



**Welfare Office
216 Parachute Signal Squadron
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Colchester. CO2 7UT**

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**Royal Signals Association
Secretary**

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Email: welfare@royalsignalsassociation.co.uk



The aim of this guide is to outline the welfare help and guidance that may be provided to serving and ex serving Airborne Signallers (Parachute Trained)

Background

1. For the purposes of this guide, welfare is divided into 3 categories:
 - a. **Personal Support.** Personal support includes the provision and implementation of welfare support to parachute trained Airborne Signallers, including assistance in the event of hardship, sickness or injury

b. **Familial Support.** Familial support is provided for families of both serving and ex serving eligible members.

c. **Aftercare.** Aftercare is the enduring provision of support for ex members and their families once they have left the Service.

Welfare Support In-Service

2. Serving members of the Squadron and their dependents are normally supported by the unit Welfare Office who in turn are supported by the Royal Signals Association:

- **Airborne Signals Association.** See page 10 for further details.
- **The Royal Signals Association.** The Association addresses the relief of need, hardship and distress amongst past and present members of the Royal Signals and their dependents. See page 11 for further details

Post Service Support

3. Having left the service, ex members of Airborne Signals dependents are still entitled to assistance from the Royal Signals Association. As their needs are more various than in-service, this support may be provided by a number of organisations both statutory and charitable. This part of the guide provides details of the service charities, although in many instances they will need to prove that all sources of Government funding have first been explored.

4. If help is required then additional Regimental resources that can assist are:

a. **The Airborne Forces Security Fund (AFSF).** The AFSF provides financial assistance to all airborne soldiers, former airborne soldiers and their dependents that are in need, hardship or distress, as well as for any other purpose or purposes of a charitable nature in connection with eligible beneficiaries as the trustees shall determine. Applications for assistance are usually processed through the casework services of SSAFA Forces Help, (SSAFA FH), The Royal British Legion (TRBL).
Contact: Tel. civil: 01206 81 7079
Email: syfund@parachute-regiment.com

b. **The Royal Signals and Parachute Regimental Associations (PRA).** Through their extensive network of branches both associations provide welfare support and friendship to both serving and retired Airborne Signallers and their dependents in the local area.

Requests for Assistance

5. **Serving Officers and Soldiers.** Initial applications are to be made through the Squadron Welfare Office.

6. Retired Officers, Soldiers and their dependents. Applications in the first instance should be made through The Officers' Association, if appropriate, or the nearest SSAFA Branch or TRBL.

Applications made direct to RHQ Royal Signals may be referred to a nominated caseworker for an independent report.

Other Armed Forces Charities and Public Funds

7. Public Funds

a. **Services Personnel & Veterans Agency (SPVA)** provides support to both the serving and veteran community where a single contact with the Agency will grant access to customer information and advice on pay, pensions, compensation payments, records of service and medal entitlement.

Contact Tel: 0800 2277. Email: Veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.veterans-uk.info/index.htm

b. **Army Welfare Service (AWS).** The AWS and other secondary lines of support are normally accessed through Unit Welfare Offices. In addition a free confidential support telephone line is available to service users the number of which can be obtained from the Unit Welfare Office or Notice Boards.

c. **Armed Forces Bereavement Scholarship Scheme.** This scheme is administered through the SPVA. Contact Tel: 0800 169 2277. Website: www.veterans-uk.info/index.htm

d. **Veteran's Oyster card.** If you are receiving payments under the War Pensions Scheme or Guaranteed Income Payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, you can get a Veterans Oyster photocard to travel free on London's public transport, including most National Rail services.

For details: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/14424.aspx>

8. Mental Health

a. **Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH)** There are 15 military centres providing outpatient mental health care in the UK. All are staffed by psychiatrists and mental health nurses with access to clinical psychologists and mental health social workers, offering treatments including medication, psychological therapies and environmental adjustment where appropriate.

