



# Annual Review and Impact Report 2023-2024



The White Ensign Association

# ***THE OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION***

(A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee founded in June 1958)

Charity No. 206787

Company No. 00606887

On the 16th July 1958 under the Presidency of David John Robarts (Chairman of the National Provincial Bank) the Council of Management met for the first time and agreed to form a non-profit making, charitable Association.

## **The objects of the Association are:-**

To assist and promote the interests of those who are serving or have at any time served in the Royal Navy, in the Royal Marines, in any Royal Naval or Royal Marine Reserve, or in the former Women's Royal Naval Service or Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service in such ways as shall from time to time be thought fit, and in particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by providing:

- (a) general guidance in connection with investments, house purchase, insurance (including educational costs and school fees); pensions and commutation;
- (b) appropriate advice and guidance, through employment services, to deliver enduring support to both individuals preparing for, and to those seeking, civilian employment, including the establishment of small businesses;
- (c) general information and advice to those leaving the Service and seeking to settle in civilian life; and
- (d) information and advice on general personal administrative matters in suitable cases appropriate to the position and facilities of the Association.

The income and property of the Association, whence-soever derived, shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Association as set forth in the Memorandum of Association, and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly, by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit, to the members of the Association.

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Front cover: Council member Admiral Sir George Zambellas paramotoring  
along the Spanish coast near Cape Trafalgar in October 2023.

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Council of Management, President and Vice Presidents. The Navy Board, Flag and Royal Marine General Officers, Naval Base Commanders, Flotilla Commanders, Commanding Officers of HM Ships, Submarines, Air Squadrons, Commandos, Support Units & Establishments, Naval Resettlement Information Officers, Companies subscribing to the Corporate Partnership Scheme, Individual Life Members, Friends & Supporters of the Association.

# *The White Ensign Association Annual Review and Impact Report (edition 64)*



*HMS Belfast, our HQ.*

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# THE WHITE ENSIGN ASSOCIATION LIMITED

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His Majesty The King

## ***PRESIDENT***

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*His Majesty The King - Our Royal Patron.*

# *Chairman's Welcome*

*Captain Lance Batchelor RNR*



As the new Chair of the White Ensign Association (WEA), I am delighted to pen the welcome to this year's Annual Review. Having been a trustee of the WEA for the past decade this is a charity which now runs through my blood. It is therefore an immense privilege and responsibility for me to step up in this new capacity and indeed to do so at what is a hugely exciting time for the WEA. More on that in a moment.

But first I want to pay tribute to my successor, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope. During his watch as Chair of the WEA, he steered the WEA with professionalism, calm and strategic vision, applying a deft touch on the tiller to oversee the safe passage of the ship through a period of transformative change, a subject to which I shall return shortly. Thank you, Sir Mark.

Early in my own watch, following the review of Royal Patronages by Buckingham Palace, we were deeply honoured to be informed that His Majesty The King was "delighted" to retain His Patronage of the WEA. His Majesty had been our longstanding Patron as the former Prince of Wales and we felt enormously privileged that He wished to continue His Patronage of our charity in His new role as monarch.

In addition to the wonderful news about His Majesty, there has been a genuine transformation of the WEA since the last Annual Review was published. As part of a bold and ambitious new strategy, there has been a welcome increase in our outputs and a doubling of our staff to deliver that outcome.

We are both expanding the existing services that we provide to our beneficiaries as well as introducing new areas of support to the naval community. By way of example, we now have a full-time regional manager for Scotland and Overseas. Therefore, among the highlights of the last year has been our inaugural visit to the permanent naval facility in Bahrain as well as the establishment of a regular drumbeat of visits across the naval estate in Scotland, from Faslane in the west, to Arbroath in the north and Rosyth in the east.

Our three regional managers have also dealt with a notable uptick in armed forces pension enquiries across both the serving and veteran naval communities following the Government's implementation of the 2015 Pension Remedy (formerly known as the McCloud remedy). They are also now reaching out to the important naval population standing by submarines in build at Barrow as well as the pockets of naval personnel serving in RAF air stations as part of the joint carrier air wings.

With our newly expanded employment services team, we assisted half of all naval service leavers last year and are now reaching out proactively to 80% of those individuals who are being medically discharged to offer our support. Our service for those wanting to make claims under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme is also proving to be a conspicuous success.

Finally, as we go to press, I am delighted to report that we have just gone live with a Financial Wellbeing Manager who is providing financial awareness, budget coaching and debt management guidance. This is an important new service to support not only individual beneficiaries but also the Royal Navy's divisional system and the Royal Marines regimental system.

As you turn the pages of this Annual Review, you will come across an Impact Report section. This captures more of the detail in terms of how the new strategy is bearing fruit regarding the increased support which we can now offer and what that means to our individual beneficiaries.

However, none of this would be possible without the generosity of our charitable funders. The Annual Review therefore provides me with a very public opportunity to thank them all: the Gosling Foundation, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, Greenwich Hospital, the Bernard Sunley Foundation, the C A Redfern Foundation and Trinity House.



***D-Day 80 Dinner: our guests mingle on the Quarterdeck of HMS Belfast***

I also want to express my gratitude to our corporate and individual supporters. Their generosity has enabled us to achieve our fundraising targets at both our inaugural WEA Maritime Seminar held in January and our more recent D-Day 80 Dinner held onboard HMS BELFAST. You can read articles about both of those exciting initiatives later in this Review.

Thanks to our charitable funders, our corporate partners and our individual supporters, all of the substantial progress that we have made over the past year has been underpinned by the laying of strong financial foundations.

So, if I was to sum up in one simple phrase what this new strategy means to me during my two years as Chair, it is about ‘doing more, sustainably’ in order that we can offer our beneficiaries the best and most comprehensive service possible both now and in the future.

I wanted to close by saying that not only am I privileged to work with the naval community as a trustee and now Chair of the WEA but also as the Lead NED on the Navy Board. In that capacity I have the privilege of working closely with the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key. I know that he is a huge advocate of what the WEA does for the people that he leads and indeed the wider naval family.

On that note, I think that this is an appropriate moment for me to bring my ‘Chairman’s Welcome’ to a close and hand you over to the First Sea Lord. Sir Ben has, once again, done us the great honour of writing his own update on the Royal Navy which you will see just over the page.

I hope you will enjoy reading that as well as all the other articles you will find in this 2023-2024 edition of our Annual Review.

# ***WEA ANNUAL REVIEW 2023-2024***

***by Admiral Sir Ben Key, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff***



As I turn pen to paper for the Association this year, I am struck once again by the volume and breadth of what the Royal Navy has achieved over the last 12 months. As Fleet Commander, as Commander Joint Operations and now as First Sea Lord I have over recent years seen the very best that the men and women of the Royal Navy can and do achieve on behalf of the Nation.

Twelve months ago, I reflected that Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine had changed many of our assumptions, with a commensurate uptick in our operational activity. A year on I now recognise that I am running out of superlatives to describe the increase in global instability and concomitant impact on us all.

It is naturally the operational activity that comes to the fore in our achievements in 2023. The sailors, marines and civil servants of the Royal Navy have continued to provide steadfast support to Ukraine through the provision of training, equipment and munitions and supporting their strategic thinking. Over 1000 Ukrainian marines have been trained by UK Commando Forces. We have been ever present on NATO's maritime flank too, conducting deterrence activity against Russia's Navy, forcing them to split their focus and denying the ability to focus efforts solely on the Black Sea.

In December 2023 the Secretary of State for Defence announced the launch of the Maritime Capability Coalition for Ukraine. Jointly led by Norway and the UK, it will underpin our efforts to set the Ukrainian Navy on a long-term path of growth in terms of both capacity and capability.

In the spring, in the midst of Sudan's escalating civil war, Royal Marines of 40 Commando and HMS Lancaster, were central in the Defence effort to evacuate British civilians caught in the crossfire. In Khartoum and Port Sudan they helped bring hundreds of British citizens and dependents to safety, showcasing again the unwavering commitment of the United Kingdom's armed forces to protecting its citizens in times of crisis.

In April, HMS Audacious returned to the UK after a record 363 days deployed to the Mediterranean. Whilst there she conducted exercises and operations in support of national and NATO interests during what was the longest deployment to date of an Astute class submarine.

