpedo, a gyrocopter, a Kittyhawk in company with a Mustang, a pair of Vampire jets, and a pair of Red Bull Matadors.

Displays of parachute operations by the RAF Falcons display team were carried out and some free fall drops were made.

The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight was restricted to the Spitfire and the Hurricane as the Lancaster had been grounded by a fault on take-off. Although the reasons were acknowledged, it was still a disappointment that we didn't get to see this venerable old aircraft.

Perhaps the highlight of the day was the display by the RAF Red Arrows team of nine T1 Hawks. Their many changes of formation were carried out at high speed with precision timing. The close formation of the aircraft while carrying out intricate manoeuvres including loops, rolls, head on approaches, and bomb bursts was astonishing. This is a must at any Air Show.

The finale was the appearance of an RAF Typhoon FGR4. The sheer power of this aircraft and its astonishing manoeuvrability, pulling up to 9G, is almost unbelievable.

A very successful day enjoyed by everyone.

Somme 100 Concert in Heaton Park

Tameside Armed Services Community organised a trip to this fabulous concert taking 24 veterans and local Scouts to the event.

Two mini-buses, which were kindly given to us for the evening by Active Tameside, left the TA Centre at 5.30pm, arriving in good time to enable all to get settled in to their positions before the concert started and giving everyone the opportunity to visit the Field of Experience.

The concert started at 7.30pm and featured soldier's songs from the time, performed by a national children's choir and interwoven with archive film. A breath-taking dance piece then followed and a stunning performance by the Hallé Orchestra, who played several well-known pieces linked to the First World War, including a piece by George Butterworth, a young English composer who died at the Somme.

The concert also featured a range of letters, poems and diary entries depicting the lives of those affected by the Somme, including a specially commissioned poem read by author and broadcaster Lemn Sissay.

Although the weather could have been more kind, it didn't spoil the veterans evening, and although it was a very sombre occasion, considering that 19,420 men were killed on this day 100 years ago, it was an experience that we will always remember.

The Remembrance path made up of ceramic tiles was laid at the front of the stage. 1,500 Of these were hand-made by communities and veterans, three of which were made by Tameside Armed Service Community veterans and were on show.

Arnold Ellershaw
Disctrict Scout Commissioner

Ex servicemen help shape health care

A session was arranged with more than a dozen ex servicemen and women at the Volunteer Centre in Ashton. Their perspective reflects everyday concerns but some very service specific problems.

'Care Together' is the program that aims to integrate Health and Social Care services in Tameside and Glossop. Action Together, previously known as CVAT, undertook some consultation and engagement with local people through Voluntary and Community groups to feed in to this program.

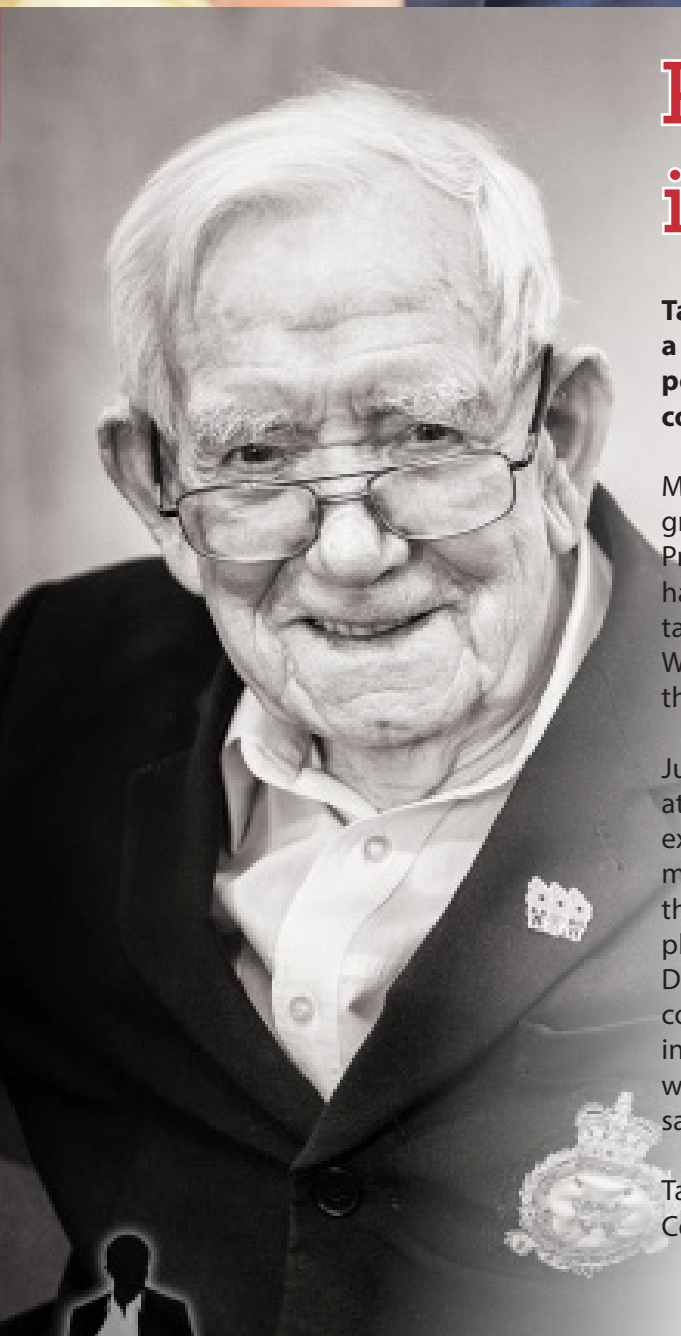
They are finding out more on how people manage their health and wellbeing, adopt healthy lifestyles and/or manage a long term limiting medical condition and what people think about the proposed new 'integrated health and social care delivery model' or 'place based model'.

