



THE
**RIPPLE
POND**

YOUR
FORCES
FAMILY
NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

September
2023



"We all know that families are the unsung heroes who look after veterans in the middle of the night. When everyone else is gone, they are the ones picking up the pieces. Thank you for everything that you do to support our community."

Rt Hon Johnny Mercer MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

FAMILIES IN RECOVERY: THE RIPPLE POND MEMBERS SHARE INSPIRING STORIES AT NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM EVENT

Over the past 6 months, it's been a privilege to work alongside the National Army Museum to highlight the role of families in the military. As part of their 2023 exhibition looking at soldiers in recovery, they recognised that there was a gap in the story. A gap that our Members fill day after day. Families. Whilst many injured British Armed Forces Members are navigating their way to recovery, it can not happen without the consistent support of loved ones around them. Loved ones who very often bear the brunt of the trauma day after day.



This partnership led to our event on Saturday 16th September hosted at the National Army Museum, with Dr. Dan Barnard facilitating a conversation with three of our amazing Members. We had the honour to listen, hear the stories, and acknowledge the role families play in recovery. It was poignant, thought-provoking, and emotional hearing the stories shared, the gaps in the care in place and, despite it all, the hopes for the future. As a Member of Staff, but also a Member of The Ripple Pond myself, I reflected deeply on our personal journey and was inspired that together, as Members, we can have a collective voice that is heard, and through which we can make a difference to the care of our loved ones. Not only that, I am hopeful that together we will see resources put in place for families, so that the wars our loved ones have fought, don't have to be lived out daily in our homes, and that we can get the help so desperately needed.

Huge thank yous go to the National Army Museum for your courage to host such an event and fill the gaps in our social military narrative, and Dr. Dan Barnard for creating a safe space for our Member's voices to be heard. Finally, a thank you to our Members, your courage is inspirational, your stories matter, and your journey is important. Together we can make a difference.

NATIONAL
ARMY
MUSEUM

Sarah,
Member Service Delivery Officer





Meet The Panel

At the heart of our event were our panelists and host. Their courage in sharing their personal stories illuminated the challenges faced by military families and served as a powerful reminder of the strength in our community.



**JOHN AND
JANET NEILSON**

John, a father to an injured veteran, found strength in The Ripple Pond community alongside his wife, Janet. They offered invaluable insights into supporting their son's recovery journey.



SHARON DEANS

Sharon, a military spouse and 'Volunteer of the Year' at the 2023 Celebrating Forces Families Awards, highlighted the unique challenges of caring for an injured veteran.



HELEN RODEN

Helen, a Regional Coordinator at The Ripple Pond, supports her husband, a veteran on the path to emotional recovery. She shared her insights on managing complex PTSD, and the gaps in understanding military family needs.

**MARY-JANE
JENKINS**

Mary-Jane, a Regional Coordinator at The Ripple Pond, shared the triumphs and tribulations of being a supportive military spouse.

HOST SPOTLIGHT

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our exceptional host, Dr. Dan Barnard, for leading our event. Dan, who is the Clinical Lead for Midlands OpCOURAGE, was the perfect fit. His skilled guidance and genuine warmth ensured that the event was not just engaging but also profoundly meaningful for all who attended.





CELEBRATING FORCES FAMILIES AWARDS 2024 LAUNCH

We were thrilled to be invited back by Celebrating Forces Families, to the 2024 awards launch at Barclays HQ in London. After winning the Military Family Charity of the Year Award in 2023, which recognises a charity which has provided exemplar support to Armed Forces families, we were asked to reflect on how important it was to have won.

The award has enabled us to reach more family Members caring for an injured loved one and reduce their feelings of isolation and loneliness. It has also enabled us to share the best practices with other organisations, that support Armed Forces families, and ensure that families caring for an injured loved one are genuinely seen, heard, and supported.



We also recognise how important the award win was to our Members, who are proud to be part of a growing organisation that champions the often-unsung heroes within the Armed Forces community – the family.



WINTER CRAFTS

We're pleased to announce that we will be running a series of winter craft sessions hosted by TRP Staff and Members. Thank you to the Members who have come forward already, and offered to run a craft session. If you would like to run a session, get in touch at help@theripplepond.org. For those wanting to attend, look out for more details coming your way for sessions and times.

**CALLING ALL MEMBERS
WHO CAN CRAFT!**

BOOK CLUB

TRP now have a book Club, run by one of our fantastic Members. So far, they have read *Wuthering Heights*, *The Blackbird*, and *The Governor*. Reading is a brilliant way to relax and unwind, and it can also help boost your mood, provide an escape from the pressures of life and even reduce stress levels. If you would like to join the TRP book club please get in touch! Please note this is for Members only.

BOOK CLUB



QUIZ NIGHT

We are thrilled to announce that we hosted a virtual quiz night in collaboration with The Poppy Factory!

Our event took place at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, September 26th, and it was an enjoyable hour filled with fun and trivia. The event was open to both Ripple Pond Members and Members of The Poppy Factory Employment Service.

QUIZ