The latter part of 2023 saw both our aircraft carriers at sea operating F-35 jets simultaneously. HMS Queen Elizabeth and her Strike Group, operating in Europe, were placed under NATO Command for the first-time during Exercise Neptune Strike. Meanwhile, off the east coast of the USA, HMS Prince of Wales conducted F-35 flight testing and trials, continuing to push the boundaries with which the combination of fifth generation aircraft and carrier will operate for the next 50 years.

In November, as NATO's newest member, Finland hosted Exercise Freezing Winds. In keeping with the exercise name, Royal Marines faced icy blasts as they stormed ashore alongside Finnish and American, honing the amphibious and cold-weather warfare skills for which they are world renowned. It was a potent demonstration of NATO's ability to operate in a region increasingly scrutinised by Russia.



***HMS DIAMOND firing in anger whilst deployed in the Red Sea***

As 2023 drew to a close, with instability growing once again the Middle East, the Royal Navy was at the forefront of the Defence response. RFA Lyme Bay and RFA Argus, recently deployed as the central ships of the Littoral Response Group (South), quickly turned their hand to live operations, supporting the delivery of 87 tonnes of live saving humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza on New Year's Day. HMS Diamond in the Red Sea conducted the first operational use of Sea Viper, targeting Houthi weapons that seek to challenge the freedom of navigation and safe passage of maritime trade on which our economy depends.

Throughout, somewhere beneath the ocean, the on-patrol SSBN continued to keep an ever-vigilant watch with the Nation's nuclear deterrent. It remains as important to our national defence as ever, but it is also clear that the task of delivering CASD is becoming more challenging. The ship's companies and thousands of men and women involved in the Defence Nuclear Enterprise the length and breadth of the United Kingdom are the reason that this last line of defence has been maintained now for over 54 unbroken years.

So 2023 has been quite a year, seeing the Royal Navy operate once again across every one of the world's oceans. From the freezing shores of the Baltic to the sun-drenched Persian Gulf to tropical South Pacific Islands sailors and marines have trained, exercised and operated in every environment, safeguarding our national interests and promoting global security. Their hallmarks have been adaptability, resilience, and unwavering dedication, thriving in the face of diverse challenges. The sheer variety of activity continues to demonstrate the utility and importance of maritime power to our island nation.

### ***Future Royal Navy***

Last year was not just about operational activity – work behind the frontline by thousands of dedicated sailors, marines, civil servants, contractors and industry partners saw us continue to introduce new equipment and capabilities as the Royal Navy continues to evolve for the 21st Century.

With the signing in January 2023 of the contract for three Fleet Solid Support ships to support the CSG for decades, we now have sixteen ships and submarines in build or on order across the United Kingdom. Last year steel was cut on HMS Active, the second Type 31 frigate, and HMS Birmingham, the third Type 26 frigate – ships that will be the backbone of the surface fleet for many years to come.



***HMS VENTURER in build at Rosyth***

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary welcomed PROTEUS and STIRLING CASTLE to the fleet. From inception through rapid procurement and very soon active service, these ships are demonstrating once again the flexibility, adaptability and skillset of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary who remain an essential element of maritime power, underpinning our status as a global navy.

The Royal Marines Future Commando Force journey continued with unprecedented speed of delivery of equipment to the front line including raiding craft, light vehicles and uncrewed aerial systems. Those deployed with LRG(S) are the immediate beneficiaries of much of this equipment.

Beyond the headline grabbing ships, are many other projects and trials going on the length and breadth of the country. From developing our anti-submarine warfare capabilities to testing and operating ever larger and more complex uncrewed aircraft to experimenting with quantum technologies that will soon have real world applications we remain tireless in our efforts to increase our operational effectiveness and lethality.

## ***People***

As always, it remains the people of the Service who are fundamental to all the successes that we achieved in 2023 and will continue to do so.



***The Royal Navy contributing to  
His Majesty King Charles III's Coronation parade***

Whether on global operations or the most prestigious of ceremonial events, the most significant of which was His Majesty King Charles' Coronation in May, they have espoused the very best of our values. Every fighting arm of the Service was on Parade in central London. Whether part of the procession, lining the route or supporting events around the United Kingdom, sailors and marines, regular and reservist showed the very best of the Royal Navy.

Our efforts to transform the technology of the Navy for the 21st Century do not stop at ships and technology. Published in 2023 was the Haythornthwaite review of Armed Forces incentivisation which reported that we have to significantly modernise the offer we make to our people, reflecting the way they want to work and want to be recognised and rewarded.

So we are embarking on perhaps the most wide-ranging review in a century of how we recruit, employ and retain our people and how we look after their families. We are testing crewing models for ships now and in the future, understanding where lean crewing and automation can be exploited. We seek to make it easier to join and leave too, allowing those who wish to re-enter seamlessly, bringing valuable skills and experience from elsewhere into the Service.

Our increased focus on recruitment is already paying dividends. Whilst recruitment changes introduced during the pandemic impacted numbers joining during 2023, additional focus put in place is now seeing record numbers start at HMS Raleigh, a trend we seek to continue into 2024.

We are being unafraid to act radically; our people are our most important asset and in the competition for talent in the information age we need to ensure our offer is both attractive and competitive, incorporating the world leading training and unique experiences that only we can offer.

It will ensure that we, alongside our maritime enterprise partners around the coast, will be modern employers, brimming with talent to protect our maritime seafaring nation. It is nothing less than is expected of us by those we serve.

The White Ensign Association continues to play a crucial role as part of the full spectrum of support available to the women and men of the Royal Navy, both serving and retired. Through its bold new strategy announced early in 2023, it is reaching more people than ever, supporting over 4,000 in the last 12 months alone. Whether assisting Service leavers searching for civilian employment, educating Phase 2 trainees in managing their personal finances or delivering armed forces pension awareness briefs, the work of the Association makes a real difference for our people and their families, our most important asset.



It is fitting for me to close with a tribute to Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope. For the last two years he has offered valuable leadership and counsel to the Association as Chair. As he now steps down, I offer my thanks and those of the whole Naval family to him. I also welcome Lance Batchelor, a well-known friend and advocate to the Service to the role of Chair. I look forward to continuing our shared commitment to the women and men of the Service. As 2023 was hugely busy yet successful, 2024 is certain to be no different. The level and variety of challenges we face is only growing as global instability seems to continue to rise. In the face of that, we continue to do all we can to lead the Service to further success, and evolve to be the Navy the Nation needs for the 21st Century.

***Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope being piped aboard HMS BELFAST at the White Ensign Association D-Day 80 commemorative dinner.***

# *White Ensign Association Impact Report*

Welcome to the Impact Report section of our Annual Review. Here we would like to provide you with a flavour of how we have supported our beneficiaries over the past year.

## *What do we do?*

Our mission is to deliver informed guidance to the naval community on:

- *armed forces pensions, armed forces compensation and other personal financial matters;*
- *civilian employment, retraining and resettlement; and*
- *access to professional services for advice on personal, welfare and domestic matters.*

This Impact Report sets out how we have delivered against that mission in support of serving and veteran members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary and their families.

## *What are the headlines?*

In the past 12 months we have been implementing a new strategy to better enable us to meet the needs of the naval community. We have done this by expanding both our services and our staff. The result is that:

- We have assisted around half of all Service Leavers from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines;
- Our expanded employment services team has more than doubled the number of people who we have been able to support in their search for civilian employment;
- Our enlarged team of regional managers has met the demand from those individuals who are in scope for the 2015 Pension Remedy and want to understand its impact on their armed forces pensions;
- Our Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) Manager has helped individuals to successfully claim a total of over £325,000 from the AFCS; and
- Our newly established full-time regional manager post in Scotland has enabled us to double the number of individuals who we have assisted with casework support compared to when we provided only a part-time service.



Please read on to see what people have said about the support which they have received from the WEA and also for a more detailed breakdown of our year in numbers.

## ***How many beneficiaries have we reached?***

Over the past 12 months, the WEA has supported more than 4,500 members of the naval community. This has included members of the serving population, veterans and family members. Assistance has been provided by delivering presentations to collective audiences through to one-to-one support either through the conduct of personal interviews or individual casework support. 72% of our beneficiaries have been RN ratings and RM other ranks and 28% have been officers.