Further detail: <http://www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/23246.aspx>

Contact in Colchester:

Department of Community Mental Health

Reed Hall House, Merville Barracks, Colchester.C02 7UT

Mil: 94660 7057 | Civ: 01206 817057 | Fax: 01206 817059

b. **The Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme (VRMHP).** Formerly known as MAP, provides mental health assessments for veterans and reservists who have concerns about their mental health as a result of service.

The VRMHP is available to veterans who have deployed since 1982 and are experiencing mental health challenges as a result of military service. The service provides a full mental health assessment by a Consultant Psychiatrist with accompanying guidance on care and treatment for the veteran's local clinical team. Referrals to the VRMHP will preferably be made by the individual's GP however self referrals will now be accepted for this service. The VRMHP investigates patients' mental health concerns and, so far as possible, it provides a diagnosis if the veteran has a mental health disorder, and recommends appropriate management through the NHS, if required. Advice will also be provided on the extensive support network that is available to veterans and their families in the UK.

It is recommended to visit your GP first to get a referral but self-referrals are accepted:

DCMH Chilwell

Chetwynd Barracks

Chilwell

Nottingham

NG9 5HA

Freephone Helpline: 0800 0326258

Email: aphcsedcmhchl-vmhp@mod.uk

c. Combat Stress is the UK's leading military charity specialising in the care of veterans' mental health. They look after those who are suffering from a psychological condition related to their service career. Their services are provided free to veterans.

Further details: <http://www.combatstress.org.uk/>

Contact:

Helpline: 0800 138 1619

General enquiries: 01372 587 000

Email: contactus@combatstress.org.uk

Support

8. Armed Forces Charities. The following charities/organisations provide support to the service community:

a. The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association Forces

Help (SSAFA FH). In addition to providing in-service support

SSAFA FH has a network of volunteer caseworkers supported by a national Head Office. The caseworkers are able to give assistance in seeking funds from service and civilian charities. For details of the nearest local SSAFA FH go to: www.ssafa.org.uk/contactUs.asp

SSAFA's other services include:

(1) Housing advice, Tel: 020 74639224 or email:

housing@ssafa.org.uk

(2) Stepping Stone Homes. Temporary accommodation for separated dependents and their children. Contact:

(a) SSAFA FH Longside, PO Box 82, Blaydon LD0 NE21

6YY. email: longside@ssafa.org.uk

(b) SSAFA FH Gildea, PO Box 301 HA5 4XN, email gildea@ssafa.org.uk

b. **The War Widows' Association of Great Britain (WWA)**. The WWA exists to improve the conditions of War Widows and their dependants in Great Britain. The War Widows' Association of Great Britain c/o 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA Tel: 0845 2412 189 or email: info@warwidows.org.uk

c. **CRUSE (Forces Support)**. Cruse Bereavement Care promotes the well-being of bereaved people and enables anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. As well as providing free care to all bereaved people, the charity also offers information, support and training services to those who are looking after them. Tel: 0844 4779400 email: helpline@cruse.org.uk or visit the website at: www.cruse.org.uk

d. **Personnel Recovery Centres (PRC)** The PRCs offer a residential capacity to those wounded, injured and sick personnel from across the armed forces undergoing recovery as well as providing facilities for day attendees; they are not hospitals, rehabilitation or physiotherapy centres. Individuals assigned to a recovery centre must be self-medicating and independently mobile.

The centres are located in Tidworth, Colchester, Catterick and Edinburgh and are able to take advantage of the full range of welfare, medical, rehabilitation, education and resettlement facilities.

The PRC are open to serving wounded, injured and sick personnel of the Armed Forces and veterans on a case by case priority basis.

Further details: <https://www.gov.uk/defence-recovery-and-personnel-recovery-centres>

Support and Funding

9. The following charities provide funding to the service and ex service community:

a. **ABF The Soldiers Charity**. As the Army's National Charity it works in partnership with the Royal Signals Association to provide financial support to meet the need of serving personnel and veterans. The assistance given to individuals includes: individual Grants; Respite Breaks; Holidays; Care Home Fee Top Ups; Annuities and Bursaries.