The feedback will be used to shape the new Integrated Neighbourhood models in Tameside and Glossop which will enable self-care, prevent the need for emergency hospital admission and delay the need for care homes.

Tameside Veterans in Schools

"Veterans in Schools" is a programme developed by Tameside Council's cultural services team and the Royal British Legion to allow veterans to share their experiences with pupils of all ages.

There are a range of services that Tameside Council's Cultural Services offer including their highly acclaimed Arts Award logs and museum loan boxes. For further information and to arrange a visit contact Tameside Cultural Services: 0161 342 4144 or e-mail covenant@tameside.gov.uk



Putting Veterans in the Picture

Tameside is in the front line of a photography project that is poised to advance across the country.

Members of the North West group of the British Institute of Professional Photography (BIPP) have started an operation to take pictures of Second World War veterans and have begun their campaign in Tameside.

Jude Gidney, who has a studio at Woodend Mill, Mossley, explained: "One of our meetings was addressed by the internationally renowned photographer Martin Grahame-Dunn. He mentioned he had come across a similar project in Australia and suggested it would be a good idea to do the same in Britain."

Tameside Armed Services Community (TASC) was keen to get involved and set up a test photographic session at Tameside Central Library, Ashton. It was attended by veterans Derek Fisher (Royal Signals), Fred Lowther (RAF Regiment) and Jack Millin (RAF), and photographers Chris Wright and Allen Thomasson as well as Jude Gidney

This is a chance to capture our history and ensure that for future generations this will be a record of the brave men and women of our Armed Forces. It is envisaged that the completed project will be put on display for the general publicand a book will be published with all the photographs taken.

For further information email covenant@tamesideasc.org.uk

Reach for the Stars

Manchester Day took off with a bang this year. There were around 100,000 people in the city centre to watch a parade in which Tameside featured prominently.

The annual event, held in June, had a Eureka! theme to tie in with Manchester being the European City of Science, celebrated Manchester's scientific firsts.

Tameside Cultural Services' deputation of armed services veterans, Scouts and Guides, carried a huge spaceman they designed and built under the banner "Reach for the Stars". And what better day to show it off to the crowds lining the streets than the one on which Britain's real-life spaceman, Major Tim Peake, returned to earth from the International Space Station?

Official mascot Elbot led the procession, which snaked its way from Liverpool Street to Exchange Square.

Tameside's element - including the newly established Tameside Armed Services Community (TASC) group - received a £17,000 grant from the Ministry of Defence's covenant fund which demonstrates the Government's commitment to backing schemes under the Armed Forces Covenant.

The fund supports integration projects which involve civilian and military communities working together to increase the understanding between them. Bringing groups together to design, build and take part in the parade fulfilled its brief to integrate and foster community cohesion.