## ***How have we helped our beneficiaries?***

### ***Outreach***

Through a regular programme of briefings by our three regional managers, we have supported Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel throughout their service – from soon after they join, then again during their careers and finally as they prepare to leave for ‘civvy street’:

***Financial Awareness Lectures.*** For those in training, our regional managers have delivered financial awareness lectures (FALs) to Phase 2 trainees, from Royal Marines at CTCRM Lympstone in the West to Royal Navy engineering branch trainees at HMS SULTAN in the East. We are also now delivering FALs to individuals from the RN logistics branch who complete their professional training at the Defence College of Logistics and Personnel Administration, a tri-Service establishment located at Worthy Down near Winchester. In the past year we have delivered 20 FALs to a total audience of 686.



***David Scholey delivering a Financial Awareness Lecture at Worthy Down.***

A Divisional Leading Hand responsible for mentoring a cohort of Phase 2 trainees through their training provided the following feedback after a FAL delivered by Dave Scholey, our Regional Manager East:

***“this is just the sort of brief they need, some of them don’t know how to run a bank account, let alone manage savings or debt. The part on pensions could actually get them to consider staying for a career.”***

And one of the trainees who received a FAL from Marty Small, our Regional Manager West said this:

***“Thank you for a well delivered and informative Financial brief you gave to our troop at CTCRM. Very insightful for me in understanding my AFPS15 pension. You explained a complex subject in a very clear and concise way, talking us through our options. We all discussed looking into Added Pension AFPS15 and seeking financial advice in regards to savings now and in the long term.”***

***Pension Awareness Briefings.*** During people's careers, our regional managers have continued to provide a regular programme of pension awareness briefings to the naval community across RN, RM and tri-service units. We have also been harnessing the power of 21st century technology to deliver these presentations online too. In the past year, 30 pension awareness briefings have been delivered to a total audience of 1,719.



***Marty Small delivering a Pension Awareness Briefing at HMS Drake.***

A particular highlight was supporting the Ministry of Defence annual pension awareness week. Supported by our other two regional managers answering questions in the online chatroom, our Regional Manager East, Dave Scholey, delivered a webinar to an online audience of over 650 people who had dialled in from around the UK and overseas locations too. This was double the number who had attended the equivalent presentation the previous year. The comments in the chat box at the end of the presentation demonstrated that the online session was extremely well received by the audience:

**“thanks for a brilliant and succinct presentation”;**

**“thank you for a really insightful period”; and**

**“thank you, very informative and helpful.”**

***Your Future presentations.*** As people prepare to leave the Service, we have delivered ‘Your Future’ presentations to Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel at units across the length and breadth of the UK. 59 briefings were delivered to a total audience of 579.



***Andy Leaver delivering a Your Future presentation at Rosyth.***

These presentations make a positive difference to Service leavers as they transition from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines to 'civvy street', as demonstrated by the feedback we received from these two beneficiaries:

**"I attended the 'Your Future' presentation from Marty Small. It was by far the best and most informative briefing during my last 12 months' resettlement journey. Articulate and engaging, Marty gauged the perfect balance when informing the mixed length of service group. All of my questions and concerns were satisfied and I now feel wholly educated on my future pension options and the services available from the WEA."**

*(Royal Marines Major).*

**"Right from the initial contact with my Regional Manager, Marty Small, the guidance and signposting was excellent. Marty was very knowledgeable and the 'Your Future' presentation was informative and pitched at the right level for everyone to understand. This is the first time I have actually understood my pension/EDP options at exit, which has allowed me to make informed choices in regards to my pension benefits and financial planning. It is a great feeling knowing that I have the support of the WEA if required."**

*(Royal Navy Chief Petty Officer)*

### **Personal Interviews**

Many individuals who attend the Your Future and pension awareness briefings then request to have personal interviews with our regional managers. These 1-2-1s might take place immediately afterwards in the unit or in the form of an MS Teams meeting held online. In the past year, 528 personal interviews have been conducted by our three regional managers.

The combination of a Your Future presentation followed by a personal interview helps to deliver a positive impact, as we heard from the following beneficiary following the assistance provided to him by our Regional Manager West and London:

**"Marty Small delivered a superb pensions/resettlement brief and personal interview that has equipped me to make the right decision for my circumstances. His very relevant Service leaver experience and clear explanation of the options available tailored to the different cadres in the room was excellent and made considerably more sense than previous briefs I have received on this subject. He kindly assisted me in interpreting my 75/15 Armed Forces Pension Calculator results, taking into account the 2015 Pension Remedy. His insightful explanation and guidance has been pivotal in our decision to maximise lump sums for my wife and myself and will have a hugely positive impact on our future retirement/part time working plans and support to our 18 year old daughter."**

*(Lieutenant Commander Alastair Castle Royal Navy)*



## *Casework support from our regional managers*

In the past 12 months, our three regional managers have dealt with 736 individual items of casework support. Of that total, 190 were veterans and 11 were family members. 60% of the requests related to personal finance matters, of which 84% related to armed forces pensions. A particular seam of work in the area of armed forces pensions has been our response to enquiries from those individuals who are in scope for the 2015 Pension Remedy. This remedy was implemented by the Government on 1st October 2023 and we have been assisting both serving personnel and veterans who have sought our guidance on what the remedy means for them, particularly once they receive their Remediable Service Statement setting out the options available to them under the remedy. In this context, Andy Leaver, our regional manager for Scotland and Overseas, received this feedback:

**“I recently received my Remediable Service Statement (RSS) for my Service Pension. It presented me with numerous choices to consider and although I had a clear goal in mind, deciphering the letter and its complexities proved challenging ... Andy’s guidance was exceptional ... he meticulously walked me through every aspect of the RSS; clarifying how figures were calculated and highlighting the implications of each available option. His thorough explanations provided me with the confidence I needed to make informed decisions about my Armed forces pension.”**

*(Captain Richard Moss Royal Navy)*

The following feedback on the support provided by our Regional Manager East, Dave Scholey, demonstrates the value which this support provides at what can often be a challenging time for someone leaving the Service:

**“When I submitted my notice after 32 years’ service, I was completely in the dark with regards to understanding my pension options, how I should go about finding out what I might be entitled to, and I had no idea that I had to apply for it. I’d never heard of a PEN1 . I’d never heard of a PEN1 and believed my pension would just be given automatically ... Without David by my side this process would have caused me much stress at a time when leaving the service is already stressful. Knowing that David was available to talk to and walk me through the whole process took a lot of pressure off me and allowed me to concentrate on finding future employment outside the Royal Navy. His knowledge on pensions and the application process has ensured I will be leaving the service a happy man with no concerns when it comes to choices I made when applying for my service pension.”**

*(WOMA Paul-James Innes RN)*

In addition to assisting with armed forces pension matters, our regional managers have assisted beneficiaries by guiding them to members of our Panel of Professional Advisers to receive advice across a spectrum of matters, including mortgages, wealth management, residential conveyancing and divorce. In the past 12 months, 6% of their casework has concerned enquiries relating to separation and divorce.



## *Employment Services*

Those preparing to leave the Service, together with the veteran community, also draw on the support provided by the WEA’s employment services team. This team has tripled in size over the past 12 months enabling us to enhance the support we provide to those in the naval community seeking civilian employment. Among other things, our Director of Employment, Adam Marchant-Wincott, and our Employment consultant, Julie Daly, are now holding monthly webinars with these individuals to talk about things such as CV writing and interview preparation. As one grateful customer put it:

*WEA attending a CTP Fair – Newbury*

**“The White Ensign Association has been incredibly supportive throughout my resettlement and job hunt. Their expertise guided me in crafting my CV and connecting with potential employers. I wholeheartedly recommend them to fellow military personnel transitioning into civilian life.”**

*(Leading Seaman Rico Macaspac – left the RN in May 24)*



The expansion of our employment services team also means that we are now able to attend the Career Transition Partnership employment fairs which are held near centres of naval population. This has helped to put us in contact with even more naval Service Leavers to help them in their job search as demonstrated by the following piece of feedback:



**“I am Andrew Broomfield, and I am about to leave the Royal Navy having completed my 22 years’ service.**

**I initially reached out to the White Ensign Association seeking advice and help with my pension and the application process.**

