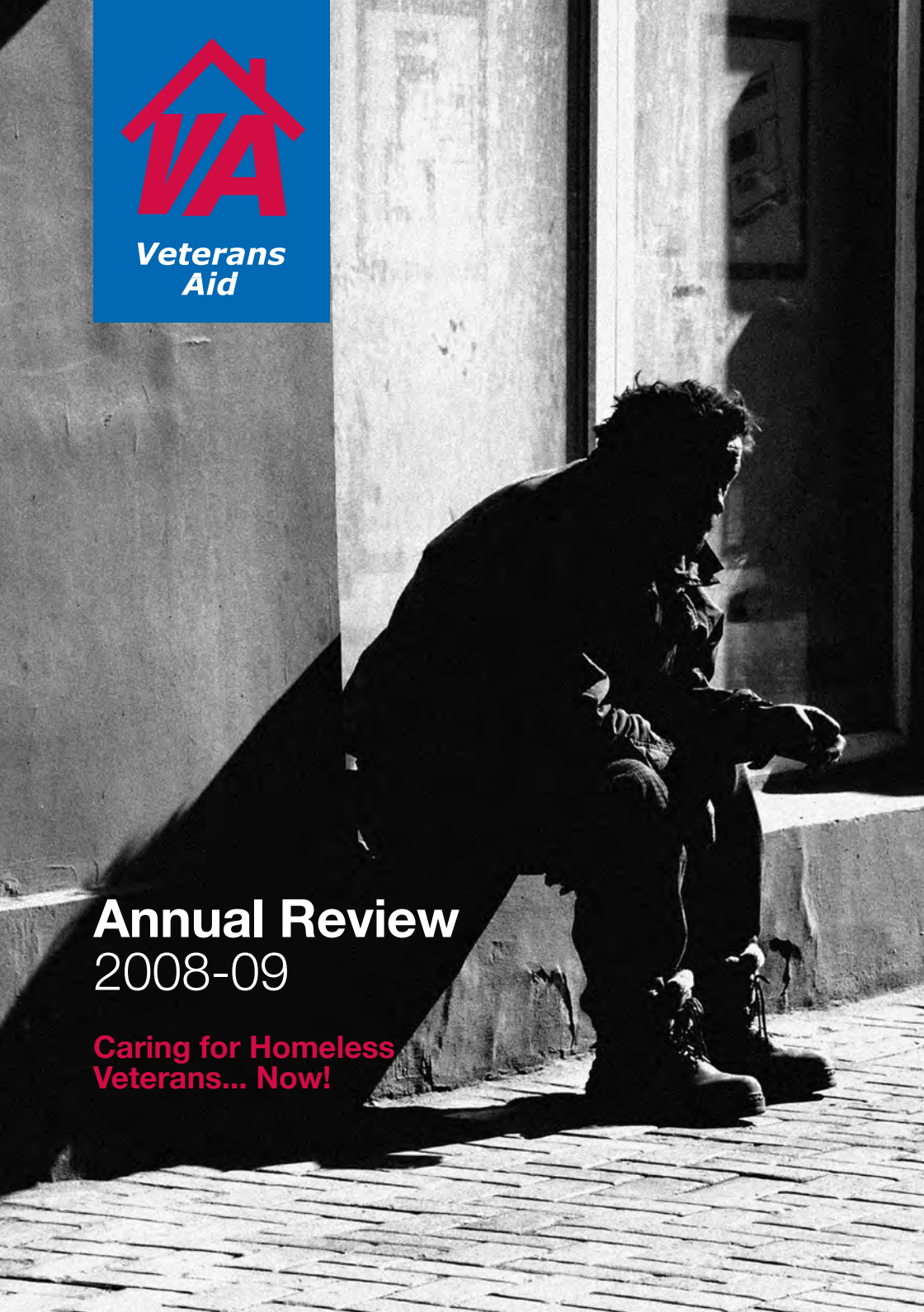




**Veterans
Aid**

A black and white photograph of a man sitting on a concrete ledge. He is in silhouette, looking down and to the right. The scene is lit from the right, creating a strong shadow of the man on the wall behind him. The ground is paved with bricks.

