

SSAFA NEWS FOR SUPPORTERS

SPRING 2017

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ssafa | the
Armed Forces
charity



@SSAFA NEWSFEED

Join us online for the latest news from SSAFA and the Armed Forces community. Visit our website, ssafa.org.uk, and our social media pages on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) where you will find on-the-day content, videos and photos.

Read inspirational stories from our beneficiaries, volunteers, supporters and fundraisers. Join our online Armed Forces family today and be inspired!

You can join in on conversations as they happen on our Facebook or Twitter pages or start a topic of your own. Make sure you use @SSAFA or use #SSAFA so that your content is linked to ours.

DON'T MISS ...

1-7 JUNE	#VOLUNTEERSWEEK	
20-26 JUNE	#BBU	
23 JUNE	#CAMODAY	

Join the conversation!

-  @SSAFAOfficial
-  ssafa_armedforcescharity
-  @SSAFA
-  SSAFATV

REACH OUR SUPPORTER CARE TEAM

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity,
Queen Elizabeth House, 4 St Dunstons Hill,
London EC3R 8AD

Telephone: **020 7463 9225**

Email: supporter@ssafa.org.uk

Registered charity No.210760 and SCO38056.
Established 1885.

FUNDRAISING PROMISE

- We commit to high standards
- We are clear, honest and open
- We are respectful
- We are fair and reasonable
- We are accountable and responsible



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

DEAR FRIENDS



Welcome to your Spring supporter newsletter.

In August of last year, I was appointed SSAFA's Chief Executive, having left the Army after 35 years of military service. The opportunity to continue to support the Armed

have helped, such as Catherine and Oliver, share their personal stories. This particular couple turned to SSAFA when they found that they could not have another child following several miscarriages. They already had one birth son, but longed for another child. Those in the Armed Forces often find adopting through the local authorities very difficult and turn to SSAFA's adoption service for help. Your support ensures we can answer their call and bring joy, not just to the adoptive parents, but to the children who so desperately need a caring and nurturing family life.

"I am honoured to lead this charity that does amazing work, and with your help and that of other committed supporters"

Forces community is a huge privilege. Despite my recent military roles and experiences, particularly dealing with Service personnel, families and veterans issues, I had not fully appreciated the breadth of vital support SSAFA provides. I am honoured to lead this charity that does amazing work, and with your help and that of other committed supporters, make a life real difference to the lives of those whom we help.

I hope that you will find the stories featured in this newsletter show you just what your support means to our Armed Forces, veterans and their families. On behalf of those whom we help, thank you for choosing to support SSAFA.

In this issue of your newsletter, some of the people whom we

Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB

WOMEN IN THE FORCES

In 1949, women were officially recognised in the Armed Forces. We honored International Women's Day throughout the month of March, by sharing stories of the incredible and varied work undertaken by women in our Armed Forces with our Facebook followers. Dorothy, 97, recalls her memories of service as a Wren during World War Two.



Dorothy was 23 and living in Salisbury when she volunteered to join the Royal Navy and worked as a Wren writer in London. Her husband was already serving in the Army.

"I was based at Horse Guards Parade and worked on ships' ledgers, making sure everyone got the right pay and promotions. I was working at St James's Park and lived in Hampstead with the other Wrens. We later moved to Gloucester Road. During the air raids, we sat in the corridors outside our rooms. You had to get used to the bombing, although sitting in the corridors wasn't good for a good night's sleep!"

Dorothy served until July 1945 and then started working part-time in an office. She said: "I remember my parents were very proud of me. The war was a bit of a turning point for women."

Dorothy's first husband Frantz was taken prisoner by the Japanese. "We didn't see each other for a few years. It was very hard. He came home in October 1945. He

had suffered a great deal in the prison camp, and I nursed him back to health."

Dorothy recently celebrated her 97th birthday with members of SSAFA's Southend Veterans Club, where she enjoys regular outings. She said: "It's become my weekly trip out, and I have made some good friends."

Southend Veterans Club is held every Thursday from noon to 4pm and is open to Armed Forces veterans of all ages as well as their spouses. Each week a two-course hot meal is served. The club provides an opportunity for veterans to get together regularly, share stories and make new friends.



WHAT YOUR SUPPORT MEANS

£15

would cover the cost of two calls to our free confidential helpline, Forcesline.

£25

would go towards running one of our Post Adoption Support events, which provide valuable training and support for adoptive parents and adopted children like Catherine and Oliver's family (featured on page 10-11).

