



Worthing Veterans Newsletter March 2026



Veteran's News Worthing FC are allowing us to do a collection for the last game of the season. Volunteers needed for a 10:30 start and 12:30 ko.

Breakfast Club The new location is proving to be a success, new people coming each week plus old faces not seen for a while. Let's keep this growing 😊

Quiz night. Wednesday 6th May at The Last Resort, 19.00 for 19.30 start
£12.00 per team - max 4 persons per team

Reminder Enzo's Italian restaurant is hosting a fundraiser charity event in aid of the WVA, Tue 28th April 18:30 to 21:30. Anyone wishing to attend can get tickets here: www.tickettailor.com/events/enzocharitynight/2083871 Tickets are £25, with £10 of every ticket going to the WVA, there is also a raffle etc etc.

Reminder Paul Holden at the worthing Journal has been doing some WW2 investigating and has found that 3 Cdo RM were stationed in East Worthing before deployment in the war. He has permission to erect a plaque in their honour – date and time to be confirmed but I am led to believe Sunday 10th May. Order of Dress will be Veterans Rig.



Navy News Minehunter HMS Brocklesby leaves Portsmouth for sea trials after three-year refit. After a major three-year refit, HMS Brocklesby has finally departed Portsmouth for sea trials.

The Hunt Class mine counter-measures vessel has undergone a full modernisation and technological update, which included embarking autonomous and remote/offboard minehunting systems. She is one of the Royal Navy's oldest ships in service, launched on 12 January 1982 and commissioned on 3 February 1983 at HMS Vernon.

As a Hunt Class mine counter-measures vessel, her primary purpose is to seek out and neutralise enemy mines using sonar technology and a combination of highly trained mine clearance divers and the Seafox unmanned underwater vehicle.



One of Brocklesby's biggest battle honours was in 2003, when she was among the first coalition ships into Umm Qasr during operations in Iraq and cleared a mined channel into the port.

Prior to her recent refit, HMS Brocklesby was in the Gulf for three years on Operation Kipion.



British forces given authority to board Russian shadow fleet tankers in UK waters British forces and law enforcement officers will be able to halt, board and detain sanctioned vessels from Russia's shadow fleet if they pass through UK waters, the PM has announced.

It follows the Royal Navy's support to allies in tracking vessels linked to the network across European and Mediterranean waters in recent weeks. Addressing the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) Summit in Helsinki, Sir Keir Starmer said the UK will go after the shadow fleet "even harder", and the move will starve "Putin's war machine of the dirty profits that fund his barbaric campaign in Ukraine". "We are living in an increasingly volatile and dangerous world, facing threats from different fronts across the world every day," he said. "He and his cronies should be in no doubt, we will always defend our sovereignty and stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes."

Ready to respond

The JEF is a UK-led military coalition of 10 northern European countries, all committed to defending against Russian incursions. A number of JEF allies, including Finland, Sweden, and Estonia, have carried out recent operations against the suspected illegal shadow fleet in the Baltic Sea region, while the UK supported the US operation to seize the Russian-linked tanker Bella 1 – later named the Marinera – at the beginning of the year.

US officials had accused it of breaking sanctions by carrying oil for Venezuela, Russia and Iran.

Tip of the spear

Both the UK Armed Forces and law enforcement officers have been conducting interdiction training in recent weeks, Downing Street has said. Possible scenarios include boarding vessels that "don't surrender, are armed, or use high-tech pervasive surveillance to evade capture".

In February, Royal Marines from 42 Commando conducted a night-time boarding operation on the auxiliary ship SD Northern River as part of a two-year extensive programme that will see them ready to deploy at the forefront of Nato's special operations, training for scenarios that could soon become a reality. The government has

said that following the detention of a ship, criminal proceedings may be brought against the owners, operators and crew for breaches of UK sanctions legislation.

It is estimated that roughly 75% of Russia's crude oil is carried aboard Russian shadow fleet vessels, many operating under false flags in an attempt to avoid maritime restrictions and remain undetected. Alongside allies, the UK has imposed sanctions on 544 of these vessels as part of a wider effort to put a stop to Russia's illicit oil exports.