Annual Review 2008-09

**Caring for Homeless
Veterans... Now!**

Veterans Aid

40 Buckingham Palace Road,
London SW1W 0RE

Telephone: 020 7828 2468

Facsimile: 020 7630 6784

E-mail: info@veterans-aid.net

Web-site: www.veterans-aid.net

Registered charity number: 1095308

Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee

No. 4544532. Formerly known as The

Ex-Service Fellowship Centres - EFC

Photographs by: Kevin Wright, Malcolm Crowthers,
Glyn Strong, Geoff Smith and Leonie Milner.



Trustees & Operational Staff

President and Chairman	Brigadier Johnny Rickett CBE
Council	Hon Treasurer: Robert Clinton Hon Surveyor: Ray Evans Group Captain Martin Armstrong Mr Michael Berry Lieutenant Colonel Eric Kohn TD Captain Ian Sutherland RN Wing Commander Anne Smith Mrs Margaret Mervis - Barrister

London Relief Centre, Victoria

Chief Executive	Wing Commander Dr Hugh Milroy PhD
Deputy	Colonel Geoffrey Cardozo MBE
Administrator	Flight Lieutenant John Smith
Finance	Richard Greenhough
Outreach	John Boyle (SSAFA-Central London)
Outreach	Debbie Langdon
Substance Misuse	Phil Rogers
Procurement	Bob Gordon

New Belvedere House, Stepney

Manager	Pat O'Connor MBE
Professional Support Worker	Alice Mary Servina (Royal British Legion)
Floating Support	Ralph Prime (SSAFA-Central London) Yemie Omomowo, Anna Maria Waylen, Leslie Macdonald, Ann James, Garry Roberts and Sandy Ulrich.

Finance and Legal

Legal Advisors	Ashurst, Solicitors
Auditors	Saffery Champness, Chartered Accountants
Stockbrokers	Savoy Investment Management Limited
Bankers	Lloyds TSB, Close Brothers Limited

Chairman's message

Veterans Aid has had another exceptional year and we are hugely grateful to so many people for supporting us and allowing us to help Veterans in crisis transform their lives.

Every Veteran, no matter what their background or circumstances, has the right to succeed and to lead a normal and happy life. VA's work with them helps overcome their often daunting problems, by tackling their personal problems and assisting them to rebuild and sustain their new lives. To do so, we have a powerhouse of specialists who are utterly dedicated to the task and I am honoured to be associated with them in my capacity as Chairman.

Make no mistake, this is not easy work and this makes the success rate among our 'graduates' a truly remarkable achievement. I never cease to be amazed that our model of operations can work in even the most

difficult of cases but it does take time, takes up a lot of staff time and costs a great deal. On average, a resident is with us in New Belvedere House between 9-12 months; this costs over £5,000 per person per year and we have 57 at any one time!

Through our awareness campaign we are now reaching more Veterans in crisis than we ever thought possible; often in conjunction with our partners we can stop some of these Veterans ending up on the streets. This is encouraging but I am worried about the future.

I mentioned last year that the impact of a financial crisis would see our workload increase - this prediction has come true.

'Every Veteran, no matter what their background, has the right to succeed and to lead a normal and happy life.'

Next, I am concerned about the number of women who are now approaching us for help - it used to be about two or three per year but now it's one or two per month.

Finally, I am still very concerned about the numbers of Foreign & Commonwealth soldiers (and their wives) who are now on our books. We had thought this to be a reducing problem but it is on the rise again.

In the main, this has to do with applications to remain in this country after discharge. The application process can take a very long time but during this period, they are not entitled to benefits and must rely on other sources of income e.g. charitable money. The regimental funds, Service charities and Veterans Aid have played a huge part in supporting these servicemen but cannot be expected to do so on an

open-ended basis.

This is a heavy burden and we are striving at the highest levels to find a solution that relieves us of this financial strain. In particular, we are working closely with the Army Benevolent Fund to try and find a more reasonable solution.

In summary, the year ahead will be challenging but we have excellent staff, a resilient method of operation and wonderfully supportive partners - we are well prepared. Thank you for all your support without which we simply would not be able to do this vital work.



Brigadier J F Rickett CBE
Chairman

background or circumstances,
a normal and happy life.'