**I met Julie Daly and David Scholey from the WEA at a recent Careers Fair in Newbury and I found them very friendly and helpful. I discovered that there was a lot more on offer than just help with my pension. I had a further meeting with David who went through everything in detail with my pension and helped me to complete all the relevant paperwork in the application process. I found this rewarding as he helped my understanding more how pensions work and my entitlements.**

**Shortly after completing the pension application process, I got in touch with Julie who has been helping me with my future employment preparation and has given me a whole tonne of advice which is fantastic. She has even put me in touch with one of their Mentors who helped me prepare for interviews. I’m pleased to say I’ve now got my dream job.**

**The White Ensign Association is an excellent service and I really appreciate everything David and Julie have done for me along the way. I highly recommend them to anyone who needs help with pensions and their future.”**

*(LS(MW) Andrew Broomfield – left the RN in July 2024)*

Expanding our employment services team has meant that over the past 12 months we have been able to more than double the number of beneficiaries we have been able to assist as they prepare themselves in their search for civilian employment, including Petty Officer Jonathan Horrell who provided the following feedback:

**“I’m currently going through the process of leaving the Royal Navy to transition to a new career civi-side. After initially applying for a number of positions at a variety of defence engineering companies, I received either no reply, or automated rejection emails.**

**These rejections had begun to cause me frustration and make me feel disillusioned at the application process, particularly in light of the skills shortages in the sector as a whole. This was compounded further by the fact many of these companies were claiming they were struggling to recruit for positions for which I was more than qualified and experienced to undertake.**

**I initially reached out to the White Ensign Association for employment support via their website and I was put in touch with Julie who took up my case. After a couple of interviews with herself and Adam (who both understood my frustration) they very quickly used their points of contact at a number of these companies to get my CV in front of the right people.**



**The end result of this was I was almost instantly contacted for interviews at a number of employers, and I'm pleased to say I've been offered my preferred job with my preferred employer. Alongside this Julie has provided advice and support for a number of my queries and concerns and the White Ensign as a whole has been a fantastic support asset to aid me in this next exciting and somewhat daunting phase of my life."**  
*(Petty Officer Jonathan Horrell – leaves the RN in Aug 24)*

In addition to assisting Service leavers and veterans we are also available to help their partners too. For example, one spouse provided the following feedback:



**"As the wife of a former serving RM, I was so grateful to learn that I too was entitled to take advantage of the support offered by the WEA.**

**I cannot praise or recommend the all-round support, which was offered by the Employment Services, enough. On reaching out to Julie, she offered invaluable direction and advice, including jobs boards and search groups, which I would not have been aware of without her help.**

**Also, Ange Presland is one of the WEA's Mentors and her guidance was above and beyond; she worked with me to ensure my CV was relevant and tailored to the vacancy I was interested in.**

**Both these ladies offered expert mentoring, which I am incredibly grateful for."**  
*(Mrs Sarah Leaver)*

We have also recruited a new Corporate Partnerships Manager, James Griffin. He is engaging with both existing and new corporate partners who understand the skills that former members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary bring to the workplace and who therefore want to hire from the pool of ex-naval talent. We have launched a new corporate partnership scheme as part of this offer which we talk about elsewhere in this Annual Review.

We have also collaborated with our colleagues in the Employment and Education team at our sister charity, the Royal Marines Association-The Royal Marines Charity (RMA-TRMC), by participating in their new initiative of delivering Service Leaver workshops. Our Regional Manager West provides briefings to Royal Marine service leavers on their entitlements under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme and the other services provided by the WEA which help to provide them with a holistic support package as part of their transition.



**Leigh Rhodes - CASO**

### ***Armed Forces Compensation***

In the past year, we have seen our support to those wishing to make claims under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) and its predecessor, the War Pensions Scheme (WPS) fully embedded as part of the service we provide to serving and veteran members of the Royal Navy. Our AFCS Manager, Leigh Rhodes, dealt with 115 new cases in the past 12 months. Of those, 87 were serving members of the Royal Navy and 28 were veterans.

Of the 12 AFCS claims decided by the Ministry of Defence over the past 12 months which had been submitted with the support of our AFCS Manager, only one was unsuccessful. A total of £327,076 compensation was paid by the Ministry of Defence to the 11 successful claimants. This was a very pleasing success rate to achieve for those individuals who we have supported. In the words of one happy customer:

**“The claim was awarded! I received £3,090 in November. Thank you so much for your help and assistance. I’m sure it wouldn’t have gone through if it wasn’t for your guidance.”**  
(Anon)

Another grateful beneficiary had this to say to Leigh:

**“I also wanted to say that your help has been outstanding, always appreciated and has made a big difference to myself to help me navigate properly the various support channels with the assistance of WEA guidance and support.”**  
(Anon)

### ***Assistance to Service Leavers***

Around 3,000 individuals leave the Royal Navy and Royal Marines each year. In the past 12 months, we have supported around half of that number either through engagement with our regional managers or our employment services team. In particular, we are now proactively reaching out to individuals who are medically discharged from the Service each year, amounting to some 80% of that cohort who consent for the WEA to get in touch with them to offer our assistance

### ***A holistic service***

For Service leavers, we have regularly provided support across more than one of the services we provide. This may be a combination of:

- guidance on armed forces pension entitlements and accompanying assistance in the search for civilian employment; or
- support from the regional managers in providing armed forces pension guidance and helping to refer individuals to relevant professional services advice from our Panel of Professional Advisers; or
- helping beneficiaries in understanding their ill-health benefits under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme and assisting them to submit a claim under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

For example, one individual provided the following feedback:

**“Now finding myself in a position in which my career is to be terminated on service attributable medical grounds, has now left me with a sizeable administrative burden; which in consideration of the financial aspects associated, makes it essential that this process is correctly achieved.**

**Having remembered partaking in numerous divisional day briefings during my time in the service, I did recall the voice from the white ensign association representative telling me to make contact – so I did.**

**I have now with the white ensigns direction, fully squared my pension and have correctly applied to AFCS for all relevant compensation aspects pertaining to my medical diagnosis.**

**I have utilised two white ensign advisors, one for the pension aspects and the second for the AFCS. Both advisors were very approachable, very knowledgeable and most importantly fully informed regarding the needs of Service leavers.**

**The white ensign association is a safeguard necessity for all pers to contact as soon as they commence their engagement with the re-settlement process – end of dit.”**  
(Anon)



***Alfie Orton being presented with his WEA tie by CEO Stuart Wright***

### ***Financial Wellbeing***

We are delighted that on 3 June 2024 our new Financial Wellbeing Manager, Alfie Orton, went live. Alfie joins us having spent a full career in the Royal Marines, latterly serving as Unit Welfare Officer at 40 Cdo RM. We look forward to detailing in next year's Impact Report how this new service is enhancing the support we can provide to not only our beneficiaries in the areas of financial awareness, budget coaching and debt management but also the Royal Navy's divisional system and the regimental system in the Royal Marines.

### ***Our increasing geographical reach***

In the past 12 months we have expanded our team of regional managers. For the first time we now have a full-time regional manager for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Overseas. Andy Leaver MC provides a permanent presence to support the increasing naval population in Scotland, from Faslane in the West, to Rosyth in the East and Arbroath in the North. He conducts a regular programme of visits to these three naval population centres delivering both briefings and clinics for our beneficiaries.

This means that we have been able to triple the number of personal interviews conducted and to double the number of pieces of individual casework support compared to when we had only a part-time presence in Scotland. In overall terms our new regional manager assisted 523 serving personnel and 41 veterans during his first 10 months of being operational. And having permanent boots on the ground ensures that we now have greater agility in our ability to respond to the needs of our beneficiaries in Scotland, as demonstrated in this piece of feedback:

***"As I approach my final 6 months in the Royal Marines, I have been delving into my Armed Forces Pension options, to which I had some idea of my entitlement would look like. Some details however were proving difficult and having already discussed other factors on leaving the Royal Marines with the White Ensign Association, I was made aware the WEA could also offer pension guidance. I placed a request for a meeting, their response was swift and Andy facilitated a face-to-face meeting to discuss my pension options. With Andy now having an office at RM Condor, this made the meeting facilitation much easier .... This is a great service provided by the WEA, whom I wholly recommend anyone leaving the RN/RM take advantage of meeting with the WEA to discuss their pension; without this guidance, others may overlook important factors that have not been considered on their AFPS pension."***

***(WO2 RM)***



As part of his Overseas portfolio, our new Regional Manager made our inaugural visit to Bahrain in early 2024. He visited not just personnel who are based at the permanent naval facility at Bahrain but also the forward deployed frigate, HMS LANCASTER, and three of the minehunters (HMS MIDDLETON, HMS BANGOR and HMS CHIDDINGFOLD) which were alongside during his visit.

