

ERSKINE *News*

Issue 43, Autumn 2026



Reflecting on 110 Years

**Take a look back at the original
Veteran Newsletter and workshops.**

Pages 8 - 11

Welcome

As Head of Community Services, I have the privilege of seeing first-hand the impact your support has on the lives of Veterans and their families across Scotland.

Today, Erskine is supporting more Veterans than ever. Thanks to your generosity, our services continue to grow, reaching more people in more communities and ensuring that no Veteran is left feeling isolated or unsupported.

One of the clearest examples of this growth is our Veterans Activity Centre in Forres. Since opening, EVAC North has become a thriving hub where Veterans can connect, make friends, access support and rediscover a sense of purpose. We are also making exciting progress towards opening EVAC East in Fife, allowing us to bring our services closer to one of Scotland's largest Veteran communities.

Alongside the activity centres, our Home Support Service continues to make a real difference. What began as a pilot project is now a permanent service supporting Veterans in Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire. Designed to tackle loneliness and isolation, we provide companionship and practical



support, from sharing a cup of tea and a chat to helping with shopping, appointments and community activities. Our Home Support Workers often bridge the gap between Veterans and their communities, helping them regain confidence, reconnect with others and enjoy life beyond their front door.

Many of the Veterans who use our services describe them as life-changing, and some have even called them life-saving. Those words are a powerful reminder of why your support matters.

None of this would be possible without you. Every donation, fundraising challenge, gift in a Will and act of support helps expand our reach and provide care, accommodation and community services to those who need them most.

Thank you for standing alongside Veterans and their families.

Roy Geddes
RAF Veteran and Head of Community Services

Meet The Team!



Evonne McCord
Centre Manager, EVAC West

I've worked with Erskine for more than 11 years across both care and community services.

As a Veteran myself, I'm incredibly proud of the life-changing support we provide. Erskine has encouraged me to reach my potential, and I genuinely can't imagine working anywhere else.

Thank you for your continued help and support of our wonderful charity.



Morag O'Donnell
Home Support Manager

I've been with Erskine since August 2024, and it has been a truly rewarding experience.

Through our Home Support service, we have the privilege of helping Veterans and their spouses remain independent in their own homes. Seeing confidence grow and knowing we've made a positive difference to someone's day is what makes this role so special.

I look forward to continuing to support our Veterans and their families.



Davie Grant
Centre Manager, EVAC North

I joined Erskine in August 2024 as Centre Manager at EVAC North in Forres.

My role involves leading activities, support services and community initiatives that help Veterans stay connected, active and independent.

What I enjoy most is our fantastic team spirit. We work closely together, and there's always plenty of laughter, which makes coming to work a real pleasure.

There are many different roles within Erskine and each one is taken on by an amazing individual offering their skills and knowledge to help continue to make Erskine's care of the highest standard.



We're proud to care and are always looking for people who share our values.

Scan the QR code to explore current opportunities and discover what a career with Erskine could offer.

MORE THAN A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Sometimes the transition from military life to civvy street can be challenging. Your support means Veterans can get help to begin the next chapter of their lives

GRANT'S JOURNEY

For Army Veteran Grant, our Transitional Supported Accommodation provided support, community and stability at a time when he needed it most.

Grant travelled the world with the Royal Logistics Corps. After taking on numerous training exercises and various postings including Afghanistan and Germany, he was promoted to Lance Corporal.

Sadly, after sustaining a severe knee injury requiring multiple operations, he was medically discharged ending his Army career.

Returning home to stay with his parents, Grant quickly found work. However, his family were concerned about how much he might have been struggling beneath the surface, even when he tried to hide it.

Grant's mentor helped him secure an apartment at Erskine Transitional Supported Accommodation.

The calm and quiet surroundings of Erskine Veterans Village provided the space he needed to begin rebuilding his life. Surrounded by fellow Veterans, he rediscovered the camaraderie he had missed since leaving the Army.

"I am enjoying life because of Erskine. I have never experienced anything like it. When I leave my flat, I immediately feel peace within the estate."