Chief Executive's message

Veterans Aid is a wonderful organisation engaging every day with fellow Veterans who are down on their luck. I am not talking about strangers, but about members of our military family who need a hand up, not a hand out!

Amazingly, calls for help come to us from all over the UK and, increasingly, from all over the world. The thing that strikes these callers is that Veterans Aid is a Veteran helping Veteran organisation and that help is there when you need it. Recently, a caller to our drop-in centre said: 'I thought I was drowning, going under for the third time until I walked through the door and you immediately hauled me out of the water'. Powerful stuff, but it really does reflect how Veterans Aid does business.

While we primarily deal with those who find themselves homeless, we are more often finding ourselves working with people who are vulnerable to becoming homeless, often through no fault of their own. The staff, who piece together their stories, which is like dealing with a giant jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces, very carefully choose the appropriate response.

Frequently, for those who are not yet homeless, this involves directing the person to one of our key supporters such as The

Royal British Legion, SSAFA, Combat Stress, the Army Benevolent Fund, Seafarers, the RAF Benevolent Fund, Scottish Veterans Residences, the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation or to the Veterans Agency.

For those that need shelter, we act as quickly as possible and if we can, we take them into our New Belvedere House hostel in Stepney, East London. This is a unique place which is, most importantly, a place of safety that can be called home.

During a visit to the hostel by Kevan Jones MP, the Veterans Minister, one particular resident caught my attention. This old soldier was slumped in a chair and was obviously distressed. I noticed that a staff member, also an ex-military man, quietly walked over and sat beside the man; nothing was said but the man gradually realised that he was not alone.



When I walked by at the end of the visit I noticed that the man was smiling and chatting to the staff member while they both drank tea and were joking with each other about whose regiment marched faster! To an onlooker this may seem to be nothing special but in the Veterans Aid system, this simple act of kindness from another Veteran really makes the difference.

This is what Veterans Aid is all about - improving the quality of life for all the Veterans who walk through our doors. It doesn't need to be based on any complicated courses or interventions but should concentrate on the well-being of the Veteran in a holistic way.

Every one of us in the Veteran family will experience some sort of crisis in our lives, and regardless of how tough and resilient you are, you could fall through the cracks

and end up in a dangerous situation.

Rank is no protector and I can tell you that as I write this, Veterans Aid is currently supporting three officers who are down on their luck for one reason or another. Their situation is dire but we can, and will, make the difference to their lives just as we did for the 150 other Veterans that we put into some form of accommodation during 2008.

To continue with this work we need more money and I hope that anyone browsing our website or reading this on the train will consider helping us financially. I thank you all for your kind support.



Wing Commander, Dr Hugh Milroy PhD
Chief Executive

Veterans Aid is a Veteran helping Veteran organisation

What we do?

Veterans Aid has been in business since 1932. Every year we receive up to 2,000 calls for help and provide more than 20,000 nights of accommodation to ex-Servicemen and women. They come in all ages, from many different backgrounds, and each one has a unique experience behind their plight. As we are mainly Veterans ourselves, we understand.

We don't make a huge fuss about it. We just make sure that everyone who comes to see us has a bed if possible that night and for however long it takes to sort out his or her problems. We are a small team based at our 'drop-in centre' near Victoria Station in London. We never close until the last of our clients has a place to go - quite an incentive to get on with the job.

We never close until the last of our clients has a place to go - we never turn anyone away.

Why do we do this?

Anyone can fall on hard times. Social exclusion often results from family break-up or debt. Some people end up on the streets, alone and victims of drink or drugs. If they have been in the Services, Veterans Aid is there to help. Their problems may well have nothing to do with their time in the forces. The average length of past military service among our clients is two years but whether they served decades ago or more recently, any period of service is enough to earn the support they need to reclaim their lives.

Chief Executive Hugh Milroy said: 'The key to overcoming homelessness is rapid intervention but it is never easy. Some clients probably won't ever find work but the average length of stay in our care is eight months, often involving psychiatric and social help. Our philosophy is to move from welfare to wellbeing through a mix of informal and formal systems of support. Even a run of ill fortune over many years can be overcome in time. We never turn anyone away. After all, we are Veterans helping Veterans'.



Who is benefiting?