Covenant Priority

We have considerably improved our communications with the ex-services community and the public in general around the Armed Forces Covenant. This is now drawing more interest to the TASC website and the publication, "Signal". It is a recognisable and increasingly well known organisation which is covering more areas of interest and reporting more stories and issues across the services community.

It is our central aim that we continue to respond to local need in the armed services community and continue to improve public recognition of the Covenant. Funding will be oriented towards projects where we can make the most difference and which can be demonstrated. It will also be used to devise, develop and promote more Community Integration Projects which must create strong local links.

Covenant projects under discussion include more involvement of community groups and organisations who are delivering services in the "third sector". We are working with families; associations; schools; businesses; public service providers; researchers both of military history and of the needs of the community and improving links to service charities.

Projects which have been a great success in bringing people together, is the "Reach for the Stars" initiative featured here, where veterans worked with young people to devise and construct items for a major parade and the "Fun Palaces" where an ex serviceman delivered an array of educational items assisted by other veterans and young people.

Tameside MBC as the local custodian of the covenant is working with and supporting the TASC group of volunteers to expand its activities to further increase these rewarding projects. Working together means that all can have an input, share values, new experiences and have great outcomes for all.

A mixture of very serious and practical to the more fun and educational. The future of the Covenant in the community is well on track here.

A Powerful Tribute

TAMESIDE certainly flew the flag to honour service personnel past and present during its Armed Forces Day celebrations in June

From poignant poetry to rousing music, the event – held at Victoria Park in Denton – was a fitting a tribute to those who have risked or given their lives for their country.

Despite the mixed weather, crowds came along to join in proceedings, which included a short service of remembrance at the war memorial led by Father Alec Mitchell from St Anne's Church, Denton and accompanied by Denton Brass Band.

One of the most moving points of the day was when local poets George Watkins (a 99-year-old veteran), Paul Broadhurst and Albert Taylor read out their powerful and thought-provoking poems about service and the first and second world wars.

Afterwards, there was live music from Dave Egerton Band and singer Jo Lancaster while Tameside Harmonies, Tameside Music Service's youth choir, and Do Your Thing choirs also put in fantastic performances.

There was also a huge range of free family-friendly activities, including a climbing wall, archery, face-painting and balloon modelling, as well as a wide range of arts and crafts.

The day, organised by Tameside Council Cultural Services and part funded by a Ministry of Defence grant, was especially successful thanks to the support of SSAFA armed forces charity, Royal British Legion, Armoury Trust, Royal Signal Benevolent Fund, The Duke of Lancs Regimental Association, Healthy Minds, Tameside Citizens Advice Bureau, 247 Air Cadets, Greater Manchester Fire Service, Healthwatch, The Baden Powell Scout Association and the Tameside Armed Services Community (TASC).

Frank Smith, secretary of the Royal British Legion's Stalybridge and Dukinfield branch, said: "The Armed Forces have always received lots of support from the borough. Tameside people have a long and proud association with all three services and residents are always eager to show their appreciation of the Forces and the excellent work they do."

Cllr Ged Cooney added: "Our armed forces personnel are on duty across the globe, risking their lives day in day out. The sacrifices they make to ensure our safety are remarkable. Armed Forces Day is an opportunity for us to show both our appreciation and support and I would like to thanks everyone who came along, showed their support and contributed to the success of our event."

Cllr Ged Cooney
Armed Forces Champion for Tameside

Flying the Flag

David Brown hails from Enniskillen in Co Fermanagh. He served four years in the Ulster Defence Regiment and 12 in the Royal Ulster Constabulary before being medically retired.

His membership of the Royal British Legion began 12 years ago but his serious involvement started in 2008 when he moved to England.

Here, he talks about his work . . .

The London Remembrance Sunday parade comprises more than 10,000 people, all of whom need to be in position on Whitehall so that the Queen can lead the nation's tribute with its two minutes silence at 11am.

I am responsible for the national standard bearers' competition, organising the parade and assisting with the march past the Cenotaph and laying of wreaths.

Also, I am a member of the ceremonial working group which meets on a regular basis to discuss and agree ceremonial matters, to give advice and support to the membership council, and to make sure the ceremonial handbook is kept up to date.