Army News **Army begins phased withdrawal of the Land Rover after more than 70 years of service** The British Army's fleet of Land Rovers – a vehicle that entered military service back in 1949 – has begun to be phased out.

The vehicle has been a cornerstone of military operations for more than 70 years, but all the Army's Land Rovers are expected to have left service by 2030.

The Land Rover is widely regarded as being a simple and dependable workhorse and, as such, has been used for a range of duties, including patrol, command liaison and transportation of equipment and personnel.

A commemorative event was held at the Armoured Fighting Vehicle School at Bovington to honour the legacy of the Land Rover and outline what the Army is looking for in its successor.

Defence Readiness and Industry Minister Luke Pollard, who was at the event, said: "The Land Rover and British Army share an incredible history and the image of a Landy in Army livery is truly iconic. "As we look ahead to the future of light mobility vehicles, it is fitting to pay tribute to this extraordinary fleet that has served our Armed Forces so faithfully. "I'm firing the starting gun on the replacement vehicle competition, seeking to put a modern vehicle in the hands of our personnel."



A number of variants were on display at Bovington reflecting the numerous ways in which the vehicle was put to use, including peacekeeping work with the UN.

The Snatch Land Rover

As beloved and iconic as the vehicle may be, one variant, the Snatch Land Rover, made a name for itself for all the wrong reasons due to the way it was deployed in specific theatres. While it was designed for Northern Ireland, the vehicle found itself being used in both Iraq and Afghanistan, where its light armour offered little protection against roadside bombs and IEDs. Between July 2004 and July 2006, almost half of the UK's fatalities from hostile action, 20 of the 44 deaths, were personnel travelling in Snatch Land Rovers. The vehicle was eventually replaced by the Foxhound in Afghanistan, which offered superior protection.

The specials

Over the decades, several bespoke Land Rover models were developed for military use. These include:

- :: Series IIA Ambulance – designed to carry four stretchers and a medic
- :: Series IIA Pink Panther – designed for use in the desert by the Special Air Service, it was used for special operation missions and long-distance reconnaissance
- :: Amphibious SIIA 109" – a prototype of a vehicle that could be used for sea landings
- :: V8 Centaur Multi-Role Half-Track – created with track links taken from the CVR(T) Scorpion light tank, it represented an attempt to merge road vehicle with a tank

The Light Mobility Vehicle programme

In addition to the Land Rover, the Army also operates the Pinzgauer, another highly versatile vehicle that's used in a number of roles such as a tractor for the L118 Light Gun. The Army is now looking to equip its personnel with a modern, technologically advanced fleet to support future operations. Both the Land Rover and Pinzgauer will be replaced under the Light Mobility Vehicle programme. The LMV programme has not yet been formally launched, but will offer opportunities to British-based businesses through vehicle support and maintenance.



Royal Artillery's Stormer air defence armoured vehicles flown in to Cyprus. A battery of Stormer air defence vehicles operated by the Royal Artillery has arrived in Cyprus to beef up the systems already in place in the wake of the drone attack on RAF Akrotiri.

The armoured vehicles and their associated kit were flown into the airbase on board RAF C-17A Globemaster transport aircraft.

Stormers can be equipped with two types of missile, both made by Thales, these being the Starstreak High Velocity Missile (HVM) and the Lightweight Multirole Missile. The Stormer is a tracked vehicle derived from the CVR(T) Scorpion/Scimitar chassis.

The ones deployed to Cyprus are fitted with the Starstreak HVM – which is one of the fastest missiles in the world, travelling at speeds of around 3,000 mph. It was designed to counter threats from high-performance, low-flying aircraft as well as fast "pop-up" strikes by attack helicopters. The missile uses a system of three dart-like projectiles, allowing multiple hits on the target. In addition to the Stormer, the Starstreak HVM can be fired from the shoulder or from a lightweight multiple launcher.

The Stormer HVM's high-speed missiles and rapid response capability make it a crucial component in defending against modern drone warfare and other airborne threats.