£50

would contribute for vital caseworker training to ensure our beneficiaries are in safe care when they are at their most vulnerable. SSAFA's 4,000 caseworkers are at the frontline and our training equips them with the tools they need to support our Forces and their families.

A gift from you today could be instrumental in changing someone's life who desperately needs our help.

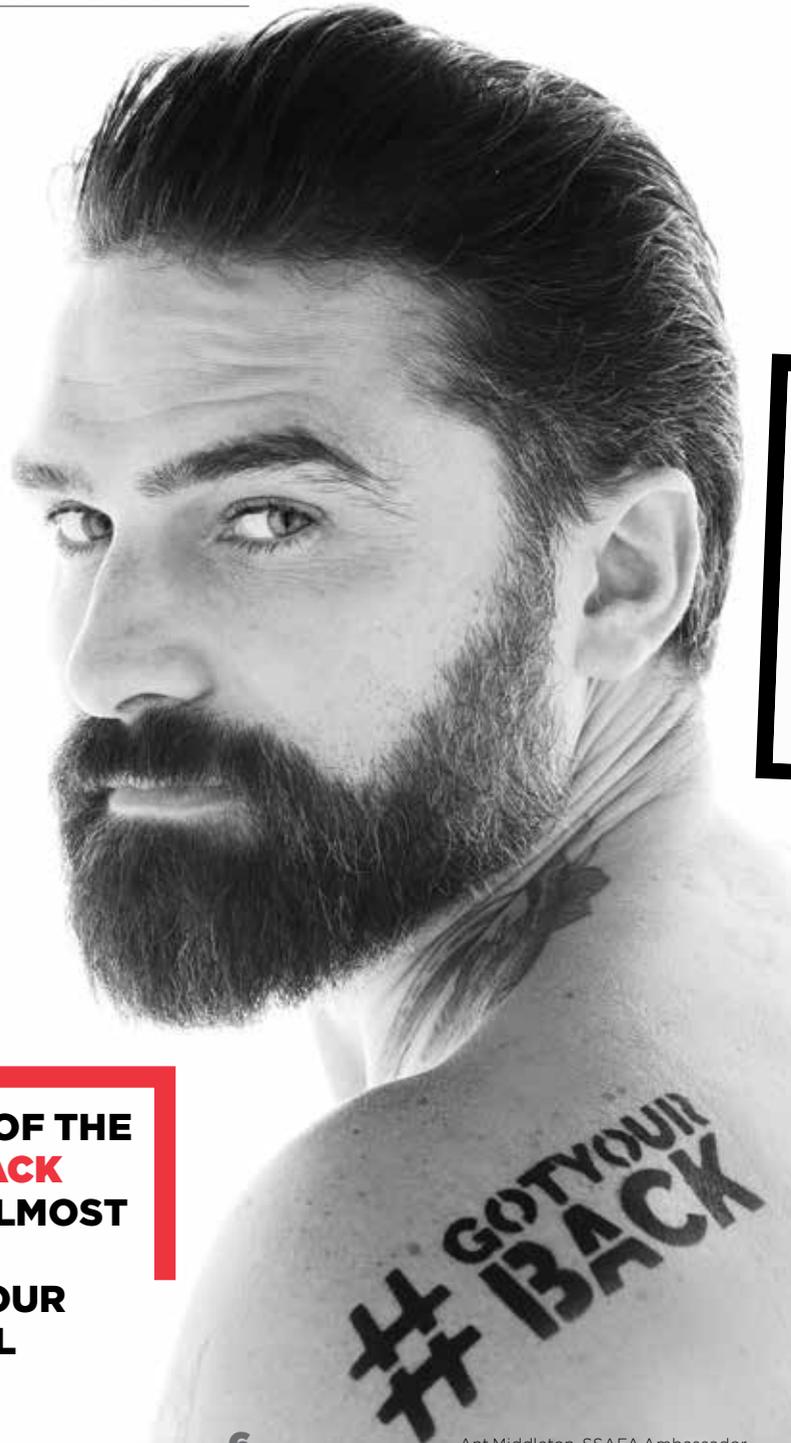


In our 2016 Christmas appeal, we shared with supporters Jason Wheeler's story— his experience serving on the frontline in Afghanistan and nearly taking his own life when he returned home. With the support of his dedicated SSAFA volunteer caseworker, Jason has made great strides in rebuilding his life.

