

# Honouring Armed Forces Week



**AS LARGE events were not permissible for Armed Forces Week, VIC took the crew van and staff and went on a VIC Roadshow to visit different locations.**

On Monday June 21, the van was Morrison's car park at Heywood while on Tuesday it was taken over to Clitheroe for the opening of a coffee morning and new outreach service. We took the

roadshow to Tesco in Haslingden on Wednesday and then on the Friday we had a special Armed Forces Day at our Hyndburn shop in Accrington's Arndale Centre.

A big thank you to VIC member Phil Speddy for creating a fun dynamic video which was posted to our Facebook account to help promote the VIC roadshow dates for Armed Forces Week.

Finally, a huge

thank you to Sign It Up in Haslingden for the free posters they provided.



## New coffee morning open

**VIC has opened a new veterans' coffee morning and outreach service in the centre of Clitheroe.**

The Mayor of Ribbles Valley Councillor Tony Austin and his wife Pauline, the Mayoress, were guests of honour at The Family Thrive Centre next to Clitheroe Market.

Also in attendance was the previous Mayor Councillor Stella Brunskill who had donated money from her Mayoral year to us and that will help cover rental costs

until the coffee morning is sustainable.

Project Worker Ray Sharkey runs the outreach and said: "It was the second event that I attended in Clitheroe during Armed Forces Week because I was also at the flag raising ceremony.

"There I got to speak to some of the veterans in attendance and I was pleased to see that they came along to the coffee morning.

"We had a very good response to the first event and I want the message to get



out there that any issues veterans have they should bring along to the coffee morning and hopefully we will be able to help, and if not then we can signpost them to someone who can."

Councillor Austin said: "On Armed Forces Week it is appropriate that

the Veterans are setting a coffee morning. Events like this really help to reduce the isolation that some veterans feel.

"I am really pleased that VIC has been able to open up the coffee morning and we are very thankful for the work that they are doing."







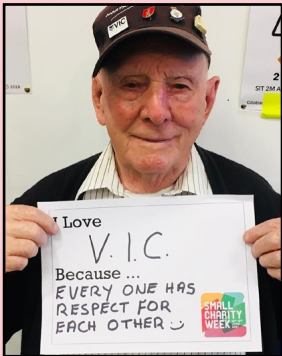
# Operation pallets

**AN ARMY of helpers stripped a 17-tonne wagon load of pallets kindly donated by manufacturers JJO of Bacup.**

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "I would like to thank everyone over the last two weeks who made a great effort to finish off pulling apart and de-nailing the pallets

into recyclable wood which will now be used for manufacturing garden furniture..

"A big thank you to Ron Flowers, Phil Speddy, Jacko Pearce, Stephen Boys, David Benson Joe Davis, Phil Mills, Keith Shepherd and Bernard Tighe. Stephen also made his first bird box at the centre."



**We ♥ VIC**

**TO CELEBRATE Small Charity Week, VIC posted a week of messages from staff, volunteers and members.**

Administrator Amy Thompson said: "I decided it would be nice for people to write down what they think about VIC and we then posted the messages through our social media."



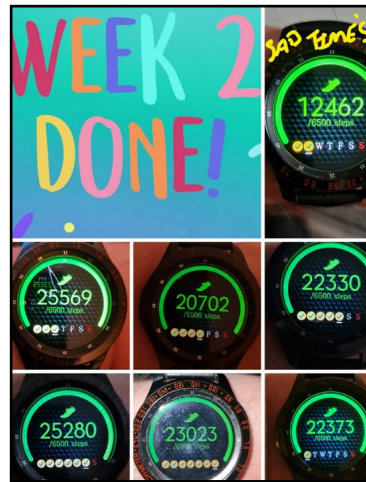
## Graham's stepping out

**MILLION-step walker veteran Graham Limb has already completed more than half of the total and he is not even half-way through his eight-week challenge.**

He has also smashed his fundraising target of £500 for Mind, the mental health charity, and VIC – currently it stands at £644.20,

Graham joined the Royal Artillery at an early age and struggled to adjust to civilian life. When he saw what was happening in Croatia with ethnic cleansing, he fought against the Serbs and then joined the French Foreign Legion before becoming a firefighter on returning to the UK. His career was cut short after a devastating house fire where children died.