Following Andy's visit to Bahrain, the CO of the UK Naval Support Facility provided the following feedback:

***"Your visit was a great success and a lot of people have come up to me to say how incredibly useful your advice was, which is exactly what we hoped you would achieve. The WEA are a fantastic supporting organisation and the RN is very lucky to have you, so thank you for coming out and seeing us."***

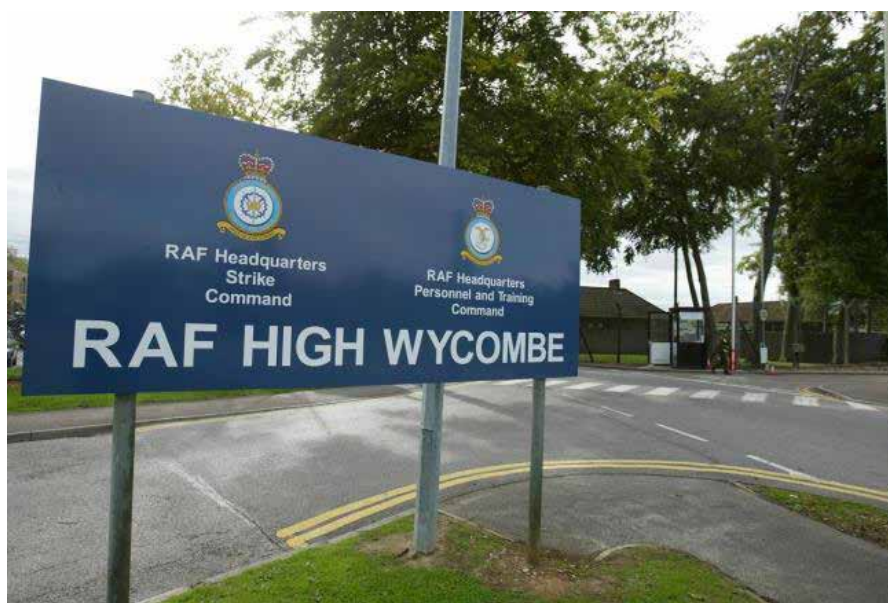
***Andy Leaver at HMS Middleton in Bahrain***

The establishment of a new regional manager post in Scotland has also opened up the North of England as part of his area of responsibility. This has enabled us to break new ground by making an inaugural visit to the important naval community which is standing alongside submarines in build at Barrow-in-Furness.

*Andy Leaver delivering a briefing at Barrow*



Our other regional managers have also broken new ground in the past year. Increasing numbers of RN personnel are serving in air stations alongside RAF colleagues. We have made an inaugural visit to RAF High Wycombe where Royal Navy personnel are now serving at the newly established Space Command and a visit to RAF Marham is now also in the pipeline to support the hundreds of RN personnel who are now based there serving on the joint F35-B squadrons.



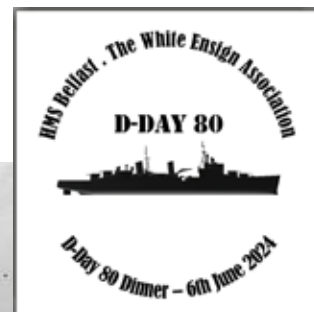
### ***Our social media presence***

At the time of going to print the WEA has 11,669 followers on LinkedIn. That is an increase of over 10% in the past year. We regularly post articles on LinkedIn to pass useful information on to our beneficiaries. They are also posted as blogs on our website at: [www.whiteensign.co.uk](http://www.whiteensign.co.uk).

### ***Conclusion***

Looking back over the past 12 months, lots has been done, but there is more still to do to better meet the needs of our beneficiaries. So, with our expanded staff, we look forward to doing even more for those people in the amazing naval community who require our support in the coming year. And we look forward to outlining what that support has meant to our beneficiaries in our next Impact Report.

# *D-DAY 80 Commemoration Dinner*



## *HMS Belfast at D-Day*

In early June, led by His Majesty The King, the nation commemorated the eightieth anniversary of D-Day, the largest amphibious invasion ever undertaken in history. Those successful landings were a decisive moment. They marked the beginning of the end of the Second World War. Winding the clock forward, we will all have been touched by the moving TV coverage of the few remaining British veterans who returned to the beaches of Normandy 80 years later to remember their part in that momentous day and to honour their fallen comrades.

For our part, we in the White Ensign Association wanted to mark this significant national anniversary with an event onboard HMS BELFAST given that this venerable old cruiser, which serves as the headquarters for our charity, played a leading role in the D-Day landings as one of the flagships of the invasion fleet. And so, on the 6th June 2024, 80 years to the day since the Normandy landings took place, we held a D-Day 80 event onboard HMS BELFAST.

The evening commenced with a drinks' reception on the Quarterdeck of the ship and we were fortunate that the weather gods were kind to us. In addition to our corporate and individual supporters who had kindly taken tables at this fundraising dinner, we welcomed a strong contingent of senior serving officers from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, including Vice Admiral Andy Kyte and Lieutenant General Sir Rob Magowan Royal Marines.



***Lieutenant General Sir Rob Magowan Royal Marines  
being greeted by Commodore Stuart Wright.***



***The Candy Girls***

A fitting atmosphere was generated by the Candy Girls, dressed in their vintage-style uniforms and singing Second World War-era music. Indeed, they serenaded not only our guests onboard but also the crowds which had assembled shoreside to watch proceedings.



*The City of London Sea Cadets prepare for the Sunset Ceremony*



*Captain Lance Batchelor takes the salute.*

Our Chairman, Hon. Captain Lance Batchelor Royal Naval Reserve, took the salute as the White Ensign was hauled down in time honoured tradition.

The climax of the drinks' reception was a Sunset Ceremony performed by the City of London Sea Cadets, who are based onboard HMS BELFAST, and the Brass Quintet of the Royal Marines Association band.



*The Brass Quintet of the Royal Marines Association band.*



*The City of London Sea Cadets on completion of the Sunset Ceremony*

Some 140 guests then moved inside the ship and sat down to dinner at tables which were named after various battleships, cruisers and destroyers of the Royal Navy which had participated in the vast D-Day invasion force. Inevitably, the top table took the name of HMS BELFAST!



*Our Chairman welcomes everyone to the dinner*



***Admiral Sir Jock Slater - President of The White Ensign Association***

At the end of dinner our President, Admiral Sir Jock Slater, proposed the Loyal Toast to His Majesty and the RMA Band played the National Anthem before our guests responded.

We were then privileged to hear from our guest speaker, Professor Sir Lawrence Freedman, Emeritus Professor of War Studies at King's College London. He provided an absorbing address in which he set the strategic context for the D-Day landings as well as drawing parallels with the current situation in modern day Europe.



***Our guest speaker, Professor Sir Lawrence Freedman***



Our landlady, Caro Howell MBE, the Director General of the Imperial War Museums, then introduced a video which captured images of HMS BELFAST on D-Day as well as a compelling interview with a naval veteran who had served onboard on that momentous day. He described what he witnessed – his recollections were vivid, emotional and moving. It was a most appropriate way to draw proceedings to a close – a powerful reminder of the sacrifices which the wartime generation made and an invocation to remember those who laid down their lives on and around the beaches of Normandy in June 1944.

***Caro Howell MBE, the Director General of the Imperial War Museums***

***They gave their tomorrow for our today.  
We will remember them.***



# THE INAUGURAL WEA MARITIME SEMINAR

Earlier this year, on 31 January, the White Ensign Association (WEA) broke new ground by staging the inaugural WEA Maritime Seminar. Fittingly, the event took place in the heart of maritime London, a world-leading centre of maritime services. A prominent shipping law firm, Norton Rose Fulbright, kindly hosted the event on the 9th floor of their offices next to Tower Bridge. This, in turn, provided panoramic views of the Square Mile and indeed the stern of HMS BELFAST, where our charity is fortunate to be headquartered in the Pool of London.