Starstreak paired with Martlet

The Starstreak's sister missile, the Lightweight Multirole Missile has also been deployed to Cyprus. Three Royal Navy Wildcats, which were again flown in by the RAF, are being used to patrol the skies armed with the LMM, which in Royal Navy use is called the Martlet.

While the missiles are similar, Starstreak is designed purely for air defence, while the Martlet lives up to its multirole name by being able to tackle surface targets as well.



RAF News **RAF Regiment shoots down 14 attack drones in single night over air base in Middle East.** British air defence specialists have shot down 14 Iranian kamikaze drones in just one night, defence officials have revealed.

The personnel, members of the RAF Regiment, were deployed to a large US-controlled base at Erbil in Northern Iraq, which has also housed British forces for several years. Largely members of 2 Force Protection Wing, they operate the Rapid Sentry ground-based missile system and have been active every night since the US and Israel launched operations against Iran.

Rapid Sentry can detect and track enemy drones using a laser targeting system, before shooting them down using Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMM). The missiles, which the Royal Navy calls the Martlet, have a range of five miles and travel at Mach 1.5.



It is thought RAF gunners have now downed more than 50 Iranian drones since the conflict began - ten times the number taken down by RAF Typhoons and F-35B jets based in the region.

The base at Erbil itself was hit by two Iranian drones at the start of the conflict. In a briefing for reporters, defence officials said the US was holding its operational plans "very tightly". US President Donald Trump has sent the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, a rapid reaction force of around 2,200 Marines, to the Middle East, along with amphibious assault ships. But defence officials said the UK had not been asked to put any boots on the ground in Iran.

The UK is preparing both manned and autonomous mine countermeasure systems. Elsewhere, officials said Iran had laid a number of mines in the Strait of Hormuz, but a safe route through did still exist as Tehran was allowing a small number of vessels from Pakistan, Turkey, India, and China to pass through.

Recently, President Trump said Nato members should play a part in ensuring the Strait remains open, as it was to their economic benefit.

Iran has threatened to attack any ship that tries to pass through the vital channel without its permission.

Much of the world's energy supply depends on tankers being able to use the Strait, which is the only maritime route for Gulf countries, including Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain.



RAF Fylingdales: The pyramid that protects people's lives

A secretive UK airbase is playing a vital role protecting British troops and their allies in the Middle East from Iranian drone and missile attacks.

RAF Fylingdales, in the middle of the North York Moors, provides a continuous ballistic missile early warning service to the UK and US governments. The distinctive pyramid structure houses powerful radar capable of tracking objects 3,000 miles into space, designed to ensure a surprise missile attack cannot succeed.

Pride and professionalism

The MOD confirmed No 2 Space Warning Squadron, supported by No. 1 Space Operations Squadron, is monitoring Iranian missile activity and providing warnings to British personnel and military bases in the region, while also helping to keep the UK's partners safe.

The man in charge of UK Space Command, Major General Paul Tedman, described his team's work as "unprecedented" and said it highlighted how space now provides the central nervous system of effective military operations.

"The UK Space Command team has been working day and night since the onset of conflict in the Middle East to protect and defend our people and our interests from missile and drone threats and provide vital space effects to our forces," he said.

"I'm extremely proud of the quiet professionalism displayed by all our Space Forces."

"RAF Space Cadets" 😊



Worthing's Soviet Prisoners of War

During the Second World War over 400,000 prisoners of war were held captive in Britain, in various camps across the country, particularly in the north of England. Whilst initially the majority POWs in Britain were Italians, who had been captured in huge numbers during their early defeats of the Western Desert campaign, as the war progressed an increasing number of Germans were also held in Britain.

Whilst the presence of Axis POWs in Britain during the war is fairly well known about, in particular the Italian captives who provided vital agricultural labour and often mixed freely with the local population, less well known is that several hundred Soviet POWs stayed here as well.