The pandemic left Graham struggling to leave his Haslingden home, so he took



up walking again, then the VIC car park marshalling of the vaccination hub at Rawtenstall gave him a purpose.

When the marshalling stopped, he decided to take up the million-step challenge.

Graham said: "I am now hoping to get to 1,000km in the eight weeks, although I realise I may also break that total.

"You can follow me on my Facebook page or my Instagram @mind.mysteps or through VIC's website or pages. To sponsor visit Virgin Moneygiving – GrahamLimb."



**Progress is being made on the 'Old Contemptibles Railroad' being constructed in the basement of the VIC Shop at Accrington's Arndale. To help call at the shop on a Friday from 10am to 3pm.**



## Thank you

**TO MARK National Volunteers Week, a whole seven days of thank yous were posted on our social media.**

This involved thanking the volunteers who: helped throughout the pandemic; run the Hyndburn drop-in; are on the committee of The Sandbag Café; organise activities both in and out of the VIC Centre; run outreach sessions across the area; marshalled at the vaccination centres and are on the VIC's board of trustees.

## Help wanted

**MORE volunteers are needed to help on our allotment in Holcombe Road, Helmshore.**

Every Wednesday, Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth is working down on the site.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "Donated flowers have been planted, there have been lots of soil deliveries and lots of work going on at the site, but we need more help."

Anyone who wants to volunteer can contact Steve on 01706 833180.





# 1,000 mile challenge



## VETERAN Gordon Aaron set himself a huge 1,000-mile walking challenge for 2021, but he is set to finish it in August.

Pensioner Gordon, 85, from Milnrow, ran for the Army while completing his National Service with the Border Regiment in his 20s.

In 2019 he completed the Manchester half-marathon for the second time and was awarded the Changing Lifestyles trophy at Rochdale Borough Sports and Culture Awards and was a finalist in the Greater Manchester Sports Awards.

The member of VIC lost his wife Doreen, who had dementia, in October, but he said the veteran family has helped him to cope.

Gordon, who is a regular at The Sandbag Café in Heywood, which VIC has now been able to reopen, said: "The veterans have been

brilliant with me and that is why I want my walking to raise money for them.

"I am very thankful for what they have done, they even brought me a full Christmas dinner on Christmas Day because my son was away and that was fantastic."

Gordon, who also walks with Milnrow Walking Group and Link 4 Life, has already completed 840 of the miles, including a little walk along the Rochdale Canal which ended up a 19.7 mile round trip.

VIC Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "Gordon has done amazingly well and already he is over three quarters of the way through his challenge.

"He is raising money for Veterans In Communities through the walks and on Thursday July 1 he is asking people to join him. I will be going on the whole route while others will join him on stages.

"He is inspirational."

The walk in July will be from Hollingworth Lake and probably around five miles.

Gordon said: "I had prostate cancer and had radiotherapy which killed off the cancer, but it also damaged my immune system and left me without white blood cells.

"My doctor said I would not get it back, but I altered my diet and began eating healthier and keeping fit and I decided to try to prove him wrong."

It worked and he is now only on six-month checks.

Gordon added: "I will be 86 in August, and I want to complete the 1,000-mile challenge by that date and then I want to get myself ready to complete the next Manchester half-marathon, also to raise money for VIC."

Anyone who wants to donate to Gordon's fundraiser is asked to contact VIC on 01706 833180.



## TWO special sunflower plaques have been installed on the car park sign next to VIC in memory of two of our members who are sadly missed by all.

It was a shock to everyone when we unexpectedly lost Carole Mills at the end of 2019 and that sadness was compounded when Tracey Vick lost her brave battle with cancer last September.

Both ladies are very fondly remembered by all VIC members and the Rossendale Hospice plaques are a fitting tribute.

