

Erskine News

Issue 34, Spring 2022



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Falklands Veteran Bill
McDowall talks of his time
during the conflict.

Erskine Registered Scottish Charity No. SC006609



PROUD TO CARE

We'd love to hear from you

There's nothing we like more than hearing from our wonderful supporters. Whether you'd like a chat on the phone, to write us a letter or share your thoughts online – here's how to stay in touch.

Write

Share your thoughts or stories by writing to:
**Fundraising Team, Erskine, Bishopton,
Renfrewshire, PA7 5PU**

Call

Questions, comments or just want to chat?
You can call us on: **0141 814 555**
Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

Email

You can email us with any queries or concerns you may have:
fundraising@erskine.org.uk

Social

Check out our social media or listen to Erskine Veterans Radio to see how your donations make a difference to Veterans.

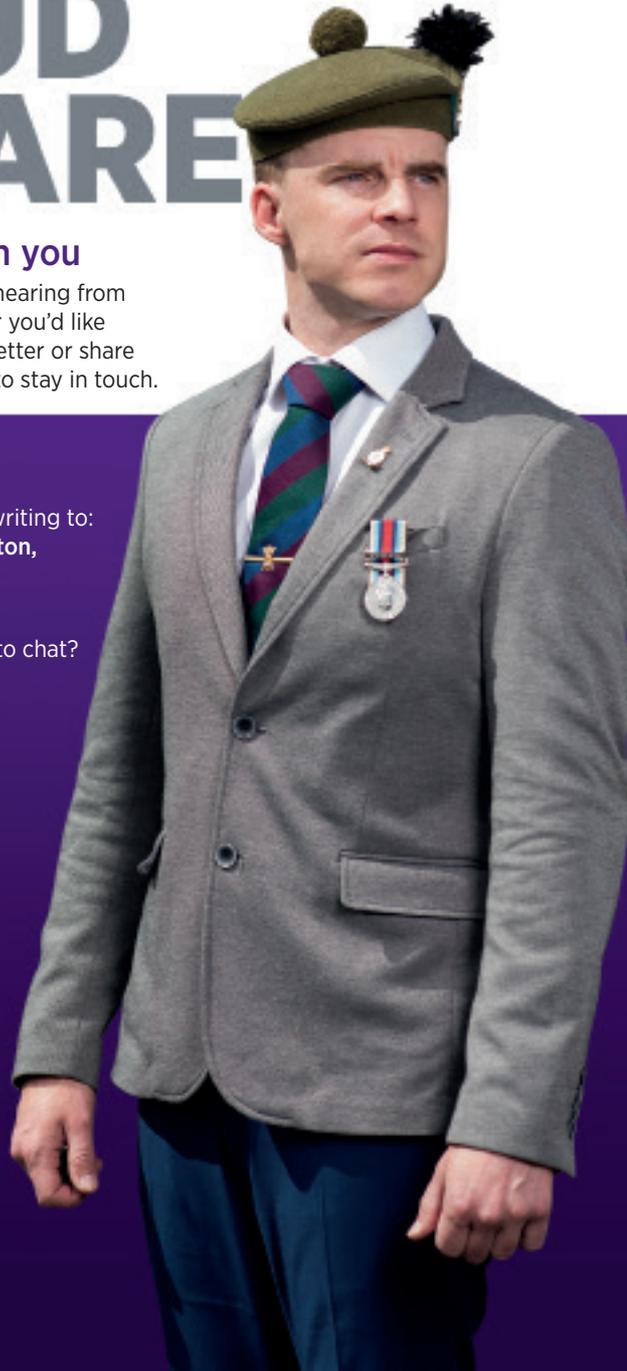
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Welcome

It was a great privilege to be appointed as Chair of Erskine's Board of Trustees in September last year, succeeding Robin Crawford who stood down from the role after more than 20 years of sterling service to the organisation. Our thanks to you Robin, we wish you all the best.

I have been involved with Erskine since 2012 and have seen the charity evolve over that period, as it has done since its founding in 1916. As the demographics of the Veteran community changes our services also need to adapt.