Growing to Meet Demand

In 2024 our Home Support service was launched as a pilot project to support Veterans to remain independent in their own homes. Today we support more than 70 Veterans.

Andy's Story

For Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Veteran Andy, Home Support has been truly life changing.

When Andy lost his first leg his daughter took a chance one day and contacted Erskine to see if there was any support available for her dad. To both her and Andy's surprise, there happened to be two cottages available within the Veterans Village.

After being offered one of the fully accessible cottages and moving in, it was clear from the outset it was the right move for Andy.

"The doors and halls are wide, and the kitchen is big, which means I can move around easily in my wheelchair. I can get everywhere I need to in the house with ease."



"When Robert comes in, we just talk, have a bit of banter and a laugh. To have somebody like him to chat to was as good as getting the cottage."

Thanks to supporters like you our Home Support service offers Andy even more support.

Many Veterans, even those with close family relationships and strong support networks, can still experience loneliness and isolation as they miss the camaraderie and routine of military life. Home Support is helping to tackle this by providing companionship, connection and a friendly face each week.

For Andy, these visits have become much more than practical support.

"I don't really look at Robert coming in as a Home Support Worker. I look at him more as a mate than anything else."

With your help, we can reach more Veterans who need support.

We hope to grow our Home Support service alongside new Veterans Activity Centres (EVACs) within the next six years.

110 YEARS OF VETERANS CREATING, CRAFTING AND CONNECTING

Workshops, artwork and craftsmanship have helped define life at Erskine for generations. Today we celebrate the talent and community spirit of Veterans past and present.

The new Willow Basket shop officially opened its doors at The Erskine Home in June, it celebrates a tradition that stretches back more than 100 years.

In April 1917, a year after Erskine opened, our workshops began. The aim of the workshops was to help disabled servicemen learn new skills, regain independence and find meaningful employment suited to their abilities.

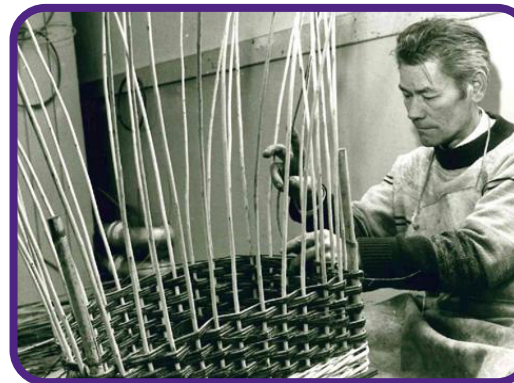
They quickly became a hive of activity. Veterans learned trades ranging from woodwork, boot and shoe repair, and cabinet making to tailoring, kilt making, hairdressing and beekeeping.

For many, the workshops opened the door to new careers.

Within a few years, Erskine-trained hairdressers, shoemakers and craftsmen were working across the country and as far afield as Canada, Australia and the Falkland Islands. For others whose injuries made employment outside our community difficult, the workshops provided purpose, companionship and an opportunity to earn a living.

As demand grew, so did the number of workshops. Throughout the years, generations of Veterans produced furniture, baskets, printed materials and handcrafted goods that were sold to the public.

The story continued through the Crafts and Garden Centre and later the Erskine Garden Centre, which opened in 2010. Although the Garden Centre was transferred to Caulders Garden Centres in 2014, the spirit behind it never disappeared.



The opening of The Willow Basket brings that story full circle.

Alongside gifts and merchandise, the shop proudly showcases artwork created by our Veterans, with a different artist featured each month.

Every purchase helps support Veterans and their families, ensuring the legacy of those early workshops continues for generations to come.

Shop the Erskine range today

shop.erskine.org.uk

In store:

**The Willow Basket
Erskine Home,
Bishopton**



Pictured: Erskine Ambassador
Scott Meenagh

STILL SHARING STORIES...

From the patient-produced pages of The Bugle to Stevie Wyllie's ERMAC Times, discover how Veterans have been informing, inspiring and connecting with one another through the written word for six decades.