Having been liberated as the Allies advanced across Europe following the D-Day invasion, the Soviet captives were sent to Britain for processing, spending time at camps in Yorkshire and finally Worthing, before being repatriated back to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet captives were mostly made up of men who had been held by the Germans, either in camps or who had been forced into slave labour. There may however a number who had freely fought alongside the Germans, (various nationalities and ethnic groups openly collaborated with the German army, many of whom regarded the Soviet regime as a far greater evil).

Regarded by the Stalinist regime as traitors, the fate awaiting Soviet POWs was little better than that they had experienced at the hands of the Nazis. This was well known to the Allies, nevertheless various agreements had been reached with the Soviets that all liberated prisoners would be returned.



Soviet POWs marching into captivity.

The particular Soviet POWs in question that spent time in Worthing, they initially arrived in Britain in October 1944 and numbered 741 men, of which 111 were Polish nationals. Due to tensions between the Poles and Russians, the Poles were segregated and eventually sent to a camp in Scotland before being repatriated.

Of the remainder, all had stated their nationality as Russian, which was either the truth or was said in the hope of more favourable treatment when they eventually returned to the Soviet Union.

'The Prisoners of War of Russian Nationality' as they were originally referred to as were first held at camp 905, at Scriven Park, near Knaresborough in Yorkshire. Although strictly speaking a POW camp, there was a minimal British staff and the men were not treated as captives. A Soviet Military Mission made a number of visits to the camp during the winter of 1944 and according to the camp diaries interviewed the Russian nationals. It appears the Soviet Mission also agreed to provide troops to help staff the camp.

The Soviet POWs must have been a source of interest and intrigue from the locals. Indeed, the Harrogate Advertiser newspaper reported on the 20th January 1945: "A good deal of interest was shown in Harrogate last Saturday morning when six hundred Russians stationed in Knaresborough paid their first visit to the town to see the film 'Song of Russia' showing at St. James's Cinema. The men marched smartly and frequently broke into song, much to the interest of spectators who lined the roadside. The Russians, accompanied by their own officers and camp commandant, were liberated when the allies invaded France and are now engaged in agricultural work in the neighbourhood."

Soviet POWs in Worthing

Between the 22nd -26th January 1945 Camp 905 relocated to Worthing on the Sussex coast, accommodated at Warnes Hotel on Steyne Gardens. (The hotel has since been demolished and is now the site of an apartment building).

Of their arrival in the town, The Worthing Herald reported on the 2nd February 1945: "These Red Army men, dressed in British battledress, have been a familiar sight in Worthing Streets during the last week or so. They sing lustily and well in harmony as they march along. During the recent heavy falls of snow in Worthing, a squad of about 70 men helped corporation workmen clear away the snow. I am told that the men are glad to have some useful work to do... In Yorkshire, I understand they helped in harvesting turnips."

And went on to add: "At one of the big hotels where the Red Army men are quartered the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes are hung on each side of the Red Flag. Close by is a big map of the Eastern Front... Always there is a closely knit group of Russian soldiers around the map. The big red arrows are now very near to the heart of Berlin - and Germany."

The Brighton Argus also reported:

"There are a few distinctly Slavonic faces among them but for the most part they are dressed in British khaki and could well be mistaken for English soldiers except for their singing, which is musical and in harmony and compares well with the singing of Welshmen." The men paraded on the seafront every day, where a Russian-speaking officer would read them the latest war news. They queued for food under the Union flag, the Stars and Stripes and the Hammer and Sickle."



A group of Russian liberated prisoners practice on their home-made musical instruments, whilst others reads the newspapers. Left to right, they are: Junior Lieutenant Maresh (reading), Aleksei Matveyenko (playing the balalaika), Private Giroriy Zurabov (playing the violin), Junior Lieutenant George Kharchenko (playing the guitar) and Junior Lieutenant Nagev (reading the newspaper).

Despite being forbidden by the Soviet Military Mission, to whom they were officially handed over on the 22nd February 1945, from entering pubs, theatres, dance halls or private homes, the people of Worthing appear to have gone out of their way to entertain the men.