Our inaugural seminar carried the title “The war in Ukraine – its impact on maritime global.” We were privileged to have a heavyweight panel of speakers: Harry Theochari OBE (Chair of Maritime London and former Chair of Maritime UK), Rear Admiral Anthony Rimington (Assistant Chief of Naval Staff/Director Force Generation), Mike Salthouse (Head of External Affairs at NorthStandard) and Caroline Haughey OBE KC (leading counsel in modern slavery). We were also incredibly fortunate to welcome Julie Etchingham, the ITN broadcaster and journalist, who moderated proceedings.



*Our expert panel (from L to R) Caroline Haughey OBE KC, Rear Admiral Anthony Rimington, Mike Salthouse, Harry Theochari OBE and Julie Etchingham.*



*Caroline Haughey OBE KC addresses the audience.*

ongoing conflict in Ukraine, ranging from matters of maritime security to the implications for commercial shipping through to human trafficking at sea. Julie then oversaw a lively panel Q&A session to draw the seminar to a close.

The audience of around 100 was drawn from right across the maritime sector, spanning shipbrokers, maritime insurers, shipping lawyers, three serving Royal Navy Admirals and two former first Sea Lords and many more professionals working within the sector. Among those attending was Lord Mountevans, shipping spokesman in the House of Lords and former Lord Mayor of London; Lord Carlile, the Managing Director of SC Strategy; J B Rae-Smith, President of the UK Chamber of Shipping; Nick Brown, CEO of Lloyd's Register; and Jos Standerwick, CEO of Maritime London. Our audience listened to the speakers covering a spectrum of issues arising from the

The evening also gave us the perfect opportunity to sign the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC), reaffirming our lasting commitment to supporting the entire naval community. Additionally, it allowed us to advocate for the AFC to a crucial audience, furthering the development of our corporate partnership scheme and supporting more Service leavers and veterans into employment.



*Rear Admiral Rimington and Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope sign the Armed Forces Covenant pledge.*

We were delighted that the inaugural seminar was so well received. So much so that planning is now well underway to hold a second edition of the event in the City of London in the early part of 2025 as we seek to establish this as an annual fixture in the maritime London calendar. We will keep readers posted on that front.

We were grateful to Maritime London, of which we are now a member, for helping us to advertise the event and generate such a large turnout of individuals from across the sector. And, lastly, a huge thank you goes to all our event sponsors, Swire Shipping, Lloyd's Register, Gray Page and the Seafarers' Charity alongside our hosts, Norton Rose Fulbright. Without them, this event simply would not have been possible.



# SWIRE SHIPPING



# NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT





## THE WHITE ENSIGN ASSOCIATION

**We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country.**

Signed on behalf of:

**White Ensign Association**

Signed:

Name: Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope GCB  
OBE DL.

Position: Chair of the WEA.

Date:



**The Ministry of Defence**

Signed:

Name: Rear Admiral Anthony Rimington

Position: Director Force Generation  
& Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm

Date:



**Ministry  
of Defence**

# **The Armed Forces Covenant**

**An Enduring Covenant Between**

**The People of the United Kingdom  
His Majesty's Government**

**- and -**

**All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown**

**And their Families**

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

## Section 1: Principles of The Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 We, The White Ensign Association, will endeavour to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant:

- **Members of the Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantages arising from their service in the provision of public and commercial services.**
- **In some circumstances special provision may be justified, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured or bereaved.**

## Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 We recognise the contribution that Service personnel, reservists, veterans, the cadet movement and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant by:

**providing informed guidance to the naval community on:**

- **Armed forces pensions, armed forces compensation and other personal financial matters;**
- **civilian employment, retraining and resettlement; and**
- **access to professional services for advice on personal, welfare and domestic matters.**

**And by:**

- **Promoting the Armed Forces with our industry partner organisations, sponsors, volunteers and other stakeholders and by continually advocating on behalf of our beneficiary audience**
- **Using our unique location to be a focus for Armed Forces engagement with the City of London**
- **Promoting the Covenant, and inherent positive behaviours across the industries with whom we engage**
- **Endeavouring to continually develop vocational pathways for our beneficiaries and share best practice with other covenant signatories**
- **Promoting collaboration between service charities and supporting services**
- **Promoting active participation in Armed Forces Day and Remembrance events**
- **Seeking to support our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment where possible**
- **Work collaboratively with other organisations to promote best practice through sector specialisation initiatives**

2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and/or on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Armed Forces Community and our customers on measuring our impact.

*HMS Belfast, our HQ, at sunrise.*





# Create a safe and secure world, together

**This is Babcock's purpose. It defines our strategy, what we do and how we do it. We provide a range of products and services which enhance defence capabilities, helping our customers achieve their missions. We help military and civil customers around the world to cost effectively improve the capability, reliability and availability of their most critical assets.**

We know that in your military career, you have been committed to helping create a safe and secure world too. That's why Babcock would like to hear from you. The skills and experience you have gained during your Service could be the perfect fit to help us support our customers.

We have an enviable track record of supporting service leavers into challenging and rewarding careers and we can help you make the transition too.

## **Babcock offers many benefits to Service Leavers and Reservists, including:**

- ✓ Guaranteed interview as long as you meet the minimum requirements for the role
- ✓ Up to 10 days of special paid leave for reservist duties
- ✓ Training
- ✓ Career opportunities and progression
- ✓ Employee Share Ownership Scheme
- ✓ Occupational Health Services
- ✓ Salary Sacrifice benefits e.g. childcare vouchers; cycle to work scheme

With a variety of vacancies across the UK, Babcock has challenging and rewarding opportunities waiting for you.



## **Our commitment**

Our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) has been recognised with a Gold Award from the AFC's Employer Recognition Scheme



Scan QR code to search jobs or apply online

If you are considering a new career then visit our website and register to receive job adverts at <https://jobs.babcockinternational.com/talentcommunity/subscribe> or email: [armedforcescareers@babcockinternational.com](mailto:armedforcescareers@babcockinternational.com) for more information.

# OPPORTUNITIES AT WORKSPACE

We are home to more than 4,000 of the brightest businesses across London and our unique approach ensures every business has a space that's perfectly suited to them. Join Workspace and you become part of a community of like-minded businesses, with a strong social offering that extends beyond work.

From empowering our teams with opportunities for growth to championing social and environmental responsibility, Workspace is committed to creating a dynamic and caring culture.

With a variety of career opportunities and a supportive environment, Workspace is more than just a place to work—it's a place to grow and succeed. Here are just two examples of the career opportunities we've provided at Workspace.



**DARREN BAKER**  
Head of Security & Risk Management

“I served in the Army for six years joining straight out of school at 16 years old. I have now worked for Workspace for eight years and I really can't see myself working anywhere else, as I find the working environment both engaging and supportive with a clear focus on continual development.



**KIMBERLY D'GAMA**  
Repairs & Restoration Manager

Kimberly spent two years as a Relief Manager for Workspace, moving across sites covering the Centre Management Team. In 2023, Kimberly took on the role of Repairs and Restorations Manager within the Facilities Team, which was created to help deliver continual improvements across our buildings, outside of the larger, ongoing refurbishment projects.

“I loved being part of the Relief Team as it gave me the chance to work with new people and meet so many different customers across all of our sites. But when this new role was created, it included business operations and the project work I enjoy, while also giving me the exciting opportunity to mould the structure of the role, streamline processes and make a change I could be proud of.

We are always looking to nurture and explore career ambitions for our people and prospective new team members. To find out more about our open vacancies, visit our careers page, <https://www.workspace.co.uk/job-vacancies>.





## You've made the difference in your military career Now it's time to take on a whole new operation

RINA is a multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy that works across the Aerospace and Defence sector. We provide a portfolio of services enabling our clients to successfully deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century defence capability. These services underpin technical through-life capability management and include integrated logistic and product support, safety and environmental engineering, regulatory legislative compliance and training and learning solutions.

### Our Experience. Your Growth.

A career with RINA means working on industry leading, technically advanced projects that support defence. Our capability spans all engineering domains - for instance the maritime sector, where we have worked on surface and sub-surface platforms including submarines, autonomous patrol vessels, rotary capabilities including Wildcat and autonomous air systems. We complement your existing engineering skills, providing you with the tools to become a consulting engineer, encouraging you to innovate.

