

# Veterans newsletter

Number 2/2009

# Angela Smith MP



I would like to thank everyone who responded to my first Veterans Newsletter. It is something I had wanted to do for some time, and I am pleased it has been so well received.

If you have any information that would be of interest to other veterans, do let me know and I will do my best to include it in my next issue.

Please let me have the details of anyone you think may like a copy of this newsletter, so I can send them one.

**ANGELA SMITH MP**

## The Nation's Commitment to Veterans

ANGELA SMITH welcomes the further support for Veterans announced in a new leaflet published in January.

*"What this means for Veterans"* commits the nation to those who have served their country and includes:

**Armed Forces Compensation Scheme** - The upfront lump sum payment for injuries to Service personnel will be doubled for the most serious injuries.

**Medical treatment** - Raising awareness amongst health professionals about priority treatment for veterans with Service-related conditions. Specialist community mental health services for veterans.

**Housing** - Ex-Service personnel have priority status under the Key Worker Living Scheme for up to one year after they leave the service. New supported housing is to be built for Service leavers to assist them in making the transition to civilian life.

**Benefits** - The Department for Work and Pensions will now use a Service medical board assessment to determine eligibility to incapacity benefit.

**Work** - Service leavers will be offered specialist employment advice for those seeking a future in the public sector.

**Further Education** - Personnel who have served more than six years will be entitled to Further or Higher education free from tuition fees.

**Transport** - Those seriously injured in-service will be entitled to statutory bus concessions and severely disabled veterans will receive blue badges automatically without further assessment.

Copies of the three leaflets outlining *The Nation's Commitment: Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans* are available from Angela Smith MP's office:

- ***What this means for Veterans***
- ***What this means for Service Personnel***
- ***What this means for Service Families***

On the publication of the leaflets, Angela said, *"These are excellent and helpful leaflets that shows the commitment the Government has to the welfare of our service personnel, their families, and the veterans who have served our county so bravely."*

**There is a free helpline for veterans to call for advice and assistance - 0800 169 2277**



**Angela Smith MP working hard for Basildon & East Thurrock**

Basildon: Fryerns, Kingswood, Lee Chapel, Laindon (part), Langdon Hills, Vange.

East Thurrock: Corringham, Fobbing, Bulphan, Horndon on the Hill, Orsett, Stanford le Hope

## Helping veterans - Veterans UK

The word 'veteran' often conjures up a particular image - that of our older generation who served so magnificently in the Second World War. However, anyone who has served in HM Forces, regardless of when, how long for and whether in conflict or in peacetime is also a veteran.

*If you were in the Navy, Army or Air Force you are a veteran and support and guidance is available for you.*

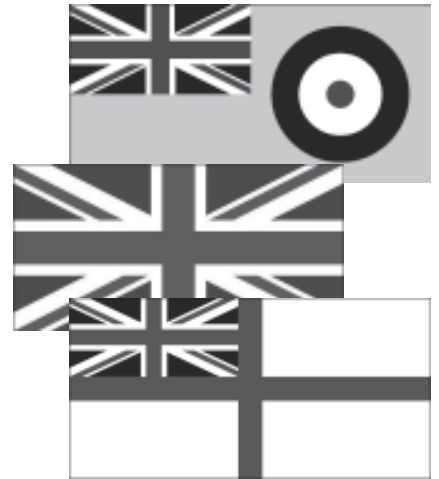
Veterans-UK is the new organisation aimed at bringing together services for veterans. It's the first stop for veterans who need help and advice.

The first organisation to use this name for its services is the Ministry of Defence's Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA). This new body (formally the Veterans Agency and AFPAA) provides a wide range of support for around 900,000 serving personnel and the veterans community.

This includes pay and personnel, pensions and compensation schemes for those who are disabled or bereaved through service and a dedicated welfare service providing one to one support, in the home if needed. Its free Veterans Helpline is a single point for obtaining information.

Whatever your enquiry, whether it is looking for service records, information on entitlement to a War Pension, health concerns or any other issue, the Agency is there to help.

If it can't help on the spot, it can find someone who can. By working with ex-Service organisations, War Pensions Committees and other groups it can point you in the right direction for sound practical assistance.



Picture credit: Veterans UK



**Veterans:UK**  
Bringing together services for veterans

**To find out more about the support on offer simply call the Veterans Helpline on FREEPHONE 0800 169 2277 or email [veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk) or go to website [www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info)**

## Youngsters boost Remembrance Services

Last November, Angela attended Remembrance Services at St Margaret's Church, Stanford le Hope and Coalhouse Fort, East Tilbury. Her husband, Councillor Nigel Smith, represented her at the Basildon parade and service.

Angela gave particular praise to the increased number of youngsters who have been attending the Remembrance Day events over recent years, saying that *"as those who fought in past conflicts pass away, this shows that the sacrifices that they made will never be forgotten by future generations"*.