Most of our work involves getting people back on track, into their own accommodation, and - for a few - back into the workplace. Take the ex-Serviceman who dropped in, asking for our help after sleeping rough for a year in a garage. It was secluded so he had some privacy at least but it was sodden with the rain. We accommodated him at our hostel to give him a chance but he may also have issues to face including mental health, alcohol or substance misuse - perhaps all three. In time, when he is ready to move into



permanent accommodation, we may hire a van and start him off with new furnishings.

Veterans Aid is increasingly recognised as the 'accident and emergency' arm of the Service charities. We deploy considerable skills and limited resources to fulfill that front-line role. It costs an average of £750 to help someone for the first week. If our hostel is full, we find other suitable accommodation and pay for their clothing, food, toiletries and travel costs as needed.

There are many different reasons why people end up at the door of Veterans Aid. For example, some have mental health problems or addictions. We provide immediate care and then work with a variety of partners including the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation, Royal British Legion, SSAFA Forces Help, SSAFA Central London, Scottish Veterans Residences, Combat Stress, the Service benevolent funds and the Veterans Agency.

As we are mainly Veterans ourselves

Raising our profile

In the short period since its re-brand from EFC, Veterans Aid's claim to be 'the leading charity dealing with homelessness' has become a self fulfilling prophecy. Over the last 12 months it has been courted by news organisations, documentary makers, photographers, students, politicians and a diverse range of individuals seeking informed comment on ex-Service issues. Notable among the media organisations are The Evening Standard, The Guardian, The Mirror, The One Show, SKY News, BBC Inside Out, BBC (radio & TV) News, GMTV, Al Jazeera and BFBS.

The value of this raised profile is threefold. It advertises our role to the military/Veterans community and wider publics, positions us as an authoritative source of information, and attracts support from donors and sponsors. The effect of this increased awareness is demonstrable. VA is now partnered by Scottish Veterans Residences, giving it a cross-border role. It is sponsored

by Towergate Wilsons and has been nominated as a charity of choice by British Forces Broadcasting Services, the Army Chaplains' Department and the Belgravia Traders Association.

The decision to engage in PR/Media activity has resulted in a better website, a strong brand identity easily picked up by search engines, and positioning as a visionary, operational charity. A number of innovative projects were launched in 2008, all underpinned by the ethos of Veteran helping Veteran and enhancing VA's ability to provide effective and appropriate intervention at point of need.



es, we understand.

Who are the Veterans Aid team?

20 people, either in Victoria or the hostel - a mix of full timers and skilled volunteers. Some are embedded from other charities, eg SSAFA Central London and the Royal British Legion. Among the others are a psychiatrist, barrister, substance misuse specialist, media adviser and social workers. Hugh Milroy, Geoffrey Cardozo and John Smith are among our former military officers with many years of experience of Service welfare. Members of the team are:

John Boyle and Debbie Langdon are our outreach workers. John was working with Veterans Aid long before the re-brand and has been a trained social worker for many years. Debbie joined in 2007. Together they deal with all comers to the Victoria centre during a day lasting from 7am until 8pm.

They assess every case on its merits and provide what is needed, arranging beds for the night, contacting state support services, or providing advice. Says John: 'Some clients are long-term rough sleepers. Others have been sleeping on friends' floors or have returned from overseas after many years with nowhere to go. Some face eviction, others deportation. Some are living on benefits, others have nothing at all. We do whatever is necessary to help.'

As Veterans Aid becomes more widely known, the number of clients is increasing. John and Debbie may see 20 people on some days. At other times they spend all their hours on the phone or answering emails. Some clients are young with brief Service careers. Others have left or been discharged many years earlier. More women and dependents are coming for help, victims of glitches in the social services system.

Phil Rogers runs the Veterans Aid Substance Misuse Service. It aims to support those ex-Servicemen whose lives have become unmanageable as a result of their addiction(s) and who wish to rebuild a life for themselves without drugs or alcohol.

The programme started in May 2008. Since then the number of addicts benefiting has risen steadily and shows no sign of slowing. Within less than a year, more than 30 clients have been helped and are currently at different stages of their recovery. Those at the earliest point are still drinking and/or using and awaiting admission for treatment but do at least have a roof over their heads. However, there are many others who have successfully completed their journey through detox and rehab and are currently clean and sober, continuing their recovery, reconciling relationships with families and friends and

undertaking training for a new career.