Whatever your engineering discipline, let us harmonise your know-how and cultivate your potential, pairing your knowledge with our expertise. Your growth in turn, becomes our collective experience.

**We're hiring! If you would like to learn more, please contact [James.Blackwood@rina.org](mailto:James.Blackwood@rina.org)**



After 17 years in the Royal Navy, I started civilian employment within the Defence Air domain. When I sought a new challenge, RINA appealed to me as every project differed. From day one, I realised RINA could nurture my individual skillset, enabling me to challenge myself, learn and progress. RINA supports my professional development; I am part of the Maritime and Environmental Safety Team, and they gave me the time to use enhanced learning credits towards an environmental management course. I now hold I-Eng (Incorporated Engineer) accreditation with IET, of whom RINA are a Corporate Partner. A strong advocate of the Armed Forces, RINA recognises the many qualities military personnel bring to a team-centric civilian workforce. Their support for those in transition to civilian employment is second to none. They offer a familiar work culture with like-minded individuals, and I would highly recommend them as an employer.



For 28 years, I dedicated my life to the Royal Marines. For a significant part of my career, I was a driving instructor, sharing my military vehicle knowledge. As a Transport Manager, I oversaw critical logistics operations. In the final years of my military career, I was Senior Training Analyst at the Defence College of Logistics, Policing and Administration, followed by a tenure at the Defence School of Transport. Through these roles, I acquired the vital skills for a successful career in civilian life. As retirement loomed, I turned to The White Ensign Association for guidance. The clear, concise, and comprehensive support they provided was exactly what I needed during my transition. The opportunity to become a Senior Training Consultant at RINA marked a significant turning point in my career. Since joining RINA, I have found the work to be as diverse as it is fascinating and challenging. At RINA, no two projects are alike, and I relish the opportunity to apply my skills in this dynamic and rewarding environment.



# *Some thoughts on resettlement and employment after Service Life*

Chris Bell CBE is a Director at KPMG delivering strategy, leadership, communications advisory and major change programs for governments and C-suites around the world. He is passionate about purpose, people, and partnerships and has recently written a couple of short though provoking pieces which struck a chord with the Employment Services team at the White Ensign Association, who view purpose, identity and culture as key intangibles impacting on successful transition for Service Leavers.



In the first piece, Chris writes about purpose within business and this is important for a service leaver to understand because it will impact directly on their own motivations for joining an organisation and should impact how organisations present themselves to service leavers, in the constant pursuit of attracting great talent from the military talent pool.

In the second piece, Chris urges service leavers to take a step back before writing a CV, getting on linkedin and embarking on the serious business of job hunting, to consider and tackle the cultural element of transitioning, work on assumptions and self-awareness, activities which the White Ensign Association are working hard to develop with a new online platform which we'll be launching in the near future. Watch this space.

Our thanks to the author for allowing us to reproduce the articles here.

## ***You pick purpose or purpose picks you - and that matters***

I've been mulling over purpose recently and I've come to a big conclusion.

We all talk about purpose like it is elective, a kind of tool to be picked up, and yet for me (maybe this is obvious) it really isn't. It is unavoidable...and that matters...a lot.

Businesses with well articulated and attractive purposes get ahead - they take more share, grow faster, and connect better internally and externally. Don't get me wrong, businesses can succeed without prioritising purpose this way, but in that case purpose picks them and that can go horribly wrong...the examples are numerous...

So three things I have concluded about purpose, and then a little framework to think about:

1. Purpose is both the foundation and mirror for a business. It answers why it exists, what it solves, and who it wants to be to those it touches. This is the basis of connection - the raw material that is at the heart of every business.
2. You can get ahead without stating purpose for a bit, but longevity comes from authentic purpose. Authenticity in this case means where purpose stems from - is it believable or does it look cynical? When it resonates it leads to loyalty, consistency and sustained relevance.
3. We live in an age of instant, global connectivity where a single individual, image, or action can cause a digital stampede. Purpose lies at the heart of (massed) reciprocity or rejection. Not thinking hard enough about it is a form of insta-roulette...

So what?

- Be authentic in creating purpose and tell your story
- Create a call to action and live it out
- Lead with empathy and connect
- See people as more than employees or customers - see them as active stakeholders and act accordingly

And so back to my blindingly obvious personal epiphany...there isn't a choice in all this because if businesses don't choose these things, then someone or something will choose them for us, most likely on a global scale.

In the end purpose doesn't just help businesses and organisations get ahead, it decides whether they exist.

## *Leaving the military can feel like a challenge...but there is good news...you got this*

"Write a CV. Get on LinkedIn. Convert your qualifications. Network. Figure out a sector you're interested in." The list goes on. These are the things you hear about when you're leaving the military, and they can feel like a challenge. To a certain extent they are, but they're not The challenge.

For me, the real challenge is cultural. All militaries are institutions that necessarily (discuss?) insist on complete cultural hegemony within their ranks. They define the knowledge of the occupation, including what concepts people may use routinely to make credible sense of competition and crisis. They insist on linguistic control, determining everyday talk in both professional and private conversation. They also drive "acceptable" identities within and beyond the work environment, and they even exercise performative control, determining how and when people professionally perform in chosen contexts and for given audiences. And here is the killer bit, the combined effect of these subsets of cultural hegemony (and I've only chosen a few examples here) are unrecognisable from within and operate as unspoken, deeply held common assumptions that permeate every aspect of a soldier, sailor or aviator's life. Think about a station or an airport...how hard is it to spot the military types? Exactly. Put another way, military culture goes so deep that it becomes part of the essence or 'DNA' of both institution and individual. It is literally everything that is taken for granted.

Then change comes. Sometimes dramatically, sometimes slowly. And whatever else it does, that change demands profound reorientation from the core of the individual out, largely unassisted by institutions that deliberately placed it there and maintained it, sometimes for all of a veteran's working life. Think about that for a minute. Changing that code, and figuring out what replaces it is incredibly demanding. It means asking fundamental questions about self, purpose and every assumption we ever thought was a rock solid, 'nailed on' certainty, because chances are it isn't. And before we default to another culturally learnt assumption, this has nothing to do with hierarchy. (Some of the loudest, most senior veteran voices in public life have struggled with this change the most...and largely avoided it by finding a way not to change.)

The good news is that there is **HUGE** opportunity in this challenge. When we retain the best of military life - team, proactivity, bias for action to name but a few - and couple it with the genuine humility and respect to learn as hard as we dare from others...then anything is possible. When that happens all avenues are potentially open, and the chances of finding renewal and personal re-engagement go up exponentially. With determination and effort, two things most veterans are mega at, the military and civilian chapters merge into a single accelerating, forwards looking superpower, where to begin with they feel irreconcilably separate.

So if you're thinking about transition don't rush to the CV and networking questions. Don't press 'send' by default on the next big corporate veterans scheme. Yes, they'll be part of it for sure, but maybe start with some cultural questions like, where am I at? What do I assume about things that might be less helpful going forwards outside the military? What have I never been entirely comfortable with which I have the opportunity to change? What side of me hasn't had 'daylight' for a while but could/should now? What matters to me and energises me that I'd like to learn about and discover? How do I want my next chapter to actually be day to day?

Tackle the cultural element of transitioning out of the military as a first priority and then remain super self-aware of it as the practical stuff gets going. Learn constantly, refine continually. Try that and my hunch is that all sorts of opportunities will unlock themselves and the odd set-back will feel so much less unsettling, so much less personal, and so much more a positive element of an exciting journey. So....

**You got this.** And if you're worried that you don't then the other good thing about veterans is we're always here to help each other...so just reach out.



Working in the nuclear industry has been an aspiration since I started studying engineering. It provides an exciting blend of cutting-edge technology and large-scale collaboration, whilst contributing to sustainable energy solutions. The profound impact on society, and complexity of nuclear systems, offers a fulfilling career path rich with innovation and responsibility.

**Sam Stanley**  
Engineer, Advance Nuclear Technologies



As a recent graduate working in the nuclear industry, I'm driven by the impact our work has on shaping a future where clean, reliable energy is the norm. Every day, I take pride in being a part of an industry that not only powers the world but also inspires individuals like myself to contribute to a more sustainable and brighter future.

