

Spring 2021

COMBAT STRESS

FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

OUR FANTASTIC FUNDRAISERS



A marathon effort

Inspired by Captain Sir Tom Moore, ex-Coldstream Guards officer Andrew Johnston wheeled an incredible 26.2 mile marathon in his 10 yard-long kitchen during the first lockdown, raising over £21,000 for charity. Over the last few years, Andrew and his wife Catherine have raised just over £165,000 for Combat Stress and we couldn't be more grateful to this amazing couple!

» Since March 2020, we have been amazed by the wonderful and innovative ways our supporters have raised funds for our specialist mental health treatment for veterans

Supporter Marlene Gotch started making face masks in March and decided to donate the profits to us. Her original target was to raise £500 – to date she has raised over £7,000 with the help of her niece Deborah Liversedge. Great work Marlene!



Sew amazing

Steve Dennis, a former Royal Military policeman from Fife, spent 30 years clean shaven with a buzzcut while in service. Now working as a network manager for utility company Veolia, Steve pledged to not shave or cut his hair for a year to support Combat Stress, one of Veolia's Charity of the Year Partnerships. Steve set out to raise £1,600, but quickly smashed his target and raised over £5,000.



Hair-raising antics



Team effort

Our corporate supporter SecureCloud+ successfully fundraised £5,000 by taking on our Ride to Victory 75-mile cycle challenge to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VJ Day in August 2020.



Jump to it

In November 2020 the Bulford Soldiers box jumped the height of Mount Everest within a 24-hour time frame, wearing boots, trousers and plated body armour. They raised an incredible £9,856 and completed their challenge with two hours to spare.



Going the extra mile

At the last minute, Alastair Golding and all our awesome participants had to take on our Race to Remember on their own when the second national lockdown was announced. Tapping the route in a kilt, Alastair raised over £1,000!

If this has inspired you, visit combatstress.org.uk/getinvolved for help and advice about fundraising

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A SENSE OF CHANGE

» How using his senses helps veteran Julian cope with PTSD.

"It's a constant battle to maintain peace of mind but, thanks to Combat Stress, I now know what to do."

Julian joined the Army Parachute Regiment a week after his 16th birthday in 1980 and just two years later saw active service in the Falklands War. A gunshot wound to his leg limited his service career and eventually he left the Army in 1986 due to ongoing physical health problems. However this incident also affected his mental health – something Julian didn't realise for many years.

"From when I first left the Army, my behaviour was erratic. I drank heavily, was aggressive and often got into fights when I was out. At home, I got agitated easily – if I was making a meal and something went wrong, more often than not the whole dinner would end up in the bin and I'd smash the plates up.

"But I didn't think anything was wrong and friends just thought it was the way I was. Back then no-one understood what PTSD was or realised that was my issue."

Julian struggled on for more than 20 years before, at an Army reunion in 2007, he heard how others had sought help from Combat Stress. He got in contact with us and began to receive treatment.

"From the very beginning, I learnt about using my senses to help manage my emotions and in 2020 the occupational therapists at the charity began to offer sensory modulation. Building on what I knew already, this made such a difference to me.

"Working with them, we discovered that my profile showed that I have a very high tolerance for sensory input. This means I'm more comfortable in an environment which stimulates my mind. For example, a room with blank walls would be agitating to me but, if there were pictures on the walls and some lit candles, I'd be much calmer as it would help keep my mind



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stimulated. Knowing what I need to have around me means I can be in control of my environment, which in turn means I can be more in control of my emotions.

"Learning about and using sensory modulation has changed my life in such a massive way. If I'm starting to get agitated, I have something I can fall back on. The sensory approach really lends itself to getting back to the here and now quickly. What's more, I know how to set up my home to best meet my sensory needs – for instance, I have candles lit all day now.

"Treatment isn't a magic wand – I still have horrible feelings but, thanks to Combat Stress, I now have the armoury to do something in the here and now to help myself."

OUR NEW SENSORY PROGRAMME



Thanks to funding from Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, we've been able to introduce a new sensory programme to help veterans with complex mental health problems. Our occupational therapists have been trained to deliver sensory modulation to help veterans better understand their mental health, develop strategies to manage stressful and anxiety-provoking situations and improve their recovery. The programme will therefore increase their ability to participate in everyday activities, such as work, relationships and leisure.



Thanks to a further partnership with Lloyd's Patriotic Fund that began in 2020, the occupational therapy team is now able to conduct research on the impact of sensory modulation input on the lives of veterans receiving treatment from Combat Stress to add to the research base for occupational therapy.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have adapted to deliver this specialist treatment virtually, helping veterans to understand their own sensory profiles and find solutions to help them cope.



To find out more, visit combatstress.org.uk/occupational-therapy



**Lloyd's
Patriotic Fund**

Help fund our specialist occupational therapy service by making a donation. Visit combatstress.org.uk or call 01372 587 151.



Thank you for your support – our last issue, where Army veteran Jessie shared how our treatment helped him cope with PTSD, raised over £30,000. These vital funds will help treat more veterans with complex mental health issues.