Until last year I was parade marshal for Greater Manchester, so I have seen those who are good and those who need a little more work on their skills. That means holding training schools for standard bearers – something I have done for most of the last 10 years. In that time I have trained three national youth standard bearers and the deputy national standard bearer.

As a county and regional standard bearer I have attended many pilgrimages, often taking veterans back to the places where they served overseas. This has included visits to Italy, Libya, Egypt, Germany, Belgium, France, The Netherlands and India.

It has been an honour to have served the RBL for the last 12 years and to have attended and influenced so many significant and unforgettable ceremonies and events.

Gary's Fun Palaces

It was fun all the way at Tameside Libraries Fun Palaces day which lived up to its publicity as a fun-packed festival of arts, culture and science provided by the community for the community.

Nearly 2,400 people attended, when the whole central library, art gallery, local studies centre, next-door armoury and their car parks were given over to the free event which lived up to the pre-event publicity in every way.

Afterwards many people took to social media to say what a good day it had been. One Facebook posting said "Absolutely fantastic event. My three-year-old little boy loved it as did we. Well done to all involved."

Tameside's Fun Palace was one of 283 across the world and 10 in Greater Manchester. A wide range of free activities included meeting crime author Kate Ellis, a climbing wall, archery, musical instruments, magnetic slime, pinhole cameras, bricklaying, henna and a spectacular workshop where rockets were being fired 200ft into the air.

The event was a partnership led by Tameside Libraries and Cultural Services in conjunction with the Tameside Armed Services Community and funded by GAMON and New Charter Housing.

Event manager Gary Howard from Complete Forensics added his thanks, saying: "Without the community delivering activities for the betterment of Tameside this event could not have taken place."

Tameside Libraries and Cultural Services want the help of the borough's communities in organising a bigger and better event for October 7, 2017. Anyone interested in getting involved should e-mail events@tameside.gov.uk placing Fun Palaces in the subject line.

Read All About It!

Apart from his scouting activities, which have involved learning about remembrance and the significance of the Poppy, Mark has a keen interest in military history and enjoys his history books. We at TASC will be helping him meet veterans and join in with visits and events.

Well done and thank you to Mark who wrote in to us.

My name is Mark Howarth I am 12 years old and live in Ashton. I have been always interested in history.

I have been a member of 3rd Ashton Scouts since the age of 5. Two years ago as part of our community project we did a poppy remembrance board and the Mayor was invited to come and view. I had to research somebody from St James' church, Ashton, I picked Herman Hodge who was an RAF Pilot in World War II. This also helped me with the Arts Award from Tameside Cultural Services.

I love reading history books, my latest being "ONCE" which is about the holocaust.

Two years ago I went to the National Arboretum with Tameside Cultural Service where I am going again next month.

Over the years I have always attended the Tameside Library Reading Challenge, this year as I was old enough to volunteer I helped for 13 hours over the summer at various libraries such as Dukinfield, Stalybridge and Central helping the young children with crafts and games.

A Great Honour

This summer Councillors Frank (a founding member of Tameside Armer Services Community) and Lynn Travis visited the Somme in it's 100th anniversary year.

Frank said "I was here in 2006 and just had to come back this year. I was chatting to the Royal British Legion men on the site at Thiepval, the biggest war memorial we have, and they asked me to say the exhortation at the morning remembrance service.

"I was hardly dressed up for the occasion, but I was wearing my 2006 commemoration polo shirt! It was an amazing occasion, right out of the blue and a great honour."

The Royal British Legion will be holding this short service every morning for the 141 days of the battle.

Operation Manna

Holland April1945
German occupation. Food is very scarce. Thousands are starving.

The grim reality for the Dutch was that the liberation had not yet reached them. In a desperate move to avoid what we would now term a humanitarian disaster, the Allies negotiated a tenuous "safe passage" with the German occupiers for airdrops of food by the RAF and USAAF.

The British part, involving over 3,200 sorties, was on. In April and May Lancasters flew as low as 100ft to drop their cargo to the cheering and waving Dutch people. In one of the turrets was Jeff Brown, with a grandstand view.

Jeff says "The food, in scores of sacks and tins was just loaded into the bomb bay and the doors were opened over the drop zone" It saved many lives for which the Dutch people are still incredibly grateful.