Requests for assistance are managed through the regimental charitable funds.

The ABF manages both the Falklands and Gulf Trust Funds on behalf of all Regiments.

Help for Heroes Quick Reaction Fund. H4H have committed to provide funds to be shared between ABF The Soldiers' Charity and other Service Benevolent Funds to be used to provide direct, practical support to wounded and injured soldiers and exceptionally their families since

9/11. The grant provides individual benevolence 'to support the recipient in any reasonable way that helps their recovery or eases their circumstances'. The intent is to provide swift funding for those in most need. The H4H QRF grant is not subject to means testing. Further details in AGAI Vol 3 Chap 99.

Individual Recovery Fund. ABF The Soldiers' Charity together with H4H and other charitable organisations have committed funds for activities within the Individual Recovery Plan of each wounded, injured and/or sick soldier. The funding is targeted to provide opportunities in retraining and resettlement. Further details in AGAI Vol 3 Chap 99. Provides grants on behalf of the Regiment to about 80 national charities that support serving soldiers, veterans and families.

b. **The Royal British Legion (TRBL).** The RBL has a national network of welfare support. For requests for assistance call the helpline on **08457 725 725** (Mon-Fri, 9am to 5pm - except Public Holidays) or use the online knowledge base (<http://support.britishlegion.org.uk/>) for more information.

- (1) War Disablement Pensions & War Widow's or Widower's Pension
- (2) Compensation Claims against the MOD for Personal Injury caused by Negligence
- (3) Disability
- (4) Independent Inquest Advice
- (5) Grants and Loans
- (6) Care and Welfare Breaks Homes
- (7) Poppy Calls
- (8) Resettlement, Learning and Work

c. **RBL Women's Section**

The RBL WS provides care and financial support to all those within the Armed Forces community; from servicemen and veterans to military spouses and children. Their flagship schemes include educational bursaries, family welfare breaks and financial grants to those in need.

Telephone: 0203 207 2181

Fax: 0203 207 2358

Email: women@britishlegion.org.uk

Web site: <http://www.rblws.org.uk/>

d. **British Limbless Ex Service Men's Association (BLESMA).**

BLESMA is the national charity for limbless serving and ex serving men and women and their dependents, widows and widowers. It is the charity that directly supports all our service men and women who lose limbs, the use of limbs or eyes, or the sight of an eye in the service of our country. For more information telephone 0208 5901124 or email: headquarters@blesma.org or visit the website at www.blesma.org.

e. **Blind Veterans UK (formally St Dunstan's).** Provides support for blind and seriously visually impaired ex service personnel. For more information telephone 0207 723 5021 or visit the website at: www.blindveterans.org.uk

Employment

10. The following provide assistance and guidance leading to employment opportunities:

a. **The Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI).** RBLI offers a range of services aimed to provide support to members of the Armed Forces and their families, with an emphasis on gaining sustainable employment and independence.

Their support can be tailored to meet individual need and can include:

- (1) Civilian employment programme, careers information and advice.
- (2) Training and workshops including vocational assessment, CV writing and interview techniques.
- (3) Back to work programmes.
- (4) Housing – a range of housing solutions from family housing to high dependency nursing care.
- (5) Residential care.

For details telephone the Employment and Assessment Helpline on 0800 319 6844 or visit the website at: www.rbli.co.uk

b. **The Poppy Factory.** The Poppy Factory specialises in supporting wounded, injured or sick veterans of all ages to gain employment throughout the UK. Additional services provided include employability, mentoring, work placements, Vocational open days and work shadowing. For more information visit the website at www.poppyfactory.org

b. **The Regular Forces Employment Association (RFEA).** The RFEA is able to assist those leaving the Armed Forces to find and to remain in employment throughout their working lives. This is done as part of the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) for up to two years after discharge and thereafter is done on behalf of the Services Benevolent Funds. For more information visit the website at www.rfea.org.uk/contactus.

c. **SORTED!** A number of key Armed Forces charities have joined forces to create **SORTED** which provides a single point of access to a range of employment related support delivered by established charities. If you are looking for work or want advice on training to improve your career prospects, contact: Tel: 0800 319 6845 or www.sorted.org.uk.