Erskine's focus for many years has been on residential care and although this will remain a major part of our delivery, responding to the needs of younger Veterans will become more important than it has been in the past. Our recently opened Transitional Support Accommodation and newly extended Erskine Reid Macewen Activities Centre (ERMAC) are evidence of this move.

We hope to replicate the ERMAC model in other parts of Scotland as it has proven to be highly effective in tackling social isolation and improving the wellbeing of those who attend. Our first facility outside the central belt is likely to be in Forres, Morayshire where we are in discussion with the local group planning the redevelopment of the former Leancoil Hospital as a community hub for health and wellbeing. As we pass the 2nd anniversary of the



Stuart Aitkenhead, Erskine Chairman

imposition of the first Covid-19 lockdown measures, I would like to pay tribute to Erskine care staff and management across our 4 homes in Bishopton, Glasgow and Edinburgh for the professionalism they have shown in continuing to deliver high-quality, person-centred care in the most challenging of circumstances.

And so to you our Erskine family; I'd like to thank you all for your ongoing support, generosity and belief in our care of Veterans and their loved ones.

Sincere regards,



Stuart Aitkenhead, BSc CEng FIMechE
Erskine Chairman

Erskine Reid Macewen Activity Centre

A Year of Pedal Power

Erskine Reid Macewen Activities Centre (ERMAC) Veterans taking part in the “Build Your Own Bike” course with mental health charity, Common Wheel, have been working alongside very talented bike engineers to design and build their own bespoke bikes.

For over a year now our Veterans have been taking part in the 10 week course which taught them new skills, built confidence and left them with a brand new bike each!

Veterans of all abilities took part and the course was a huge success.

The project wouldn't have been achievable without an incredible donation of £35,000 from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, which allowed us to team up with Common Wheel.



Buying a pint of milk has more value than you think

Shoppers can now support Veterans just by buying a pint of milk at the Co-op!

From now until 22 October 2022, if you're a Co-op member you can choose to raise funds for Erskine Reid Macewen Activities Centre (ERMAC) every time you shop.

For every £1 members spend on selected branded products and services, 2p will go into their membership account to help provide vital support to Veterans living in the community.

The funds raised through the Co-op Local Community Fund will allow a professional tutor to deliver weekly classes to our Veterans at the Activities Centre.

ERMAC Manager Debs Dickson said: *“Choosing the Erskine Reid Macewen Activities Centre as your cause will help provide support to our Veterans.*

Wellbeing classes will bring together Veterans with shared experiences, allowing them to seek support within a safe environment which in turn will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of vulnerable Veterans within our communities.

Those who are experiencing social isolation, loneliness and mental health challenges particularly benefit socially, recreationally and educationally.”

To find out more about ERMAC visit erskine.org.uk/ermac



Three easy steps to collect rewards and support Erskine:

1. Become a Co-op member at: co-op.co.uk/membership
2. Set your cause to Erskine Reid Macewen Activities Centre in the members section
3. Swipe or scan your card every time you shop at the Co-op.

As well as earning rewards, 2p from every £1 you spend will support Veterans. Thank you!



Spectacular Sporting Veterans

Our Veterans prove you're never too old!

2021 was the year we finally watched our sporting greats return to centre stage. The wait was over and a popular Erskine event returned - The Sporting Senior Games!

The fun sports tournament started in 2015 and returned after missing a year due to the pandemic.

Events included boccia bowls; javelin; golf and basketball. Teams took part at individual care homes due to guidelines, the competition was as fierce as ever!

Participants from Erskine Edinburgh Home, Woodlands Nursing Home in Livingston (part of the West Lothian Activities Network), Summerlee House in Coatbridge, Erskine Glasgow Home, The Erskine Home and the Erskine Reid Macewen Activities Centre were set in their blocks and ready to go.

Erskine Head Physiotherapist Janet Leith said: *"We were 'picking up the baton' that had to be put down in 2020 as a result of the pandemic.*

This time I had the privilege of being at each event and witnessing the emergence of our resident athletes from the worst effects of Covid. It was exciting to see the joy and laughter on the faces of athletes and staff alike."