A massive thank you to everyone who responded to our Christmas appeal and helped raise more than £103,000 to ensure SSAFA can continue to be a lifeline to those who need us. Since Christmas, Jason has been sending us regular updates on how he is getting on, and we thought we would share this photo with you and introduce Fudge, the most recent addition to Jason's life!

Thank you for your support and generosity.

#GOT YOUR BACK



**AS A RESULT OF THE
#GOTYOURBACK
CAMPAIGN, ALMOST
1,500 PEOPLE
CONTACTED OUR
CONFIDENTIAL
HELPLINE,
FORCESLINE.**

At SSAFA we believe that those who have served our country deserve our support in return.

In October last year, SSAFA published research which showed that less than one per cent of currently serving personnel and veterans would ask for help from a charity, if they found themselves in need.

SSAFA launched its 'Got Your Back' campaign in a bid to encourage those who need help to come forward and not allow their pride to stand in the way.

TV and sports personalities, including SBS veteran and television presenter Ant Middleton, SSAFA's newest Ambassador, were photographed with the campaign's hashtag #GotYourBack emblazoned on their back.

As a result of the campaign, almost 1,500 people contacted SSAFA asking for support.

Thank you to everyone who supported our recent 'Voices of the Unheard' fundraising appeal, thanks to you, we've got their backs.

VOICES OF THE UNHEARD

ANDY'S STORY

"SSAFA helped to ensure we had a roof over our heads."



Andy, 41, had a motorbike accident in 2005 when he was on leave from the Army. He was struck by a hit-and-run driver while stationary at a junction. Following a month in hospital, he left walking, but a year later things went downhill.

"I'm not completely paralysed as I have fairly good circulation from my hips to my knees, but from my knees to my feet, it's bad. I'm in pain most of the

time. I have four metal screws and two rods in my back. I can sometimes stand and walk a few steps but then fall. I don't know from day-to-day what I'm going to wake up like," said Andy.

Andy, a father of one, joined the Royal Artillery in 1990 and later served with REME, but tours of Northern Ireland and Iraq left him with severe anxiety. He was medically discharged from the Army in 2007 as a result of his accident.



Andy's house needed vital adaptations. "The council said I had to have lived there for a year before they could make any changes. Three years later, I was still crawling up the stairs. It was my mum who suggested I get in touch with SSAFA. I was a bit doubtful, so it took me a while before I picked up the courage to call and say I need help.

"When I finally called SSAFA, my caseworker Michele came round to visit. SSAFA sorted out our rent arrears and are now looking into getting a ramp at the front and back because I can hardly get outside at the moment. Michele has been absolutely amazing. She can not do enough.

"Michele told me about the SSAFA Veterans Club that she runs. I don't like going to new places, but Sally, my wife, persuaded me to go. The rest is history. I love swapping stories with the older guys every week. It's a great place.

"Sport and fitness were really important when I was in the Forces, so going from being a young and fit man in the military to civilian life with a medical discharge was difficult to take. I have taken up wheelchair racing and train four or five times a week. Doing the sport gives me a real focus, a reason to get up and go out. I was proud to bring home two silvers and two bronzes from the 2016 Invictus Games."

EVENTS

L'ORCHESTRE DU MONDE

We are delighted to announce that SSAFA is the beneficiary charity for the L'Orchestre Du Monde classical music event taking place in London on Tuesday 17 October. Conceived in 1987 by the renowned Polish conductor Janusz Piotrowicz, L'Orchestre Du Monde is a unique ensemble which brings together some of the world's finest musicians from around the globe. This year's concert will feature Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 and Brahms' Symphony No. 1. The concert will take place at the prestigious Cadogan Hall near Sloane Square, London.



For more information and to purchase your ticket visit lodm.org

TAKE PART TOUGH MUDDER

Do you fancy taking on an endurance challenge?

Test your strength, stamina and grit in the world-class muddy obstacle challenges across the UK. To sign up and support SSAFA, visit ssafa.org.uk. Every mile and drop of mud you crawl through will help to make a difference in the lives of those in need.

WHEN: JUNE & JULY





SSAFA's Adoption team goes the extra mile to ensure adopters are supported during the adoption process and after children are placed. In 2016, 23 children were placed with adopters. This included sibling groups of up to three children and children who are considered harder to place due to their additional needs. For more information on this service, visit ssafa.org.uk/how-we-help

COMPLETING THE FAMILY CIRCLE

“We have a birth son, Sam, but when we started trying for a second child, I had several miscarriages which took over my life.”