Phil says: 'Veterans Aid has always recognised the importance of addressing drug and alcohol problems and this year we've taken a major step forward in supporting those ex-Servicemen who are struggling to cope with their addiction(s). Addiction is a major contributor to the 'revolving door' of homelessness. The sad reality is that we regularly see guys with a history of rough sleeping who have been unable to sustain a tenancy due to their problems with alcohol or drugs.

'If any of our clients feel they're ready to address their substance misuse issues, they're referred to my service, often through New Belvedere House. Pat and all of the staff there are fantastic in helping me to support and motivate these guys as they prepare for sobriety. Hopefully the hostel is just the start of their journey. I work with local authorities around the country to agree funding for detox and rehab. We've had a tremendous amount of success over the past year in securing treatment. There's no set timescale for how long I'll work with the guys. But there's no better feeling than seeing somebody go from rough sleeping, through treatment and into independent living.'

We've taken a major step forward in supporting ex-Servicemen who are struggling to cope with their addiction(s)

Where we operate

New Belvedere House continues to prosper and is a unique facility. The range of backgrounds and ages of the residents is very broad and the fact that so few of our graduates fall back on to the streets is testament to the work done there.

New Belvedere is the VA powerhouse where lives are changed. It can be so many things to so many people - a place of safety, a home, respite care, a family or most importantly, a launch pad for a new future. The choir, the fitness regime, the gym, the snooker hall, all help create a positive atmosphere but it is the staff who really effect change and support the residents as they battle to recover their lives.

Pat O'Connor, our manager, and Alice Mary Servina (sponsored by the Royal British Legion) our hostel social worker are just

part of a very strong and highly trained team. They are ably supported by specialists including Professor Ian Palmer (psychiatrist) and Phil Rogers (alcohol specialist) and from old friends such as Combat Stress. The staff's web of connections for housing options - The London Borough Tower of Hamlets, E Hayes Dashwood or the French Hospital to name but a few - makes the moving-on process so much easier.

Of course, as the residents prepare to graduate they are very vulnerable and the period when they first move can be very fraught. To help them cope we now have Ralph Prime (sponsored by SSAFA Central London) who mentors and guides our new graduates as they get used to living on their own again. New Belvedere House is a place where hope is part of daily life and change is really possible.



What special services do we offer Veterans?

Ground-breaking initiatives introduced for clients include a traditional Korean relaxation treatment already used by the police and fire services for their staff. Ki London's specially trained therapists visit the hostel to relieve clients of stress and physical pains.

During each visit the therapist treats up to 18 clients and staff free of charge. One client commented afterwards: 'A good session made me feel lighter with loss of headache, neck and shoulder pain.' Another said: 'I feel lighter and have virtually no pain in my body which is a new experience for me. I enjoyed my first experience and would recommend it to anyone.'

Another free initiative is access to British Military Fitness classes (left) with weekly sessions in Stepney Park. A former Serviceman leads all the volunteers in a series of press-ups, jumping, and energetic running sessions to help them restore fitness. All abilities are catered for and hostel manager Pat O'Connor now accompanies the men as they all enjoy the challenges they once took for granted in their Service days.

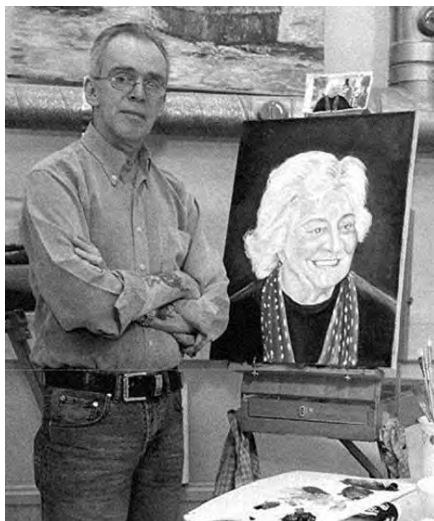
Back to life

Ray: Ray's Army service lasted four years a lifetime ago but it has given him a lifeline. He made corporal before leaving to study art and then ran his own business producing storyboards for TV adverts over 27 years. But debt overtook him on 22nd November 2005 and the next day he was on the street. He slept in his car until that - like his home - was repossessed.