After months of isolation and limited physical activity, residents worked incredibly hard and competed well to win our trademark Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals and the John Bowman Trophy - awarded to the overall winning team.

Winners received their medals at an award ceremony held on Older People's Day, at the Glynhill Hotel in Renfrew.



**Overall winners:
Erskine Glasgow residents
taking part in golf.**

ERMAC Olympians hit the target

Inspired by the summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, Veterans from ERMAC held their very own Olympics to promote wellbeing, teamwork and healthy competition.

The archery event saw Derek winning the gold medal, John the silver and Alan the bronze. The age range between the winners is an amazing 51 years, the youngest being 41 and the eldest 92!

Activities Coordinator Evonne who organises the archery said: *"Archery is excellent for balance, concentration, upper body strength. In addition the social side of the activity is great with the banter flowing.*



I am immensely proud of everyone involved in the two week competition and I'd like to offer a huge congratulations to all our medal winners."

Spirit In Motion

Erskine Ambassador Scott Meenagh is quite literally the Paralympic motto: Spirit In Motion. The 32 year old Paratrooper Veteran competed for Team GB at his second Winter Paralympics last month making the journey to Beijing, China, just 6 months after welcoming his daughter to the world.

Scott is a Para Nordic Skier and competed in no less than 7 events at the Games and we're not talking short sharp sprint distances! Ranging from 7.5km to 15km Scott made sure he had all training and preparation needed to tackle each race head on.

We're sure you'll join us in sending Scott huge congratulations on his achievements.



“It really does feel like one big family.”

The Magic of Music

Sarah Smith unveiled as new Family Ambassador

For many families coping with the heart-breaking journey of dementia is daunting. Sarah Smith knows first-hand how difficult and emotionally debilitating a journey this can be.

In March this year we were honoured to announce Sarah as our latest member of the Ambassadorial team in her role as Family Ambassador.

“I am delighted to be asked to be the first Family Ambassador to Erskine. When my dad Bill entered the Glasgow Home in December 2017 I was told that “not only do we have a duty of care to Bill, but the whole family”, and that duty of care allowed me to gain a greater understanding of dementia with every question being answered, so my brothers and I never felt alone.

Since April last year I have been volunteering at both the Bishopton and now Glasgow Home which I love, so to be asked to do this is a great privilege and one that I hope will allow me to help others because at Erskine it really does feel like one big family - residents, staff and families all supporting one another in what is a very difficult time in anyone’s life.”

Sarah feels her experience has given her an understanding of what others may go through. She is willing to share her journey - the ups and downs - to offer a little insight to families dealing with the condition. Although she is keen to emphasise

everyone’s journey is different.

When the time came for Bill’s family to make the tough decision that residential care was needed they visited various homes, but as soon as Sarah set foot in Erskine she knew it was the one: *“I actually just burst in to tears because this was the right place for him.”*

During lockdown Sarah turned author to occupy her time and her book *‘Because I Know Who He Is’* details the overwhelming changes and emotions experienced when a loved one lives with dementia.

‘Because I Know Who He Is’ can be purchased from Amazon now.



Catch up on Sarah’s interview with Erskine Veterans Radio at: youtube.com/ErskineTV

Veterans Radio has a new home

Music plays a large part in the life of our residents. It has been proven to have a transformational effect on people living with dementia.

Every year Erskine supports around 1,000 Veterans, many of whom listen to the radio every day. As well as offering companionship, it’s a great way to feel connected with the outside world.

Building on the success of Erskine Veterans Radio, we’re keen to expand the core mission of bringing music and joy to Veterans in our four homes, as well as giving family and friends the chance to tune in and stay up-to-date with Erskine News.

You can now tune into local community radio station Paisley 107.5 FM to hear your favourite music and dedicated Erskine shows.

Thanks to Paisley FM, listeners will have the opportunity to request music from a catalogue of over 85 million songs!

Two dedicated Erskine shows will be broadcast weekly with guest interviews on Tuesdays at 12 noon and Saturdays at 2pm.