“We have a birth son, Sam, but when we started trying for a second child, I had several miscarriages which took over my life.” Catherine

Catherine and Oliver, a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy, had always planned to adopt, and finding out they could not have another child naturally brought the decision forward.

“We had always wanted to adopt at some point. My mum was fostered, so it had always been in my mind. I knew we had to get over the idea of not having a second birth child first, but then we started looking at our options,” said Catherine.

The couple initially attended an open evening organised by their local authority, but were disappointed with the lack of understanding about the

military way of life.

Catherine said: “My neighbour knew we were looking into adoption and showed me a SSAFA advert in Homeport. I hadn’t realised that SSAFA does adoption. I called up and they were so nice. We lived in a two-bedroom flat at the time and were not going to be entitled to another bedroom until we were approved for adoption. The local authority just didn’t get it, but SSAFA understood which

made things a lot easier.

“We didn’t want to move out of the area because we didn’t want to disrupt Sam’s school as well as his home life. Our SSAFA social worker supported us by writing a letter to explain the situation. This resulted in a new house in the same area, just a couple of weeks after we were approved to adopt.”

Catherine and Oliver first met their youngest son, Harry, when he was just nine months old. After two weeks of

introductions, he moved in with his new family.

“It took a while to settle into the new family dynamic, but Harry is now Sam’s shadow. Sam is really gentle and patient with him. Having my husband at home on adoption leave for six months made a huge difference, which is one of the great things about the Navy.

“I would say Harry made us work for his attention and love, but he is definitely one of us now!”



WIN £10,000 EVERY WEEK

Join the SSAFA weekly Lottery today!

It's only a £1 a week to play with so much to gain. The SSAFA Lottery is an easy way to support our Armed Forces, veterans and their families and there is a **chance of winning £10,000 every week.**

Visit ssafa.org.uk/lottery or call us on **020 7463 9225.**



Britain's favourite seaside holiday

Book your holiday with Haven this year to save up to an extra 10% on top of Haven Holidays' best prices and, for every booking made, Haven will make a donation to SSAFA. To claim your discount or find out more, simply visit haven.com/SSAFA or call **0333 202 5423 and quote **CH_SSAFA**.**

With 36 parks nestled in beautiful coastal locations around the UK, there's a park to suit every family. Every park has fantastic facilities and activities for all ages; you'll be spoilt for choice.



SARAH'S STORY



Sarah Thyer, one of SSAFA's newest volunteer recruits, shares her story of developing a passion for SSAFA by completing the Ride to the Somme.

"I started cycling in February last year with the Action Bikes Ladies Cycling Club in Swansea. Always one for trying something new and after much nagging by the club owner, I turned up in a totally unsuitable kit and borrowed a bike and helmet. I soon learned that correct padded pants and warm clothing were essential for this new hobby! Still I persevered, despite a few classic falls, to cycle 40 miles in eight

the Somme. I sold it to her by pretending it would be just a few days wandering around France in the sunshine, not knowing how physically and emotionally rewarding it was going to be. Some of the other Swansea riders signed up, too. The ride was planned to commemorate the cycling soldiers who fought and fell during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. It was a 200-mile ride over three days, culminating in an emotional service at the Thiepval Memorial of the Missing, which honours the 72,000 British and African soldiers who have no known graves.

"I was honoured to ride with over 50 men and women from all over the UK, some of whom were former servicemen."

weeks. Thrilled with my achievement, I bought my first road bike, which I looked after like a new baby!

"With my confidence growing, I persuaded one of my fellow newbies to sign up with me for SSAFA's Ride to

"I was honoured to ride with 50 men and women from all over the UK, some of whom were former servicemen. The focus was to raise funds for SSAFA, and I'm very proud to say the team raised more than £75k.

"On my return from the Somme, I wanted to continue to support SSAFA. I am now very proud to be a volunteer and assisting in fundraising. I look forward to this year's Ride to the Somme, which will travel through Passchendaele and Arras. If you want a challenge, come and join us. It is a journey you will never forget!"



A SUPER TROOPER

In May 2016, Afghanistan veteran Flight Lieutenant Mike, 36, cycled from RAF Akrotiri to RAF Brize Norton. He rode 2,700 miles in two weeks and raised £4,600 in support of SSAFA's work in Cyprus.