Drink was a problem but he became a pavement artist. Then he heard about Veterans Aid, made contact and soon moved into New Belvedere House. With a roof over his head he sold the Big Issue and was eventually given a flat on the 17th floor of an 18-storey tower block. It had just been cleared of squatters but Veterans Aid helped him refurbish it, supplying him with a cooker, fridge and other essentials. To these he added a microwave, bedding and most recently a big TV set.

The Big Issue gave him a grant for canvasses, brushes and paints, he sold works, and at an event for the homeless, met celebrities including the actress Jean Boht of 'Bread' fame. He painted her portrait (above) and was filmed for a TV documentary with the result. Now he is waiting to move into his own studio. Today, at 59, he plans to paint the panorama of London landmarks immediately outside his living room window. It will be a view by night, pinpointing illuminations across the horizon. Ray's story shows there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

He slept in his car until that - like his home - was repossessed.



'Ben': Ben, now in his early 40s, was a Royal Marine - one of the best; a rare King's Badgeman. He served for seven years and left the Service a happily married man with two children. Life was good. But gradually Ben got into debt and things began to unravel; first his finances, then his marriage. Caught in a downward spiral of domestic and financial collapse he started drinking and, inevitably, lost his job.

A North-Easterner by birth, Ben gravitated towards London where he ended up living on the streets. What started as 'drinking to escape' turned into full-blown alcoholism and serious degeneration of health. When Ben came to Veterans Aid he had also become a victim of the violence that affects

the vulnerable street homeless.

Over the years he has been stabbed, beaten up and lost several teeth. The once proud King's Badgeman is a regular visitor to VA's centre in Victoria. He has been offered accommodation, access to detox programmes and regularly provided with new clothes and food.

Sadly he is not a success story - yet! But he knows in his heart that Veterans Aid won't give up on him. Quietly and politely he refuses further offers of help, preferring the street life to which he has become accustomed. But Ben still has a lifeline that will always be there - to the Veterans Family, of which he will always be a part.

Back to life

'Jeff': 'Potty about aircraft' from his youth, 82-year-old Jeff recalls the days he hung around Blackpool Squires Gate airport trying to 'get some flying.' Persistence paid off and the former Lancaster Royal Grammar School boy got his wish. In 1944 he joined the RAF to start pilot training. His World War 2 tales of rides hitched in US Dakotas, his first sight of flying bombs in Piccadilly, and the day he was arrested as a suspected spy all make compelling listening.

Over 60 years on, Jeff, a wanderer, decided to go to Gibraltar but found himself homeless there. Concerned about his welfare, Gibraltar Social Services contacted Veterans Aid. We were ready to collect him but at the last minute he returned to the UK by himself. His wild hair and woolly hat belied his still sharp mind and independent spirit. Jeff conforms to no stereotype of street homelessness. He was seriously distressed to arrive in London unable to access his

bank account or find anywhere to stay.

He says: 'I spent a wobbly first night on a chair in St Thomas' Hospital. I told them I was 82 and couldn't face a night on the streets.' In the morning he was directed to an organisation that gave him breakfast - 'in exchange for listening to a sermon', he says. A phone call to Veterans Aid followed. He continues: 'When I came here I was gob-smacked. I turned up and they knew all about me. I was broke and they gave me £70, put me in a decent hotel and for the first time I slept like a log.'

Jeff is certainly not the only ex-Serviceman to reach out to Veterans Aid from overseas. We have received calls for help from Canada, Hawaii, Argentina, New Zealand and Thailand among other places. Once you're a member of the ex-Service community, you're a member for life. Our ethos is applicable worldwide. That's what we mean by Veterans helping Veterans.