Listen in, request a song and send a message to our Veterans!

erskine.org.uk/radio

“Alexa, play Paisley FM”

Download Paisley FM’s app

WE HAVE
CARED FOR
100,000
VETERANS SINCE 1916



EVERY YEAR WE
NEED TO RAISE
£10m

You. Our Super Supporters

Talk about hitting the road running!

The ladies of Girl Torque are making their presence known in the haulage industry whilst raising an astonishing amount for six charities. Calendar sales raised £22,500 and Erskine were honoured to receive Girl Torque's donation of £4,250.

Safe travels to all of Girl Torque and if you happen to spot them on the road give them a toot hello!



A fun get together turns into 45 years of supporting Veterans

The Kilmacolm Golf Club Ladies Section started a Bridge Evening all the way back in 1977. Their aim - to raise funds for Erskine. And they continue to hold the event to this day!

To date they have raised a whopping £22,732. In March we went along to pick up their latest donation from Rosemary Hammond, the event organiser, and the ladies section captain, Stella Bowie.

A huge thank you to all who have taken part over the years and for continuing to support Erskine.



What a champion

Back in 2020 Stephen Tiggerdine set out to complete the 75 mile Tour O the Borders cycle but sadly had to pull out due to a bad crash.

Not one to be put off by a setback Stephen signed straight up for the 2021 Tour and completed the cycle in September, all while representing Erskine and raising over £500 for Veterans.

March for Erskine

The sunshine was out for our March for Erskine Live event! There were bikes, chairs, prams and four legged friends rounding up the month long fundraising event.

A huge well done to all who took on the March for Erskine challenge, raised funds and earned their very well deserved medal.

You have raised an incredible £8,221 for Veterans!



Erskine's very own gin

Launched in January this year, Inspired Dry Gin have created an Erskine Gin. It's a traditional London Dry with a modern flavour - Inspired are so confident in it's taste they suggest you try it neat over ice first.

The best part is that a portion of the proceeds will be donated to Erskine!

Order your bottle now: inspired.co.uk

One very brave step

Our first Firewalk took place at the Lochter Activity Centre, Aberdeenshire in October.

18 participants all put their best foot forward and walked over hot coals in aid of our Veterans.

The night was a roaring success with such positive feedback that we're hosting another event this year!

If you're inspired to take part we'd love to hear from you. Call **0141 814 4555** or email events@fundraising.org.uk



Do you have a helping hand to spare?

We're looking for volunteers to help at the **Ideal Home Show** with bucket collections, setting up and running the Erskine stand.

If you could help for 2 hours (or more if you wish!) please get in touch.

Volunteers needed from Thursday 26th - Sunday 29th May at the SEC, Glasgow

Call **0141 814 4555** or email events@erskine.org.uk

Remembering the Blitz

On the nights of 13th and 14th March 1941 the Clydeside town of Clydebank was shaken to the core. Luftwaffe crews in Heinkels of the elite KGr 100 Bomber Group wreaked havoc and devastation; the town never fully recovered.

The events are forever etched in the memories of the many survivors. Starting with the terrifying wail of sirens echoing through the Clyde Valley, replaced minutes later by the dreaded sound of heavily-laden bombers approaching. The bombers spread to mark their targets. The merciless bombing started; people ran to safety; Clydebank began to burn.

Over the years Erskine Veterans have shared their memories:

When a bomb exploded in the backyard Jean was blown up the stairwell of her

tenement block. A very vivid memory she will never forget. When Jean and her friend ventured out the next day they found, the gas mains in Kilbowie Road were on fire and the water mains were burst. Sadly her friend's home had been bombed and her family bussed to the refuge of Helensburgh across the water.