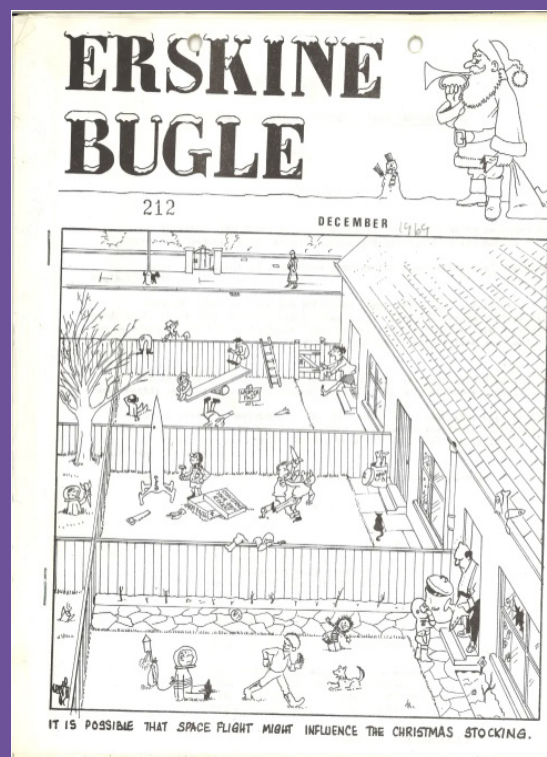
In 1966, a group of Erskine Hospital residents launched a newsletter.

Known as The Erskine Bugle, the patient-produced newsletter promised something for everyone: poetry, sport, quizzes, stories, opinion pieces and, perhaps most importantly, news from around the Erskine community.

It gave Veterans a voice.

With contributions from both patients and staff, The Bugle helped residents stay connected to life around the hospital and encouraged anyone with a story, thought or opinion to share it.

For those unable to leave their wards, it provided a valuable window into the wider Erskine community. Its pages were filled with humour, creativity, personal reflections and the everyday moments that brought people together.



60 YEARS ON

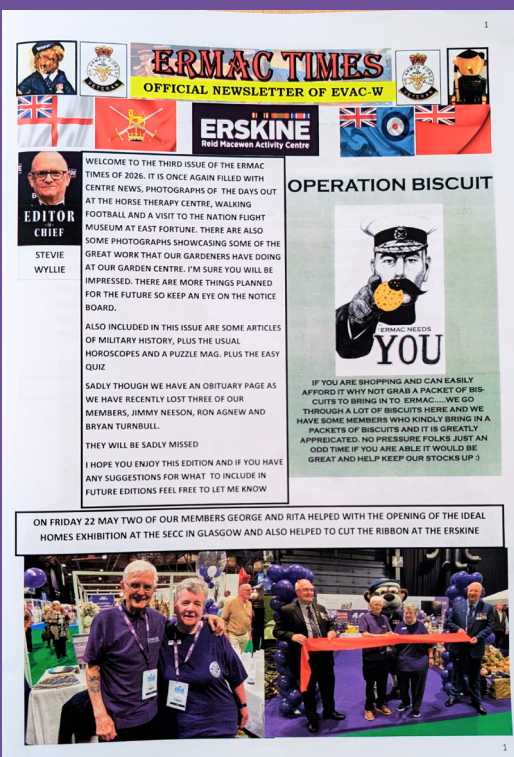
It quickly became a success. Members of the Occupational Therapy Department typed manuscripts during lunch breaks, workshop teams helped draw up illustrations and puzzles, with hundreds of copies assembled by hand each month.

More than a newsletter, The Bugle became a record of life at Erskine. Its pages captured friendships, achievements, celebrations and even national events, preserving a unique snapshot of Veteran life and ensuring that everyone's story, no matter how ordinary it seemed at the time, had a place to be shared.

While The Bugle eventually disappeared from circulation, the spirit behind it never really went away.