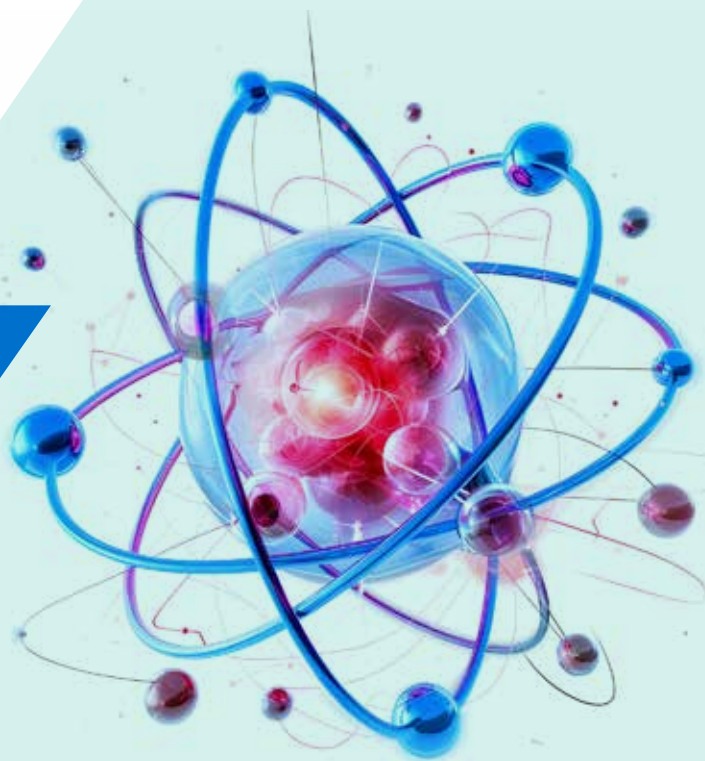
**Diana McKeown**  
Project Delivery Associate



## DRIVING INNOVATION TO HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE SUCCESS OF THE INDUSTRY

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#### SCALE

Our people, our knowledge and breadth of technical expertise

#### COLLABORATION

Identification of best solutions and industry partners

#### DRIVING INNOVATION

Shaping the future success of the industry... and delivering!

# TOP TIPS FROM A SERVICE LEAVER

*by Cpl Ben Getley*



Cpl Ben Getley recently left the Royal Marines after 7 years' service. He contacted The White Ensign Association 10 months prior to his release and worked with our Employment Consultant Julie Daly towards his next career. Having now attained what he describes as a '*dream job that far exceeds his expectations*', he's happy to share his top tips:

## ***Ben says:***

- Network wherever you can. Besides the WEA and other support networks, LinkedIn is by far the best tool for networking and also job hunting.
- There are so many people out there that will take the time to help you. Drop the ego and don't be afraid to ask for support.
- Prepare as much as you can, but don't get too caught up on CVs. Everyone has a different spin and opinions on what should be included on a CV and it gets a bit ridiculous. Prepare for your interview and do the best you can. The WEA can help with mentors to do this. I've had some really challenging questions posed so make the effort to research the company.
- Don't undersell yourself, be confident in your ability and what you have to offer.
- The time really goes quickly, so plan early and take advantage of everything you can. There is so much more available to service leavers that isn't disclosed in the resettlement process, don't miss out.
- You will 100% get ghosted, whether it be a recruiter or employer... don't take it to heart and just keep moving forwards.
- Don't waste time applying for roles you don't even want (what's the point?!). Not sure why I did it, but the panic soon starts to set in and you think ultimately anything is better than nothing... Don't do it!! Focus on what you want and how you are going to get there.
- Finally, don't move house and plan a wedding around your transition, it's too much stress!

Ben says that what The WEA offers is '*exceptional*' and he'd '*thoroughly recommend any Service Leaver or Veteran to get in touch.*'

Good luck with your new career Ben!

# THE WHITE ENSIGN ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

The WEA corporate partnership scheme has been in place since January 2024. It recognises that partnerships are a two way relationship and that the WEA, as well as being a conduit to accessing outstanding Royal Navy and Royal Marine service leaver talent, can add value to an organisation by encouraging it to engage with the Armed Forces community more widely.



## Associate Partner

- Armed Forces Covenant signatory
- Display WEA Logo
- Features in newsletters

+

## Employment Partner

- Support with Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme
- WEA Employment Portal Access

+

## Corporate Partner

- Mil CV Hiring Manager workshops
- HMS Belfast conference room access

+

## Flagship Partner

- Enduring veteran support
- Top table events
- Mentoring opportunities



## PARTNER BENEFITS Fee

Associate  
£650 pa

Employment  
£1200 pa

Corporate  
£1700 pa

Flagship  
£2850 pa

Right to display the  
"In support of the White Ensign Association " logo



Advertising in WEA newsletters and Annual Review



Support in creation of Armed Forces Covenant pledge and  
Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) application submission  
to Defence Relationship Management (DRM)



Feature on the WEA website scrolling banner



Employment portal access



Access to transition and employment seminar



Military CV workshop for hiring managers/recruiting teams



WEA conference room use on board HMS BELFAST



Webinar hosting and Industry insight day support



Volunteering and mentoring opportunities



Ongoing veteran employee support



Access to all WEA 'top table' events



Access to council board members for speaking and  
consultation engagements



***At the White Ensign Association we talk about partnership. Partnering with us has tangible benefits for both parties, driven by a common goal, supporting those who have served the nation, to continue to contribute to society in a meaningful way after service.***

### ***Associate Partnership***

At the Associate level, partners gain the right to display the prestigious "In support of the White Ensign Association" logo, symbolizing their commitment to supporting the organization. Additionally, they enjoy benefits such as discounted advertising in WEA publications such as newsletters and the WEA Annual Review and Impact Report.

### ***Employment Partnership***

Employment Partners, building on the benefits available to Associates, receive additional value. This includes permanently featuring on the WEA website and access to the employment portal for advertising up to five roles a year. Employment partners receive support in creating their bespoke [Armed Forces Covenant](#) pledge and [Employer Recognition Scheme](#) (ERS) application submission to the Ministry of Defence, Defence Relationship Management department, fostering a sense of shared commitment. Employment Partners are provided opportunities to participate in transition and employment seminars, ensuring a supportive environment for both employers and employees.

### ***Corporate Partnership***

The Corporate level extends the partnership benefits to a more comprehensive scope. Corporate partners enjoy all the advantages of the Associate and Employment levels and further receive the privilege of having access to the WEA Conference room on board HMS Belfast. The partnership also offers a military CV workshop tailored for hiring managers and recruiting teams to better understand and engage with service leaver and veteran candidates and encourages corporate webinars in association with the WEA, to attract service leavers.

### ***Flagship Partnership***

Positioned as the premier level of collaboration, Flagship partners receive the highest tier of benefits. In addition to that offered at the Corporate level, Flagship partners gain exclusive access to WEA 'top table' events, offering unparalleled networking opportunities. They can call upon WEA staff for ongoing veteran employee support ensuring the well-being and success of veterans in their workforce. They also have the privilege of engaging with Council board members for speaking engagements and consultations, solidifying their role as key contributors to the strategic vision and direction of the White Ensign Association. There are valuable and purposeful volunteering and mentoring opportunities for Flagship partner employees, contributing to a collaborative and socially responsible business environment. The value proposition at this level signifies a transformative and deeply integrated partnership with substantial benefits for both parties.

Other partnership opportunities:

### ***Veteran Owned/ Veteran Start Up Partnership***

Corporate partnership benefits and first 12 months free

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# ***PARTNERS OF THE WHITE ENSIGN ASSOCIATION***

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Cerco IT	Leonardo	Whippendell Marine
	Lifting Equipment Engineers Association	Workspace Management

## ***PANEL OF PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS***

Blake Morgan LLP	Knights PLC	Sara Quirk Wealth Associates
Glanvilles	Patrick James Solutions Ltd	Trinity Insurance Services Ltd
Peter Horn, Landmark Chartered Accountants		

# *WEA Supporters in 2023-2024*



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*The Seafarers Charity*



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# Are you serving, or have you served in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines or Royal Fleet Auxiliary?



**The White Ensign Association can provide you and your families with informed guidance on:**

Armed Forces Pensions, Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, War Pension Scheme and other personal financial matters

Civilian employment, retraining and resettlement

Access to professional services advice on personal, domestic and welfare matters



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