Margaret was 19 years-old at the time of the Clydebank Blitz and lived in Edmund Street in Dennistoun, Glasgow with her parents and younger brother. *"When the siren went off, my mum, brother and I all ran down to the air raid shelter which was in the abattoir in the Glasgow Meat Market on Melbourne Street, we were there all night. When we got home the next morning, my dad who worked in an engineering firm, Dawson and Downie in Clydebank, wasn't home. Turns out he spent the night in a*

shelter in Clydebank due to the bombing. When he eventually got home on the second night, he said that the Germans had dropped bombs on the hills at Mountblow, the hills were on fire and a lot of the area had been flattened, it was dreadful."

Sydney recounted: *"When we were young my dad used to tell us that he worked as a messenger boy for the Partick Fire Station, he was just 15 years old at the time of the Blitz. Dad got the job as the previous messenger boy died from his injuries during The Clydebank Blitz. Dad always remembered him and spoke of him often. He told us that on the night of the bombings Partick Fire Station was one of five stations in the city that received a direct hit during the bombing raids. A young messenger boy Neil Leitch (15) accompanied a Senior Fire Officer out of the area, but was sent back to the station with a request for assistance during an air raid. He was injured on his return to the station but continued on route. He was further injured but again, insisted that he continued with his message. Sadly he later died from his injuries. What a brave young boy he was! In those days the messenger boys used a bicycle."*

On the 14th the evacuation started; 48,000 refugees were spread afar, with many never to return to Clydebank. The town was still burning that evening, when the bombers returned to a near deserted town to complete their task. When the drone of the



last bomber had faded, 528 lay dead and over 617 had been seriously injured. Many hundreds more were wounded by shards of exploded glass. Clydebank had been razed to the ground.

The memories of the Blitz live on and quite rightly should never be forgotten.

The Clydebank children in the years that followed listened to stories passed down from great grandparents and grandparents who survived those horrific nights, a fact to which Erskine Social Media Officer Luisaidh Davidson can attest to: *"Growing up in Clydebank, the Blitz was something we were always aware of. We learned about it in primary school but most people's grandparents had lived through it so we heard the stories first-hand. My gran would often talk about the war, and the Blitz in particular. The bombing started two nights after her 13th birthday. I know those nights stayed with her for the rest of her life, and the memories never faded."*

To read more memories from our Veterans visit erskine.org.uk/news or follow us on social media



BIG PICNIC

ALWAYS REMEMBER OUR HEROES. ALWAYS TOGETHER.



WE'LL MEET AGAIN

Host your picnic throughout June

Contact Erskine for your **FREE** Picnic Pack

T 0141 814 4555
E events@erskine.org.uk
www.erskine.org.uk



ERSKINE
Caring for Veterans since 1916

PROUD TO WALK



DUNDEE

EDINBURGH

2022

DUNDEE

21st August

EDINBURGH

18th September

VIRTUAL WALK

7th - 9th October

WALK WITH OUR VETERANS

Try The Wise Wander, The Big Strail or take on The Mighty Stride and raise vital funds for Erskine!

Every penny you raise, plus an amazing 50% bonus will come to Erskine to help us continue to support over 1,000 Veterans each year.

TO JOIN US CONTACT

E community@erskine.org.uk

T 0141 814 4620

www.erskine.org.uk

@ErskineVeteransCharity



ERSKINE FIREWALK 2022

The Hottest Challenge of the Year

Let the Veterans we support inspire you to take the challenge

Erskine Reid Macewan Activity Centre,
Erskine Veterans Village, Bishopton, PA7 5PU

Friday 30th September 2022 from 18.30

Registration fee £10 Sponsorship target £100

For further information please contact
Jim Watret on

0141 814 4622

Or visit

www.erskine.org.uk/events/erskine-firewalk-2022



ERSKINE
Caring for Veterans since 1916



Falklands War 40th Anniversay Memories from Bill McDowall, Scots Guards Veteran

The night before the attack felt surreal. I had a wife and an 18 month old son at home and I had just turned 21. I knew I had to do my job but I also just wanted to be home.

On the night of the 13th June 1982, myself and my comrades of the 2nd Battalion took part in the Battle for Mt. Tumbledown.

By the morning of the 14th June we had secured the summit of Mt Tumbledown. The cost to the Battalion was 8 comrades killed and 48 wounded. I knew every one of them. It still upsets me when I think about it now.

