Welcome to the fifth RAVC Newsletter – June 2026

Dear Friends,

This firth RAVC Newsletter is for your information etc.

The previous four newsletters have been attached to this email along with the current edition so that new email addresses added to the mailing list can view if required. Should you wish not to receive further email communications from the RAVC, please let me know and I will remove your email address from the mailing list. Please also feel free to forward this newsletter to others who may have a genuine interest in the Corps.

This newsletter is primarily intended to inform every one of upcoming RAVC related dates and activities which may be of interest to many. Please note that some dates have changed and a couple of new dates have been added.

Chiron Calling Articles – Thank you to everyone who responded to the recent requests for articles. A wide variety of submissions has been received, and readers can expect to have their copy by late June early July 2026. Please remember Chiron Calling remains the Corps' primary publication for sharing news, events and updates, please kindly contribute to your magazine. The closing date for articles for the next Chiron Edition is Fri 5 March 2027.

RAVC Sunday Church Service Royal Hospital Chelsea Sun 12 July 2026 – Veterans wishing to attend should note there are seats are available on a coach travelling from the DATR departing at 0530hrs and returning at approximately 1800hrs from RHC. Those wishing to take this kind opportunity offered by CO DATR, please liaise with the undersigned asp.

The Cenotaph Parade Sun 8 Nov 2026 – Details concerning the application process will be sent out by the Regimental Secretary in the summer of 2026 to apply on line, and confirmation of those selected to attend is provided in early October 2026. Remembrance dates for 2026 are listed further below.

RAVC Stable Belts – The long awaited Corps Stable belts have now arrived. Those wishing to purchase belts please kindly liaise with RSM DATR Belts will cost in the region of £44 - £45 each.

RAVC Ties – Corps ties are expected to be delivered late June 2026. Those wishing to purchase belts please kindly liaise with RSM DATR. Ties will cost in region of £9 - £10 each, much cheaper than online sites.

UK Military Working Dog capability during the First World War – A Presentation by Emma Worrall. Thu 18 June 2026 1330 hrs

Emma Worrall from the National Army Museum will kindly give an online presentation of her work concerning the Army's Military Working Dog capability during the First World War. This presentation should be of interest to serving and RAVC Veteran personnel who retain a strong interest in the history and development of MWD capability. The presentation will be a recorded so those unable to attend the initial brief can be access later.

Welsh Assistance Request – The RAVC Representative as the SO2 Engagement with Headquarters 160th (Welsh) Brigade, runs a Remembrance 'virtual assembly' that last year reached in the region of 30,000 students. If anyone knows of any Welsh stories that related to MWA? This would be an amazing opportunity to reflect and promote what the RAVC does and has done in the

past. There are plenty of opportunities to explore what this might look like, last year James organised a recorded video presentation of an Operation ALAN (liberation of s'Hertogenbosch) a WW2 veteran spoke about his experience for the presentation.

If any of you are able to assist Major James Wright RAVC or have any suggestions James would be greatly appreciative and is keen to arrange a telephone call to discuss any ideas. Please contact James at james.wright175@mod.gov.uk

RAVC Heritage and Communications Strategies – Please see the attached draft Heritage Strategy and draft Communication Strategy which hopefully will be published in the months to come, I welcome any comments by 1 August regarding the documents.

St George's Barracks Closure – Commemorative Whiskey

1MWD Regt (RAVC) has commissioned a commemorative whisky from St George's Distillery - The English Whisky Company. This acknowledges the site's long history with the RAVC. The English Original is the distillery's 'at home anywhere' whisky - a remarkably easy-going, unpeated single malt that will wow you with its exceptional balance, making this expression a favourite for first-timers and whisky lovers alike. The Smokey: The English Smokey is a single malt - layers of savoury smoke, balanced with just the right amount of peppery heat and sweetness. Any fan of Islay whiskies will be delighted to discover this gem. The cost will be £67.50 per bottle, (P&P extra) monies can be transferred into the 1 MWD Regt Central bank account for payment (Acct. No: 10226511. Sort: 16-19-26) ensuring your name is clear in the Reference. Orders can be collected from 1 MWD Regt or posted at an additional cost. Please respond by e-mail to james.mursell100@mod.gov.uk with your order requirements.

Royal Army Medical Services (RAMS) Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess Past and Present Reunion Dinner – Fri 31 July 2026 Please see attached letter regarding this event.

Australian War Animals Memorial Organisation (AWAMO) – Please see the poster further below if you wish to attend please kindly RSVP by 12 Aug 2026 to *northerndonks@gmail.com*

The Forces Pension Society Update – The challenges ahead in 2026. This important update is lengthy and is at the very end of the RAVC Newsletter.