Once you're a member of the ex-Service community, you're a member for life

Financial summary for the year ended 30th September 2008

Income £888,309 (2007 : £757,308)

	2008 £	2007 £
Local Authority payments	380,797	362,452
Charges to hostel residents	33,603	30,455
Retirement home rents	55,561	59,750
Grants	140,396	115,332
Donations & Legacies	146,786	27,574
Fundraising & Sundry	44,508	10,429
Investment Income	86,658	151,316
	<u>£888,309</u>	<u>£757,308</u>

Expenditure £968,479 (2007: £693,464)

	2008 £	2007 £
Hostel & Retirement home running costs	557,901	482,167
London Relief Centre	315,619	139,206
Governance costs	63,296	49,665
Fundraising & Event Costs	31,663	22,426
	<u>£968,479</u>	<u>£693,464</u>

Net decrease in funds £80,170 (2007: £63,844 increase) excluding unrealised losses on investments of £217,214

Reserves at 30th September 2008

	2008 £	2007 £	
Hollenden House			
Endowment Reserve	1,524,819	1,732,166	permanent endowment reserve
Restricted Funds	945,368	979,149	funds donated for specified purposes
Designated Reserves	154,817	271,073	funds allocated for the development of a drop-in and detox centre in Central London
General Reserve	450,000	390,000	represents six months operating costs
	<u>3,075,004</u>	<u>3,372,388</u>	

Trustees' statement

This financial summary has been prepared to illustrate the main areas of ongoing expenditure by Veterans Aid, the principal sources of its income and the funds available.

The Board of Trustees confirms that this financial summary is taken from the draft accounts for the year and is subject to audit. The summary does not contain all the information necessary to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of Veterans Aid. Copies of the full accounts, once the audit is complete, will be filed with the Charities Commission and may be obtained from: Veterans Aid, 40 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1 0RE.

Signed

Robert Clinton, Honorary Treasurer

Who gives us grants for specific projects?

Supporting People funds for hostel	London Borough Tower Hamlets
Emergency Fund for immediate operations	Dulverton Trust
Supporting Alcohol & Drugs Treatment Work	Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation The Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors
Floating Support Work	Queen Mary's Roehampton Trust
Assistance with rent deposits & furniture	The Royal British Legion (TRBL)
Hostel Professional Support Worker	The Royal British Legion (TRBL)
Assistance with tri-Service cases	SSAFA Forces Help & Officers Assn
Relief Centre and NBH Outreach work	SSAFA Forces Help (C London)
RN and RM homeless Veterans	SEAFARERS UK & RN Benevolent Trust (RNBT)
Outreach work & Army homeless Veterans	ABF & Corps and Regimental Associations
RAF homeless Veterans	RAFBF
Ex-Merchant Navy homeless seafarers	Merchant Navy Welfare Board
Hostel heat and hot water system	RBL Attendants Company Trust
Whitworth House maintenance	Compton Housing Association
Advertising in The Big Issue	Palmer Capital Partners
Clothes, shoes & bedding	Hedley Foundation Queen Mary's Clothing Guild
Club, support and encouragement	Royal Hospital Chelsea, Victory Services, Union Jack Club
Household goods, cutlery etc	Many thoughtful people and organisations

Who helps us through general donations?

The following organisations

Army Benevolent Fund	Palmer Capital Partners
An anonymous Charitable Trust	Pearson Family Trust
BAE Systems, Head Office	Queen Mary's Roehampton Trust
Belgravia Traders Association	RAF Benevolent Fund
Chaplain General (Army) & RACD	Royal Artillery Charitable Fund
Compass Group UK & Ireland Ltd	Royal British Legion
Daily Telegraph	Royal Hospital Chelsea, Chaplaincy
Dulverton Trust	Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Aid Society
Ebury Wine Bar	Royal Warwickshire Regiment Charitable Fund
Expedition Kit Direct	Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation
Fellfoot Charitable Trust	Savoy Investment Management Ltd.
Fitton Trust	SEAFARERS UK
The Worshipful Company of Grocers	Sodexo Defence Services Ltd
Hedley Foundation	SSVC/BFBS
ING Real Estate Investment Management	Tom Hall Charitable Trust
Lancashire Fusiliers Compassionate Fund	Towergate Wilsons
Lloyds TSB Foundations	Townsend Family Charitable Trust
Marshall Aerospace	West Coast Trains Limited
McKinsey & Company	Westminster Foundation
The Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors	Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers

Innumerable members of the public, relatives, friends and others who understand what it means to be a homeless veteran

produced and paid for by



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