Angela is pictured with the air cadets at their hall in Stanford le Hope.



Picture credit: 1582 Squadron ATC

## Minister welcomes Angela's 'Veterans' Newsletter'

The Government's Defence Minister, Kevan Jones MP, congratulated Angela on her first Veterans Newsletter.

The Minister wrote, "I would like to congratulate you on putting together such an informative and easy to read publication. I was particularly pleased to see that you were encouraging Veterans in your constituency to apply for Veterans Badges."

Mr Jones is Veterans Minister in the Ministry of Defence, a position created by the Labour Government in recognition of the importance of veterans to our society. He added in his letter, "Veterans are a very special group who bring so many skills and experiences to the local community. Many thanks for all your efforts to raise awareness and support for our veterans."

In her first newsletter, Angela wrote, "I have always thought that events and services with local veterans are one of the most important parts of my work. It's my way, in representing the local community, that I can show my respect, thanks and admiration for the contribution of our veterans."

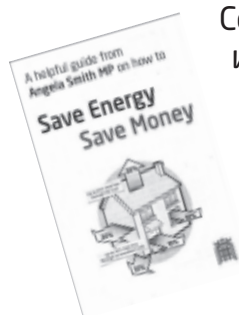


Veterans Minister  
Kevan Jones MP

Picture credit: MoD

### £60 winter bonus for pensioners

All pensioners over 60 will receive a £60 bonus from the Government this winter to help cope with the recent higher costs of gas and electricity.



Commenting in the Thurrock Gazette, Angela said, "I know many older people have worries about paying bills, and their energy bills in particular. This payment is in addition to the £250 winter fuel payment (£400 for the over 80s) paid this Autumn, and is equivalent to the largest possible amount someone could have gained if we had brought forward the uprating of the basic State Pension from April to January."

For advice on how to save energy and money this winter, please contact Angela's office for a copy of her booklet, "Save Energy - Save Money".

### Recognition badges

The struggle and sacrifices made by the armed forces during the Second World War is well documented. This was justly rewarded with medals, and the recognition that wearing these bring.

For some of our veterans, recognition of the part that they played during the war has not been easy to attain. The Government has therefore commissioned special badges to recognise the contributions made by those who supported the home front during the war, and without whom servicemen on the front line would not have been able to fight.

Badges are available to former members of the **Women's Land Army (Land Girls)**, the **Bevin Boys** and the **Timber Corps (known as 'Lumber Jills')**. The badges have been available for a few months and Angela is keen to encourage every person who is entitled to one to apply.

Following Angela's last newsletter, she took up the case for recognition of those who served in the **Air Transport Auxiliary** on behalf of a local veteran. Many served in the ATA along the Thames during the Second World War, and they are also now entitled to their own veterans badge.



If you think you (or someone you know) is entitled to a badge please write to:  
**ANGELA E SMITH MP, HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON. SW1A 0AA**

# News in brief... News in brief... News in brief...

## Burma Star Association given Freedom of the Borough

The Thurrock Branch of the Burma Star Association has been granted the freedom of the Borough of Thurrock, providing public recognition of the hardship those serving in British forces in Burma faced during World War II.

Angela has worked with the local association, which has a public memorial in her constituency in Orsett, since her election as an MP. At the Thurrock Council meeting that made the award, Councillor Carl Morris said, *"In the words of King George VI, no army ever had to encounter such a vicious and fanatical enemy or hostile environment, rife with all kinds of debilitating diseases."*



## Polish veterans

If you - or someone you know - served in Polish forces under British command during World War II, or were displaced from Poland during that time, then there may be help available with long term residential or nursing care. The Government's *Ilford Park Polish Home* is in Devon - known popularly as 'Little Poland' it is currently home to around 100 veterans.

## Resettlement and retraining

The Royal British Legion has formed a partnership with the Portland College in the Sherwood Forest, to offer retraining courses to ex-service personnel. As well as the courses involved, there is a Legion welfare officer on site. For more information call 01623 491340.



## Royal Anglian Regiment

Angela met local serving soldiers from the regiment, when representatives came to Parliament to brief her in January. She was able to hear an overview of their current training programmes and the lessons learnt from their recent operations.

The regiment has a museum at Duxford, and former members can join the Royal Anglian Regimental Association by contacting: *The Keep, Gibraltar Barracks, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3RN*

## Useful websites:

### Ministry of Defence

[www.mod.uk](http://www.mod.uk)

### Veterans-UK

[www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info)

### Royal British Legion

[www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)

### Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association

[www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk)

## Contact Angela

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## Angela's website can be viewed at [www.mpangelasmith.org](http://www.mpangelasmith.org)

This site includes details of local activities around and about Basildon and East Thurrock.

Please pass on or recycle your copy when you have finished with it.

If you would prefer to receive future copies by email rather than by post, please email [flackk@parliament.uk](mailto:flackk@parliament.uk)



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