Today, at Erskine Veterans Activity Centre (EVAC) West, Veteran Stevie Wyllie is continuing that tradition through his own newsletter, the ERMAC Times. Sharing updates, celebrating achievements, highlighting activities and helping members stay informed, ERMAC Times serves many of the same purposes as its predecessor.

Although much has changed since the first edition of The Bugle was printed, some things remain the same. Veterans still value the opportunity to tell their stories, celebrate their community and keep in touch with one another.



SPOTLIGHT ON MAJOR GENERAL ALASTAIR BRUCE

Ambassador

We're delighted to welcome Major General Alastair Bruce of Crionaich to the Erskine family and introduce him to you, our supporters.

Many of you will recognise Alastair as the commentator who has guided television audiences through some of the nation's most significant moments, from Royal Weddings and Jubilees to the Coronation of King Charles III. Others may know him as the historical adviser behind the much-loved television series *Downton Abbey*.

Yet behind the public profile is someone with a deep appreciation of military service and the Veteran community. Having served for 45 years, Alastair has dedicated much of his life to understanding and honouring the experiences of his comrades.

His connection with Erskine grew during his time as Governor of Edinburgh Castle, when he first met Chief Executive Ian Cumming and learned more about our work

supporting Veterans and their families across Scotland. Since then, he has become a valued friend of the charity, regularly supporting Erskine's work and creating opportunities for our supporters to take part in significant occasions. This included the 21 Gun Salute at Edinburgh Castle marking the accession of King Charles III, Alastair's final one as Governor.

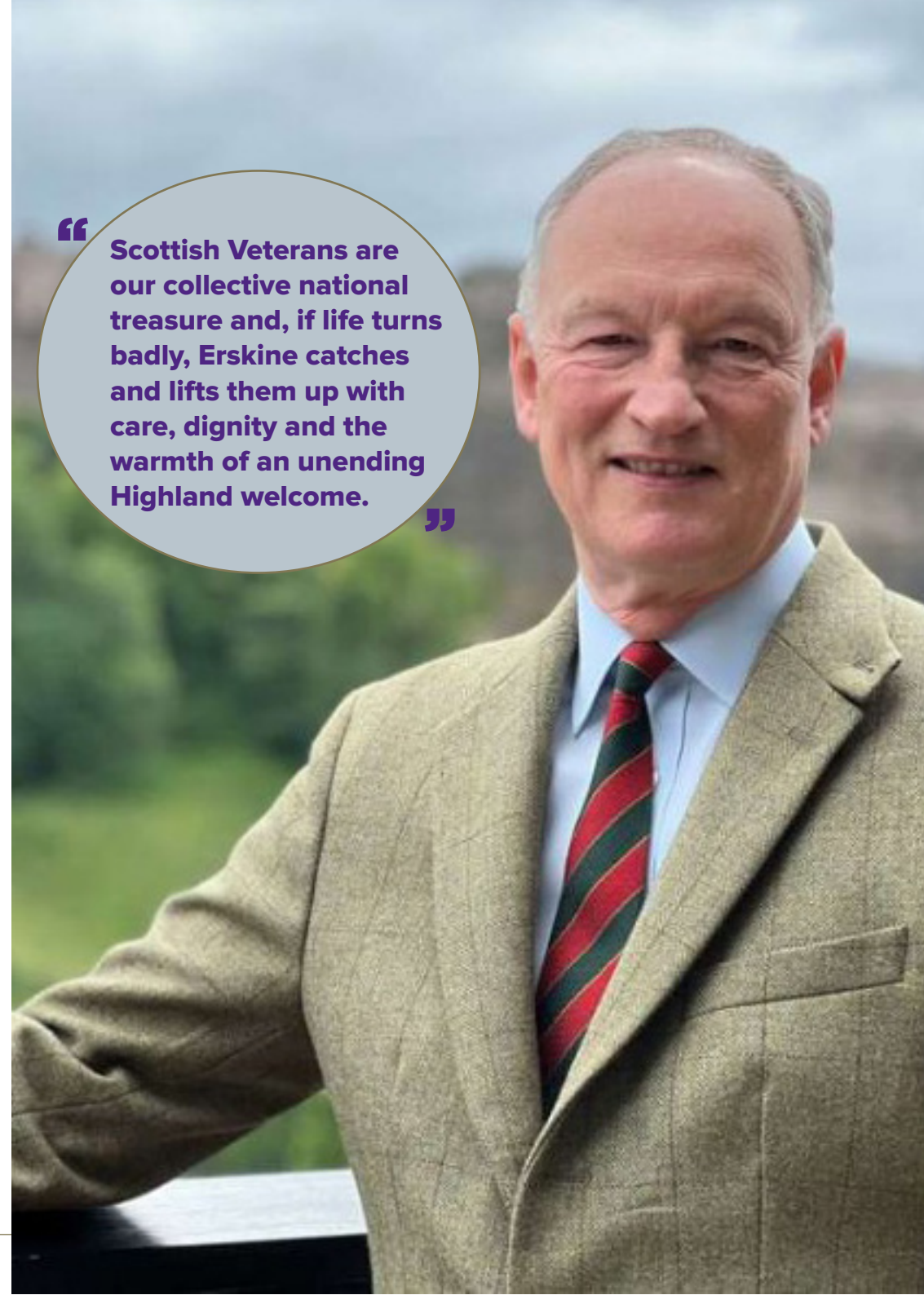
"On a recent visit I met three residents – the eldest has recently turned 103 years old and the youngest 98. What spirits they were in. The atmosphere within Erskine is magnificent and the staff are absolutely committed. It's a wonderful place."