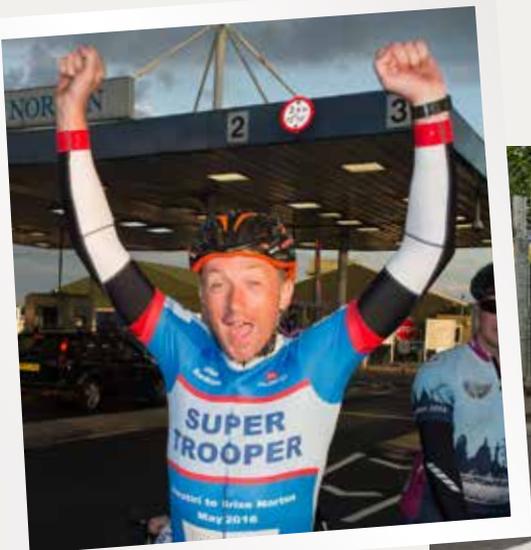
Mike, nicknamed 'Super Trooper' by his RAF Police colleagues, was waved off by his family and friends in true Cypriot style with a souvla and champagne breakfast, but Mike had to settle for porridge. His solo, unsupported bicycle ride saw him cross 15 countries, including Croatia, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, France and Belgium.

"I set my mind to covering as many miles as possible each day. The second week was a blur—1,700-2,000 miles covered each day and up to 18 hours in the saddle to stay on target. In the second week, I covered 1,000 miles in six and a half days, and I am immensely proud of that.

"I have been in the RAF for ten years now and have seen firsthand the great work that SSAFA does across the Forces. In a community as unique as Cyprus, the SSAFA team plays a pivotal role in helping serving and ex-serving personnel and their families through some very difficult times. You do not have to look far to see the positive impact that SSAFA volunteers and staff behind the scenes continue to have on people's lives."

Congratulations to Super Trooper Mike and to the hundreds of fundraisers around the world who go to great lengths to ensure SSAFA can provide practical, emotional and financial support to those in need within our Armed Forces community.

If you are taking part in an organised event, or taking up a challenge on your own, contact us and we will be happy to send you a free fundraising pack and SSAFA T-shirt. Email communityfundraiser@ssafa.org.uk Telephone **020 7463 9310**



CHAI ANYONE?



year, supporters in Kathmandu held a Big Brew Up. Wives of the British Gurkas prepared Nepalese food and European style cakes, which were sold during a coffee break on camp. Serving personnel and spouses enjoyed the event and helped raise £482.

SSAFA supporters in Nepal contributed towards the purchase of a welfare minibus for the use of all serving personnel and families. This provided assistance to a respite house in the Butwal Area Welfare Centre for veterans and their families, who travel for several days to receive treatment at Butwal hospital.

Join our supporters from Devon to Kathmandu this June by signing up to host your very own Big Brew Up.

Request your Big Brew Up pack by completing the coupon below and use the Freepost envelope provided to send it back to us. Alternatively, visit ssafa.org.uk/bigbrewup or email thebigbrewup@ssafa.org.uk or phone us on **020 7463 9310**. Get your kettle boiling in support of our Armed Forces, veterans and their families!

SSAFA's support is needed around the world, so it's no surprise that we've got an inspiring story all the way from Nepal.

British Gurkhas in Nepal are supported by SSAFA volunteers, who go to great lengths to fundraise within their local communities spread across Kathmandu and Pokhara to help support the welfare services we provide locally. In June last

Sign up to put the kettle on for our Armed Forces by organising a Big Brew Up event. We will send you a pack with handy tools to make your event a success.



Title _____ Forename _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel _____ Email _____

Your SSAFA supporter reference number (if you have one): _____

Send your completed coupon to: **FREEPOST Plus RTEC-XKUX-TSLA, The Big Brew Up, SSAFA, Queen Elizabeth House, 4 St. Dunstan's Hill, London EC3R 8AD.**



DO YOU HAVE A WILL? IS IT UP TO DATE?

SSAFA has teamed up with The Goodwill Partnership, the largest distributor of home-visit solicitor-provided Wills in England and Wales, to offer our supporters and beneficiaries a trusted and professional Will-writing service. The service includes a free, no obligation appointment in your own home at a time that suits you.

Single Will £98 + VAT

Second Will £96 + VAT

TO ARRANGE YOUR APPOINTMENT CALL 01482 975 909

Mention SSAFA when you book your appointment to qualify for this charity discount.

If you would like to talk to us about this Will writing service, or about a gift to SSAFA in your Will, please call us our Legacy team on **020 7463 9257** or visit ssafa.org.uk/legacy

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