*Hikers enjoyed a six-mile circular challenge from Hollingworth Lake in Littleborough up to Blackstone Edge. Next month's walk, on July 15, will be a six-miler in Rivington. Call 01706 833180 for information.*



## Mick Armstrong

It is with great sadness that we have to report the sad loss of Royal Irish Ranger veteran Michael (Mick) Armstrong.

Mick, 65, passed away peacefully in the Royal Blackburn Hospital having been diagnosed with cancer early last December.

Although seriously ill, he was determined to attend the reopening of the Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club and meet up with his many friends.

Our condolences to his son David and family and his many friends.

Funeral details to be arranged.





## ROSSENDALE

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

### Outreach Service

#### MONDAY-FRIDAY

9am-4.30pm

For a home appointment call 01706 833180

#### MONDAY

##### Crafty Chatters

10am-12 noon

#### TUESDAY

##### Art Group

10am-3.30pm

Cost £6 places limited book on

01706 833180

#### WEDNESDAY

##### Allotment

Help on the allotment in Holcombe Road, Helmshore. Contact 01706 833180

#### THURSDAY

##### ON ZOOM

##### VIC Choir (weekly)

6.30-8.30pm

#### FRIDAY

##### Art Group

10am-3.30pm

Cost £6 places limited book on

01706 833180

#### SECOND SATURDAY

##### Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club

10am-12.30pm

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

Limited numbers book in advance

#### EVERY MONTH

##### Painting in the Style of Bob Ross art classes

Contact Darren 01706 833180

##### Walking Group

restricted numbers see Facebook or website for details

## BURNLEY AND PENDLE

### Outreach Service

#### MONDAY

Breakfast Club at the Community Kitchen, Charter Walk.

10am-noon

Contact 01706 833180 for dates of outreach at Burnley FC in the Community, the Pendle Armed Forces Support Group, Holmefield Mill, Gisburn Road, Barrowford, at Morrisons in Nelson and Asda in Colne.

## HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

### The Sandbag Cafe and drop in

#### TUESDAY

10am-noon

Sandon House, Taylor Street, Heywood OL10 1EF.

### VIC Outreach

#### TUESDAY

12.30pm-2.30pm

Middleton Gardens, M24 1AB

### The Messing cafe and drop in

1pm-2.30pm

The Lighthouse Project, Middleton Shopping Centre, M24 1AB.

#### THURSDAY

### Rochdale Veterans; Breakfast Club

9am-10.15am Touchstones Cafe, The Esplanade OL16 1AQ.

10.30am-noon

### VIC Outreach

Touchstones Cafe, Rochdale OL16 1AQ.

## RIBBLE VALLEY

### Coffee Morning and Outreach

#### TUESDAYS

10am-noon

The Family Thrive Centre, New Market Street, Clitheroe, BB7 2JW.

# VIC – 01706 833180

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Sessional Worker Bernard Tighe

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VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde

barryhyde@vic.org.uk

# Contacts

### Combat Stress Helpline

0800 138 1619

### NHS Military Veterans Psychological

#### Therapies Service (NW)

0300 323 0707

### The Royal British Legion

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

### SSAFA

email Lancashire@ssafa.org.uk

01772 260 462

### Rossendale Citizens' Advice

0300 456 2552

### The Samaritans

01282 694929 Mon to Fri 9am-9pm

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

0800 018 2361

### Veterans UK Free Helpline

0808 1914 218

### East Lancashire Single Point of Access

via GP or self-referral

01282 657116

### Armed Forces Support Group

01282 613132

**SUSPENDED**

## HYNDBURN

### Outreach / drop in/ Model Railway Club

#### FRIDAY

10am-3pm

VIC Shop, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1EX.

## Want to help?

To donate to support the work of VIC please visit our website and click on the secure

Virgin Money Giving link

[www.veteransincommunities.org/donate.html](http://www.veteransincommunities.org/donate.html)

### VIC supported

by:



East Lancashire

Clinical Commissioning Group



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BOROUGH COUNCIL

Putting people first



ROCHDALE  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH  
COUNCIL



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VIC Veterans In Communities