On the 2nd March a concert was put on at the Pier Pavillion, with reports afterwards stating "the Pavilion probably never contained a more appreciative audience than on Saturday when Russians were entertained by the Worthing Anglo-Soviet Friendship Committee." Whilst on another occasion in late February, US Army Airforce personnel visited the town and gave gifts of cigarettes, candy and cookies to the Soviets.

A Canadian Press report from March 1945 rather romantically describes the welcome the Soviet POWs had received in Worthing:

"The Russians have "captured" this proud English town. The Red Flag flies from a promenade pole and beneath it Russian soldiers sing on the streets and play football in the parks. There are 2000 of them, all liberated from German prison camps by the Allied advance in western Europe. They are the counterpart of Allied soldiers freed from German camps by the Russians and, like their Allied comrades, await repatriation. Worthing has made guests of them. They spend their time roaming about and being entertained.

The soldiers come from all parts of the USSR. One billet alone contains men of 15 different groups, including Cossacks, Tartars, Siberians, Yahutsks, Tadhiks and even an Eskimo from northeast Siberia. Some do not speak Russian."

Finally, in early March the men were transferred from Worthing to Glasgow, for their repatriation and sailing back to the Soviet Union. By this time they'd been reclassified and were no longer referred to as POWs, though sadly this matter little when it came to their treatment back home. Many would find themselves sent to forced labour camps, or in extreme circumstances executed as traitors.

Of course, as the war reached its eventual climax and the collapse of the Nazi regime, the world would begin to enter a new Cold War, as the Iron Curtain descended upon Europe. The consequences of which we are still sadly living with today in certain parts of Europe.
Thank you Richard Shenton for this story

And now for some banter... Well it is their birthday, so they're fair game 😊



"So, tell me. What makes you think you'll make a good drone pilot?"





That's all folks..... Submissions for inclusion gratefully received.

Useful Contact Info – Military

Worthing Veterans Association: Providing a “one stop shop” point of contact for anything veteran related in and around Worthing. Contact Steve Hinton on Worthing.veterans@hotmail.com or call 07948920339.

Blind Veterans: Supporting veterans with sight loss to overcome their challenges. Website is www.blindveterans.org.uk or call on 01273 307811.

Boots on the Ground: The charity runs small activity weekends for veterans and their families, offers back to work programs, sign posting and support services. Tel: 08000 699 990 or <https://www.bootsonthegrounduk.org/>

Care for Veterans - a multi-disciplinary approach towards the care and rehabilitation of residents, which includes physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and neuropsychology, as well as social and recreational activities – all delivered from our facilities in Worthing, West Sussex. www.careforveterans.org.uk/ 01903 213458

Help for Heroes Providing lifetime support to those wounded in the service of their country. No matter when someone served. <https://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support/get-support-today/> Or call Keith Rule on 07823882400 or email keithrule@pm.me

Royal British Legion: Website is www.britishlegion.org.uk or call 0808 802 8080.

Royal Naval Association With over 11,000 members across 250+ branches in the UK and overseas, we are a family of current and former Naval Service personnel, relatives and supporters of our country's Royal Navy. <https://royal-naval-association.co.uk/>
Email: admin@royalnavalassoc.com Tel: 023 9272 3747

RAF Association. The charity that supports the RAF family. Tel: 0800 018 2361
Website is: <https://rafa.org.uk/>

SSAFA: The UK's oldest military charity, providing support for veterans and families.
Website is www.ssafa.org.uk or call SSAFA Sussex on 0800 169 9060.

Veterans Gateway: Point of contact for veterans and their families to access information, advice and support online for a range of issues. Website is www.veteransgateway.org.uk or call 08088021212.

Walking With The Wounded: Walking With The Wounded, a military charity for injured veterans in the UK, supports a pathway for vulnerable veterans to re-integrate back into society and sustain their independence. At the heart of this journey is employment. Website is www.walkingwiththewounded.org .

WWTW is not a crisis support organisation so all contact can be made through the website

Useful Contact Info – civilian

(If anyone wants to recommend a local tradesman or charities to other veterans please let me know and they will be listed here.)