A NEW APPROACH TO SERVICES

» Last year we completed a thorough review of our services for veterans and produced a road map for the future. Now in 2021, despite the challenges of the pandemic, we have fully moved to our new modern and evidence-based service that focuses on veterans with the most complex mental health needs – those who have several severe mental health conditions that often hugely impact their lives.

Our services today are personalised, flexible and accessible, offering a mix of both in-person (when COVID-19 restrictions allow) and online treatment, ensuring veterans can conveniently get the help they need.

Our expert clinicians have designed the services to be as effective online as they are in person. Our new service model was officially launched in November 2020.

All of our treatment has either been developed in collaboration with our National Veterans' Voice group or has had their approval. This means that a veteran coming to us for treatment can be confident that everything from the language we use to the results we want to achieve has been shared with other veterans who have received our treatment.

A seamless path

Everyone from our psychological therapists and psychiatrists to occupational therapists and nurses have been involved in the development of our services to ensure veterans have a seamless path through their treatment.

And, with the addition of online services, we've also invested in training for our clinicians so they can run online individual and group sessions just as well as the in-person ones, keeping veterans safe and delivering the best results. In fact, we have two dedicated senior psychologists whose jobs are to make sure we are delivering online treatment to the best of our abilities at all times.

Greater equality

There is now much greater equality in our access to services through the addition of online treatment. People in rural areas, those with complex caring responsibilities and veterans with limited access to transport or with significant disabilities can now use our services more easily.



"Once we are allowed to hold in-person treatment again, we expect treatment to be a mix of face-to-face and online sessions, allowing veterans to move through

their treatment in the way that suits them best. We're all very excited about offering our services in this new way," concludes Dr. Naomi Wilson, Head of Psychological Therapies. "We really believe that we can help more veterans to access our services so that we can help them live better lives – and that is our reason for being here."



HELP SUPPORT OUR WORK

Your donation can help us provide life-changing treatment and support to veterans with complex mental health problems.

I would like to give Combat Stress a gift of:

£

Supporter no. (if known):

- ☐ I enclose a cheque (payable to Combat Stress) **OR**
☐ Please debit my MasterCard/Visa/Maestro/Amex/CAF card

Card number:

Expiry date:

Full Name:

Home address:

Post code:

Please send this form with your donation to the following address:
Freepost RTKB-SYUY-CZYR, Combat Stress, Tyrwhitt House,
Oaklawn Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BX
Or call **01372 587 151** or visit [combatstress.org.uk/donate](https://www.combatstress.org.uk/donate)

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- ☐ I would like to receive an acknowledgement letter
☐ I'd like to give regularly, please send me a Direct Debit form
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☐ **Gift Aid – By ticking this box I confirm that I would like all past, present and future donations to Combat Stress to be treated as Gift Aid donations.**

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I am a UK Tax Payer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year that it is my responsibility to pay any difference. Please notify us if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax.

Please note we require your full name and home address to claim Gift Aid.

MARCH IN MARCH

*It's not
too late
to join us!*

» Looking to put a spring in your step? Why not sign up for March in March? All you need to do is walk 10 miles on any day during the month of March – not only will you give your mental health a boost, but you'll also be raising funds for our life-changing mental health treatment for veterans.

March in March is a virtual event so even with COVID-19 restrictions, this is a fundraising event we can all take part in. Register online, decide when and where you're going to walk locally and get started! All we ask is that you try to raise as much as you can in sponsorship. Demand for our services remains high but taking part in March in March will help raise funds for our specialist treatment.



GET INVOLVED



It costs just £15 to register to take part. To find out more, visit marchinmarch.co.uk

WHY I SUPPORT COMBAT STRESS

» We're so grateful to everyone who chooses to make a donation to help veterans. Here, three different supporters share an insight into their giving this year.

"For me, continuing to make significant annual support as a Benefactor is an opportunity to ensure when we prioritise mental health issues, we remember those who do so much for us in the line of duty."



Lord Rami Ranger CBE

"We are proud to support Combat Stress and their online self-help resources which provide a vital lifeline for veterans."



Louise Baverstock-Price, Group Head of Community Investment, BAE Systems plc

"Combat Stress equips veterans with the tools to handle the effects of PTSD caused by their service to our country. I am delighted to be able to help by leaving a gift in my Will."



Carolyn Stait CBE

Visit our

LIVING ARCHIVE

» As part of our Combat Stress 100 project to capture the voices of military veterans, we recently launched our Living Archive.

Made by veterans for veterans, the project provides a real insight into the impact of living with military trauma and the archive offers the opportunity to watch individual testimonies from over 60 veterans. We've made these powerful first-person accounts available to the public to encourage understanding about the agony of living with PTSD and the toll this, and other complex mental health conditions, can have on



veterans and their families. Some may find these interviews hard to listen to but, as a charity, we feel it's important that they are heard.

The Combat Stress 100 project, undertaken to mark our centenary, was made in partnership with reminiscence charity Age Exchange. It was made possible thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and, of course, the veterans who so bravely shared their stories.



To find out more and to view the veteran stories, visit combatstress.org.uk/living-archive

For more information about the different ways to give, including giving a major gift and becoming a Benefactor, leaving a gift in your Will or supporting us through your company, please get in touch at fundraising@combatstress.org.uk or call 07715 075 671.

Find out more
combatstress.org.uk
f in t i y

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