Housing

11. In addition to the SSAFA housing advice service, the following can provide housing support:

a. Haig Housing is the leading UK housing provider for ex-Service people and the strategic housing partner of Help for Heroes. The main object of the Trust is to provide housing assistance to the Service and ex-Service community and this is delivered through various options including:

- (1) General needs housing let to ex-Service people at affordable rent. Call 020 8685 5777
- (2) Special needs housing to rent or part purchase through a shared ownership scheme aimed to help severely wounded and disabled Service and ex-Service people. Where wounded and disabled Service and ex-Service people wish to purchase by themselves Haig can advise, find and negotiate purchases. Call 020 8685 5782

For those with significant medical needs arising from operational and non-operational traumatic causes there is no requirement for a specific length of Service. This housing

scheme is open to, amongst others, those with Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) and other compensation payments.

For more information visit the website at www.haighousing.org.uk

“Coming Home” is the fund raising campaign for Haig Housing.

12. **SPACES.** Managed by Riverside ECHG, working in partnership with the MoD, assists single Service Leavers to find suitable housing prior to being discharged. The project reduces the likelihood of ex-service personnel/veterans becoming homeless or sleeping rough after discharge.

Contact: Tel. 01748 833797/830191/872940 or visit websites:
www.spaces.org.uk or www.riverside.org.uk

13. **Veteran's Aid.** Provides direct and immediate help to vulnerable Veterans with:

- a. Accommodation
- b. Financial assistance
- c. Food and clothing
- d. Advice and advocacy

Contact Freephone: Tel. 0800 012 68 67 or 020 7828 2468 (they will always call you back).



Airborne Signals Association (ASA) Membership

Membership to the Association is open to all ex members (and their wives/husbands) who have ever served with Airborne or Air Assault Signals, irrespective of rank or age and is free of charge. The Association is keen to increase its membership and it is usually the ex members of the Squadron who spread the word on its behalf as to what is happening. If you meet anyone who qualifies to become a member of the Association please pass on my details and encourage them to get in touch.

Although the Association is not resourced as the Royal Signals Association, there is a lot we can do with regard to members seeking advice and information. We can act as a signpost to point members in the direction of the relevant agencies who will be able help with any queries of problems they may have.

One of the Associations main aims remains the annual pilgrimage to Caythorpe village in Lincolnshire where a weekend of events with the former and current soldiers of the Squadron and the villagers culminates with a service of remembrance in the village church of St Vincent.

Please ensure that you keep me informed of any changes in contact details so that you are not missed off our mailing lists. Also, if you no longer wish to receive our newsletters please let me know.

ASA Contact details

Unit Welfare Officer

216 (Para) Signal Squadron

Merville Barracks

Colchester

Essex

CO2 7UT

Email: 216SigSqn-MTO@mod.uk

Tel Mil: 94660 5505 | Tel Civ:(0044) 01206 815505 | Fax: 01206 815487

Royal Signals Association (RSA)



The Royal Signals Association (RSA) was formed in 1920 at the birth of the Corps from the Royal Engineers.

The objects of The Association are:

To provide comfort and relief either generally or individually to past and present signallers and their dependants who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.

To foster comradeship and morale within the Corps family, serving and retired.

Structure of the RSA

Working within Regimental Headquarters Royal Signals, based in Blandford Camp, Dorset, are the RSBF Welfare Section and the RSA Membership Section.

The RSBF Welfare Section assists signallers by way of grants of money or paying for items to reduce hardship and distress.

The RSA Membership Section maintains records of all the branches and affiliated associations located throughout the country, plus their members.

RSA Contact details

The Royal Signals Association
HQ Royal Signals
Griffin House
Blandford Camp
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT11 8RH

Website: www.royalsignals.org/rsa