Flamingo Rock: Launched by one of our own. Gifts for him and her with a classic feel. Also bespoke items can be purchased. See website: <https://www.flamingorock.co.uk/>

Carers Support West Sussex: Providing support for family and friend carers across West Sussex. Website is www.carerssupport.org.uk (you can chat online to them too) or call on 0300 028888.

Freedom Powerchairs Charity led mobility solutions, run by a RAF Veteran. 0800 0096631 or email info@freedompowerchairs.org.uk

Helping Hands at Home “No job too small” Home maintenance. Call Gerren on 07884 213613. Website is www.hhhworthing.com

Injury Treatment Centre: Chartered physiotherapist dealing with joint and muscle injuries, and back and neck pain. Website is www.injurytreatmentcentre.co.uk or call 01903 205599.

Wall Bros Carpets Local firm run by strong supporters of the Veterans community. <https://wallbroscarpets.co.uk/> call them on [01903 20503638](tel:0190320503638)

Painting & Decorating Services No job too small, special care for veterans. Contact Teresa Lee on 07494711276 or email teresalee309@gmail.com

Plumbing Services Son of one of our own James Heaton has his own Plumbing & Heating business. Any jobs, small or large and will offer a 10% discount on labour for all Veterans. If you need any plumbing or heating work please contact James on heatonsplumbing@gmail.com, or by phone on 07919948630.

Snack Shack Located in the Lancing Business Park, run by a former Royal Marine. With space for up to 60/70 bods, interesting décor and obviously he knows what a brekky should taste like you should check this place out if in the area.

Forecast of Events

April 2026	
Wed 1 st	Formation of the RAF – otherwise known as April Fools Day 😊
Sat 4 th	Breakfast Club – Snack Shack 0930 – 1100
Mon 6 th	No Drop In – Bank Holiday
May 2026	
Sat 2 nd	Army v Navy Rugby – Twickenham
Sat 2 nd	Breakfast Club – Snack Shack 0930 – 1100
Mon 4 th	No Drop In – Elections...
Fri 8 th	VE Day – Events TBC
Sun 10 th	3 Cdo RM Blue Plaque event – details TBC
Sun 17 th	“Black Sunday” Grenadier Memorial Day
Sun 24 th	HMS Hood Day
June 2026	
Mon 1 st	Drop In – Gordon Room 10:30 – 12:00
Sat 6 th	D Day
Sat 6 th	Breakfast Club – Snack Shack 0930 – 1100
Sun 14 th	Falkland Islands Victory Day
Thu 18 th	Waterloo Day
Sat 27 th	Armed Forces Day
Tue 30 th	The Day Sussex Died – Battle of Boar’s Head
July 2026	
Sat 4 th	Breakfast Club – Snack Shack 0930 – 1100
Mon 6 th	Drop In – Gordon Room 10:30 – 12:00
August 2026	
Sat 1 st	Minden Day
Sat 1 st	Breakfast Club – Snack Shack 0930 – 1100
Mon 3 rd	Drop In – Gordon Room 10:30 – 12:00
Sun 16 th	Canadian Memorial Day 10:30 onwards

Annual Diary

A place for us to list annual events which may require observing at the Cenotaph, Parade, Dinner or visit to the pub. If anything is missing please let me know.

January	
27th	Holocaust Memorial Day
February	
March	
April	
1st	Formation of the RAF 😊
May	
8th	VE Day
24th	HMS Hood Day
June	
6th	D Day
14th	Falklands Victory
18th	Waterloo Day
30th	The Day Sussex Died – Battle of Boar’s Head
July	
August	
1st	Minden Day
15th	VJ Day
September	
13th	Battle of Quebec (1759)
15th	Battle of Britain Day
22nd	Battle of Arnhem (17th – 25th Sept 1944)
October	
21st	Battle of Trafalgar
25th	Charge of the light brigade (Balaclava) 1854 and Agincourt 1415.
28th	Formation of the Royal Marines
November	
5th	Battle of Inkerman
11th	Armistice Day
11/12th	Battle of Taranto
December	

17th	Lancaster Bomber crash