He has been back since to Holland, on trips organised by the Dutch government. Once a young boy of about 10 years of age came up and shook his had and thanked him. Jeff asked what for and the boy replied it was for saving his grandad and grandma. "They can't do enough for us; it's a very moving experience"

Jeff was born in 1925 and became an Air Cadet, followed by his first crew training at, of all places, Lords Cricket ground. He went on to become an air gunner via experience on various aircraft types. He was posted to join an operational squadron right at the end of the war, after a campaign in which Bomber Command had 40% casualties.

His final "Manna" trip of the war was on VE day. After that he worked as an armourer, in radar in Germany and flew again on the B29 Superfortress before pilot training in Canada. Scheduled to fly fast jets, the medics discovered he had a low tolerance to G Forces and so ended a very varied career in the RAF, for a very disappointed Jeff.

But he continued working in his beloved air industry, with AVRO, retiring now to his home in Mottram.

Proudest moment. First solo flight in a Harvard trainer. Most memorable service. "Operation Manna, definitely"

Giving Something Back

Scott Glover was born in Ashton-under-Lyne, but struggled at school with dyslexia.

He says, "In those days it was not well understood and my schooldays were not a big success. I got into trouble as a young lad, but then joined the Army, I was in the artillery"

Scott had a variety of jobs on leaving the Army, "I started a cafe bar in Ashton, but the culture changed and business went right down, I lost everything"

Scott moved to Kent to get away from the area and suffered from depression, ending up sleeping rough in parks and in cardboard boxes on the streets. "I tried to hide it from my family,

I was extremely fortunate that the Royal British Legion found me and a couple called Jim and Rosie really helped me, they were heaven sent"

They sorted him out with food, clothes, his finances and helped him get a job. He says he returned to Manchester and tried different things, but never gave up, so as not to let down his helpers.

In respect to the help he received he says, " I assist families of the fallen and look after graves and monuments, including that of the late Drummer Lee Rigby and Guardsman Tony Downes. I have learned a lot about life, about the value of teamwork and I have left behind the daemons and moved on.

"I have a new project to help the homeless off the streets with an offer of employment and through this project I would assist in directing ex-servicemen/ women to the appropriate assistance for them!"

Star Treatment

Tameside Armed Services Community was invited by the BBC to the premier of the new series of 'Our Girl' at HOME in Manchester. Members were treated to a VIP evening, which included a Q & A with the star Michelle Keegan, the writer and co-producer before the premier started.

Michelle was very keen to hear the veterans views and if she portrayed the character in the right way.

Commanding Talent

Talent Commandos are a recruitment consultancy owned and operated by ex-military professionals who are experts in people management and talent attraction.

Our experts will create growth in your business by improving your ability to attract, develop and retain great people. We are experts in employer branding, recruitment outsourcing, management development and employee retention.

We pride ourselves on offering hiring managers honest, professional advice around their vacancy and then a sense of urgency in providing a solution. We are adaptable and can provide simple recruitment advice, a full end to end solution or we can become an extendable arm of your company with our fully branded RPO programme.

Chris Edwards - Managing Director
07595906975
Chris.edwards@talentcommandos.co.uk
www.talentcommandos.co.uk"

MAKING CONTACT

There are many ex-service residents in Tameside. Together with the Council, Tameside Armed Services Community (TASC) is building up a contact database to help build a support network, focus services, give the armed services community a voice and ensure that the principles promised in the Armed Forces Covenant are delivered.

TASC would like to invite individuals, community groups, businesses or anyone who has an interest in the services – past, present or future – to get in touch and complete our contact form.

Email: covenant@tamesideasc.org.uk Tel: 0161 342 4144
www.tamesideasc.org.uk

Dates for your diary

8th December

Halle Orchestra at the Bridgewater Hall 7.30pm (Free of Charge)

11th December

RBL Concert

7pm, At the Gorton Monastery, 89 Gorton Lane, Manchester, M12 5WF. £12.50

Featuring: The Band of the King's Division, with Iona Fisher and Wright Robinson College (Gorton) School Choir.

For tickets email:

sgale@britishlegion.org.uk, killaloe10@live.co.uk or

joelarrigan@hotmail.com

TASC members recently visited the National Memorail Arboretum.
Another succesful and poignant visit to this national place of remembrance"