We are thrilled to have Alastair as part of the Erskine family and look forward to working alongside him and you our loyal supporters as we continue to expand our services across the country.

“

Scottish Veterans are our collective national treasure and, if life turns badly, Erskine catches and lifts them up with care, dignity and the warmth of an unending Highland welcome.

”



SUPPORTING ARMY VETERANS THROUGH EXCEPTIONAL CARE

We are delighted that the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) has continued its longstanding support of Erskine's Army beneficiaries with a grant of £150,000.

The funding will directly support the delivery of enhanced care services to Army Veterans and their spouses at The Erskine Home, Bishopton.

The ABF has been one of Erskine's most loyal supporters for many years and this latest grant will help ensure Veterans receive the specialist care, rehabilitation and opportunities they deserve. One Veteran already benefiting from these enhanced services is Chris Downie, who some of you may recognise from our Summer Appeal.

Chris joined the Army straight after leaving school and completed six years of active service. After his time in the Army, he went on to work as a delivery driver until a devastating road traffic accident changed the course of his life.

When Chris moved into the Erskine Home in 2020, he began a new chapter.

With the support of Erskine's dedicated staff, particularly our Physiotherapist, Chris has made remarkable progress. Shortly after arriving, he was assessed for an electric wheelchair which gave him greater independence and confidence.

One of his biggest ambitions has always been to walk again. Earlier this year, with the support of a specialist walker and ongoing physiotherapy, Chris successfully walked the full length of the gym for the first time.

Chris's story is just one example of how enhanced care services can transform lives. Thanks to the generosity of you, our supporters, and organisations such as the Army Benevolent Fund, Veterans can access the specialist support, rehabilitation and encouragement they need to achieve goals that once seemed out of reach.

**Army
Benevolent
Fund**



Recognising Service, Celebrating Community

Each year, Armed Forces Day brings communities together to show their support for serving personnel, Veterans, reservists and military families.

This year, residents from Erskine Edinburgh were proud to take part in the Falkirk Armed Forces Day celebrations.

Throughout the day, residents met serving personnel and Veterans, shared stories and memories and enjoyed being part of a wider celebration of military service.

Thanks to you, our generous supporters, our Veterans can attend memorable events like this.

A special thanks also to everyone involved in organising and hosting the event, and the staff and volunteers whose support helped make the day possible. Their kindness and dedication ensured our residents could enjoy a fitting celebration of all that Armed Forces Day represents.

£20 could help provide trips and outings for our care home residents.



