

ABF  
THE SOLDIERS'  
CHARITY

**Grants to Individuals in 2013**  
**An update for The Captain James Philippon Trust Fund**



February 2014

## Introduction

In the coming months and years ABF The Soldiers' Charity will face some major challenges and we fully anticipate that the demands on our benevolence will continue to increase. Veterans of the Second World War and National Service generations are becoming increasingly elderly and frail, while those individuals from more recent conflicts continue to suffer from the physical and mental scars of combat. Widespread Army redundancies also mean we are seeing increased demand for employment and training support for those in particular difficulty. Memories of Iraq and Afghanistan will inevitably fade, but not for those casualties and their families who will continue to suffer the impact for many years hence.

This summer will mark the Centenary of the start of the First World War. Whilst we reflect on the past and honour those soldiers who suffered and died fighting for their country in 1914, we must continue to focus on those who urgently need our help in this, the Charity's 70<sup>th</sup> year of providing help to all members of the Army family, past and present.

## Grants to Individuals in 2013

The complexity and cost of supporting serving and retired soldiers and their dependents is rising steadily year on year and in 2013 The Soldiers' Charity distributed over £4.8 million to around 5,592 individuals. We are being called upon to provide more and more grants each year and the cost of this programme has doubled since 2006.

In April 2013, The Captain James Philippon Trust Fund donated a further £5,000 to ABF The Soldiers' Charity for the benefit of individual soldiers and former soldiers who have been wounded in action when deployed in recent and current operations. In the last year this contribution will have helped to fund grants which range in value between £200 and £2,500.

This table illustrates some of the most common grants made to all our beneficiaries over the past 12 months:

<b>Grants to Individuals</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b><i>Wounded or Elderly</i></b>	
Care home fees	277
Mobility aids & specialist equipment	783
Home/Car adaptations	414
<b><i>Homeless or at risk of homelessness</i></b>	
Accommodation/ deposits	319
Help with rent/utility arrears	490
Basic furnishings/equipment	1,158
<b><i>Other</i></b>	
Education bursaries/course fees	312
Funeral expenses	389
Therapeutic holidays/remembrance trips	128
General needs	1,322
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,592</b>

## **Some of the individuals we have helped**

### ***Sergeant Gary Jamieson***

In 2010 Gary deployed on his second tour of Afghanistan with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Scots Guards in his fourteenth year of service in the British Army. Whilst on a patrol, Gary's platoon entered an IED field; one of the devices detonated and Gary was left with catastrophic injuries. He lost both legs above the knee and his left arm above the elbow. The same IED killed the patrol commander.

In order to help Gary, his wife Claire and 3 children cope with his injuries, major renovations to their home in Lanarkshire were necessary. The family were unable to stay there whilst the work was being done so The Soldiers' Charity paid for the cost of a hotel nearby, thus keeping further disruption to a minimum. Through The Quick Reaction Fund we also administered a grant to make essential adaptations to his car and for gym equipment so Gary could continue his rehabilitation and fitness at home.

Gary is now taking the steps towards medical discharge but says *"you never know when you'll need support, it could be you, or one of your muckers. But The Soldiers' Charity is there, it's had such a positive impact on my life"*.

### ***Chris Parrot***

Chris, 23, was injured twice whilst serving with 2 Mercian on two separate tours of Afghanistan. The first incident saw a bullet shatter his leg in a battle that claimed two of the lives of his comrades. On his next tour in 2009, he suffered a serious head injury from grenade fragments. As a result of this injury, Chris was diagnosed with epilepsy and was medically discharged from the Army in 2011.

He has now finished a college course in Horticulture, in his hometown of Derby, and now hopes to qualify as a landscape architect. His studies were enabled through funds administered by The Soldiers' Charity which have paid for the purchase of essential items for his course including clothing, safety equipment and travel.

Despite missing the camaraderie of the Army, Chris Parrot is enjoying his new life as a civilian. He said of the retraining support he was given by The Soldiers' Charity: *"It's a good course and The Soldiers' Charity helped me out massively through this funding; they've sorted out everything from the kit I've needed to the bus fare, it's a huge help. Now I've finished it I hope to get a job so I can carry on with something that I love doing."*

### ***Corporal Andy Garthwaite***

Andy joined the Queen's Royal Lancers at the age of 16. After serving in Iraq he deployed to Afghanistan and whilst on his second to last patrol of the tour, he was searching a compound when his unit came under sustained and heavy fire. As section commander, Andy raced to join the rest of his troop on the roof of the compound but no sooner had he reached them than a rocket propelled grenade took off his right arm. A close friend was killed in the same incident. Andy is only alive today because his team radioed for a helicopter and within 10 minutes were carrying him to it across an open field despite continuous, enemy fire.