I came back in August and, even then, I knew something was wrong. Something inside me had changed. I didn't want to talk to anyone about how I felt. I just wanted to hide away.

I remember going to the supermarket once. I heard people talking and moaning about trivial things and I just exploded. I hurled a trolley against a wall and walked out.

Nobody understood what I was going through.

Had it not been for Erskine, their understanding of my condition and the encouragement I was given, I honestly do not think I would be in this world today.



'The Shadow of the Brave' memorial

With your help we are honouring those who fought in the Falklands by building a dedicated memorial.

Thank you to all of you who have already donated towards the memorial.

At the time of print £69,500 has been raised. These funds will cover the cost of the memorial and provide vital care and support to Veterans and their loved ones.

You can keep up-to-date with the build and the unveiling in June at:

erskine.org.uk/falklands

SCAN HERE
To watch Bill's
interview



Watch Bill's full interview at erskine.org.uk/never-forgotten

A Lifelong Lasting Impression

John Calder, author of the Vanishing Willows, first visited Erskine when he was four years old.

John would get the train from Gourrock to Bishopton to visit his father, Mr Calder Senior - one of the first patients at the Princess Louise Hospital for Limbless Soldiers and Sailors (today known as Erskine). These visits would make a huge impression on John for years to come.

John's father was being fitted for an artificial arm after an injury he received whilst serving as a volunteer for the Highland Light Infantry in the South African War, and as a Territorial soldier in the Great War of 1914.

As a young boy John remembers vividly the artificial limbs his father was provided with. He recalled: *"They hung on the back of the cupboard door in our home."*

Many years later John visited in his capacity as a Daily Record columnist. He wrote: *"I was writing a piece on the hospital's forthcoming 60th anniversary. Much had changed in the 60 years since the mansion had first opened its doors to the war shattered men who returned from the shambles of the Somme and obscenities of Passchendaele."*

John noted that despite a constant flow of changes to the hospital one thing remained steadfast - the fortitude of the patients.

Throughout Erskine's 106 year history, we can agree with John's statement.

Another thing that remains steadfast is the love and unwavering devotion of you – our loyal supporters. Thank you.

For each of our Veterans, there is a moment when Erskine's door opens and they see a life worth living again. This is only possible thanks to the generosity of supporters like you. Every gift, no matter how small, really does make a difference to our Veterans and their families.

Since 1916 we've been a place to turn to, and while today's conflicts may be different, the need is still greater than ever. Our vision is that every man or woman who has served their country can receive the care and life they deserve.

You can make a difference for years to come.

By leaving a gift in your Will to Erskine, you can help create a brighter future for Veterans and their families. These special gifts make up nearly half of our vital funds. Gifts in wills help provide specialist nursing care, medical equipment, physiotherapy and many social activities that enhance Veterans' quality of life.

Without gifts in wills this enhanced care would not be possible.

If or when the time is right, please remember Erskine in your Will.

Writing has never been easier!

Writing your Will can seem like a daunting prospect, but it needn't be. Erskine have partnered with two specialist Will-writing providers to offer you a free Will writing service.

Please note that if you decide to use one of these services you are under no obligation to leave a gift to Erskine.

To find out more about Free Will writing services or legacies please get in touch:

Write to: Sarah Morgan, Legacy Officer, Erskine, Bishopton, PA7 5PU

Email: Sarah.morgan@erskine.org.uk

Call: 0141 814 4520

Visit: erskine.org.uk/legacies



A secure online portal - you can write your Will from the comfort of your own home at a time that suits you, when you're happy it is checked by a solicitor.

Write or update your Will for free with a local qualified solicitor.



No gift is ever too small and no act of kindness is ever wasted at Erskine.

Yes, I'd like to make a difference via Direct Debit

Name:

Address:

I would like to make a regular gift of:

£5 £10 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, 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)	

Service User Number

7	0	6	3	7	7
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Reference

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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.

Branch sort code

--	--	--	--	--

Bank/Building Society Account Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Signature(s)

--

Date

--

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