STRIPING OUT FOR FELLOW VETERANS

From military service to fundraising success, David is helping ensure Veterans receive the support they deserve.



Back in April, Retired Royal Air Force Wing Commander David Tait completed his third Kiltwalk in support of the Veteran community at Erskine.

With a military career spanning 22 years and a long family history of supporting Veterans, David understands the importance of looking after those who have served.

His commitment is now being carried forward by the next generation, with his daughter volunteering at Haig House in the Erskine Veterans Village.

David said: **“Every time I visit Erskine, I’m inspired by the care provided to Veterans and the dedication of the staff and volunteers. If I can help Erskine continue its work, every step is worthwhile.”**

Our sincere thanks go to David and all of Team Erskine’s Kiltwalk participants. Their determination, generosity and community spirit will make a lasting difference to Veterans and their families across Scotland.

Ready to join Team Erskine?

Visit: erskine.org.uk/give-support

Call: 0141 814 4555

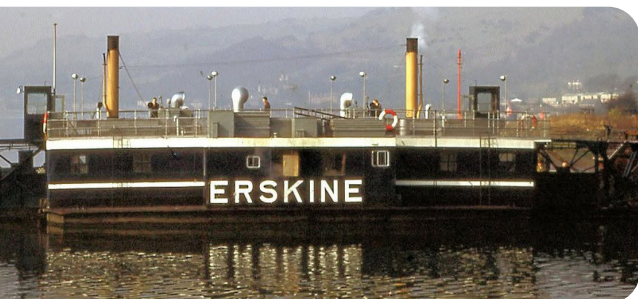
Leave A LASTING LEGACY

Every gift left in a Will is unique. For some, it represents years of loyal support. For others, it is a way of recognising the difference Erskine has made to their lives or the lives of those they love.

For lifelong supporter Jean Hendry, leaving a gift in her Will was a way of saying thank you.

Jean's connection to Erskine began during the Second World War. Jean's father, Alexander Duncan, was held as a Japanese Prisoner of War for more than four years. When he returned home in 1945, Erskine helped him recover.

Jean fondly remembered travelling across the Clyde on the Erskine Ferry to visit him, seeing first-hand the care he received.



Picture with thanks to the West Dunbartonshire Council Arts & Heritage.

That experience stayed with her throughout her life. When planning her estate, Jean chose to leave a gift to help future generations of Veterans.

Jean's friend, Robert Scott, explained: **"She would be delighted to know how her legacy is being used to support more Veterans."**

Thinking about leaving a gift?

Our Legacy Manager, **Sarah Morgan**, is always happy to have an informal chat with no pressure or obligation.

0141 814 4520 | sarah.morgan@erskine.org.uk



I want to make a donation to Erskine Veterans Charity today

1 Your Details

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

2

Please accept my gift of £

3

Did you know the taxman can care for Veterans too?

If you are a UK taxpayer, let us know and we can boost your donation by 25% at no extra cost to you.

giftaid it

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations to Erskine that I make in the future or have made in the past four years. **In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below and insert today's date:** I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 I have given.

I am a taxpayer ☐

Signature Date

Donation Payment

I enclose my cheque made payable to Erskine or please debit my Visa/Mastercard/Maestro

Card No

Expiry Date Security No. (Last 3 digits)

Signature Date

Please send me information about leaving a gift to Erskine in my Will. ☐

I'd like to make a difference via regular Direct Debit

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

I would like to make a regular gift of: **£8** ☐ **£12** ☐ **Other £**

I would like this gift to be made: **Monthly** ☐ **Quarterly** ☐ **Annually** ☐

Please start my payments on: **1st** ☐ **15th** ☐ _____
(insert month/year)



**Instruction to your Bank or
Building Society to pay
by Direct Debit**



Please fill in the form and send to:

Fundraising Department, Erskine Veterans Charity, Bishopton, PA7 5PU

Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

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Branch Sort Code

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Bank/Building Society Account Number

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Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Erskine Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with Erskine and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Service User Number

7	0	6	3	7	7
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Reference

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Signature(s)

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Date

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Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.