It has been a long road to recovery for Andy but he recently became one of only five people in the world to be fitted with a bionic arm powered by the brain. The Soldiers' Charity gave Andy two grants to assist with his rehabilitation and the first paid for an iPad. Because of the nerve damage in his remaining hand he found it extremely difficult to hold a pen but, because of its

lightness, this piece of equipment allows Andy to type with one hand. The second grant paid for adaptations to his bathroom. Prior to this Andy had fallen out of his shower a number of times; our funding helped provide a wet room thus ensuring Andy could safely carry out his daily routines. Last summer Andy married his partner Kailey. Thanks to the bionic arm he is now able to ride his motorcycle and drive a car again. He is now preparing for his transition to civilian life and says that *"having The Soldier's Charity behind me, it's not only given me more independence, it gives me reassurance, just knowing that people are out there, to give support if needed"*.

### **Ronald Watkins**

Ronald Watkins joined the Army two weeks after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1944 – the same year ABF The Soldiers' Charity was founded. During World War II he served with the South Wales Borderers and then the Royal Pioneer Corps. Ronald guarded high-ranking prisoners of war, including Field-Marshal Gerd von Runstedt, the commander of German forces in France. He also worked in an Army hospital, caring for wounded men returning from the front. Ronald left the Army in 1948 but our paths did not cross until 65 years later.

Early last year, the central heating broke in the house in Wales where Ronald, now 87, has lived alone since the death of his wife Gwyneth. A local gas repairman was unable to fix his heating and the local authorities turned down his request for assistance. With the temperature outside plummeting, Ronald wrapped himself in blankets and tried using the flame of a small oil heater in his living room to stay warm. But it wasn't enough to keep the cold at bay. He told us: *"I used to go to bed early at night because it was so damn cold, I had to go to bed just to keep warm."*

As soon as we learned about the urgency of Ronald's situation we took immediate action and made a grant that ensured new radiators and a new central heating system were installed as quickly as possible. Ronald says, *"I was bowled over at how quickly the work was done. I don't know what I would have done otherwise. I hope people give as much as they can to this Charity as they've done me the world of good; they've been such a godsend to me. I will have no more cold winters in my house, they'll be all warm"*.

### **Kim Sweeney**

Kim is the mother of Guardsman Michael Sweeney who was killed in Afghanistan in April 2010 whilst serving with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Coldstream Guards. He was 19 years old. Her husband, also called Michael, served in the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers. They have one other son, Sean aged 21. Since Michael Jr's death, the family have devoted themselves to fundraising for The Soldiers' Charity in his memory. Every year the family holds a family fun day in Blyth town square which has now raised over £40,000. The Sweeneys chose to support The Soldiers' Charity because Michael was wearing one of our wristbands when he died. His father says, *"Michael had chosen to wear the wristband for a reason, so we thought let's honour his memory and support his Charity"*.

It was then our turn to support the family in their time of need. Michael Snr's health problems had deteriorated significantly. The Soldiers' Charity gave the family a grant for a heavy duty electric adjustable bed so that he could be more comfortable at night. When asked what inspires her to keep fundraising each year, Kim said: *"It's my way of coping knowing that it's in Michael's name. It's keeping his memory alive and it's helping his fellow soldiers; his brothers, his Army family. We're all one big family and families help each other in hard times; that's what The Soldiers' Charity does. It's there to help people who need support, whether it's mental, physical or for the immediate family."*

## **Our Thanks**

The Soldiers' Charity strives to be the most effective military charity for soldiers, former soldiers and their families, providing a lifetime of support where necessary. We continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Regiments and Corps of the British Army to ensure that all available resources are delivered appropriately but, without the generosity of committed supporters such as The Captain James Philippon Trust Fund, the charity would not be able to meet the constantly increasing demand on our resources. We remain extremely grateful for this invaluable support and are indebted to the Trustees for their continued interest in our work.