Key RAVC Dairy Dates for 2026/2027

- Fri 12 Jun 2026 – Annual RAVC Golf Reunion ably organised by Sgt Dan Gregory and his team, Sgt Gregory will send out details at a later date. We thank him for great work and hope many will join the day. We also must thank George McGregor for kindly supporting this event financially in the past. Thank you George - Well over 56 people are expected to attend.
- Thu 18 Jun 2026 1300 hrs MS Teams 'on line' presentation. The Presentation by Emma Worrall regarding the Army's Military Working Dog capability during the First World War Please see link etc further below
- Mon 22 Jun 2026 – Fly the Flag Day, Melton Borough Council
- Sat 27 Jun 2026 – Armed Forces Day
- Sun 12 Jul 2026 – RAVC Morning Service, Royal Hospital Chelsea. All are welcome to attend the prestigious Church Service in the Royal Hospital Chelsea and join the RAVC for lunch

afterwards. Personnel need to in situ by 1030hrs.(It's an ideal opportunity to visit the National Army Museum just next door)

- Fri 24 Jul 2026 – LCpl Ken Rowe's Family visit to NAM, Shropshire, wider attendance by serving and RAVC Veterans very much welcomed by the Rowe Family
- Fri 31 July 2026 – Royal Army Medical Services (RAMS) Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess Past and Present Reunion Dinner
- Sat 12 Sep 2026 – Australian War Animals Memorial Organisation (AWAMO) Memorial rededication
- Sat 19 Sep 2026 – RAVC Corps Reunion at DATR. All are welcome to attend. Further details to follow in the summer. (Committee Meetings will take place in the morning, relevant Committee Meeting Members please kindly note)
- Thu 1 Oct 2026 The UK Service Dogs Conference and Awards (see further below)
- Thu 5 Nov 2026 – St Margaret's Field Remembrance Service, London (nominated personnel only)
- Fri 6 Nov 2026 – Animals in War Memorial Service, Park Lane, London
- Sun 8 Nov 2026 – Remembrance Sunday Parades
    - Cenotaph (London) – Veterans only (12 RAVC places allocated). (Sadly very limited RAVC attendance during 2025, let's hope for 2026 there will be more of an uptake by our RAVC Veterans, a calling request will be sent out in the summer of 2026 for Sun 8 Nov 2026)
    - Melton Mowbray Parade
- Wed 11 Nov 2026 – RBL Act of Remembrance, Melton Mowbray
- Fri 5 Mar 2027 – Chiron Calling Submission Deadline
- Sun 4 July 2027 – RAVC Morning Service, Royal Hospital Chelsea

Please note the 'Old and Bold' Meet in Melton for lunch normally on the last Wednesday of each month. Please see the 'RAVC' and also 'Past and Present' Facebook sites for details.

Veterans Breakfast Club – First Saturday of each month, Harboro' Hotel, Melton Mowbray.

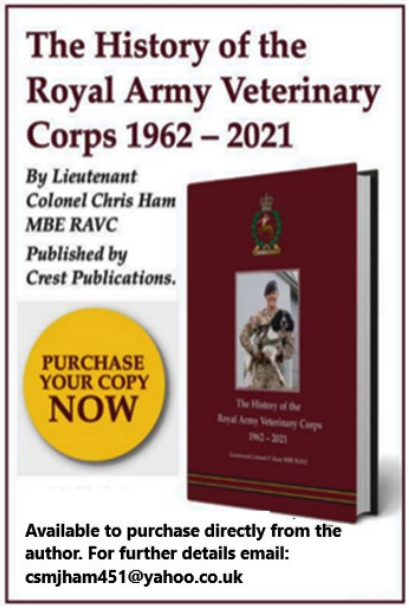
Personnel wishing to have other dates included please contact the undersigned.

With my very best regards,

Chris Ham.
Lt Col (Retd) Chris Ham MBE - RAVC Regimental Secretary (Interim).

The History of the RAVC 1962 – 2021

The History of the RAVC 1962-2021 is on sale for £20.00 per copy, kindly subsidised by the RAVC Association and Wagtail UK Ltd. Only 12 copies now remain for sale. The RAVC book is still available from DATR RSM and Chris Ham. Copies can be signed on request. Postage is £8 per copy, (Royal Mail postage allows three copies to be posted to the same address for the price of one parcel at £8).







Microsoft Teams meeting
Join: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/313910913585398?p=gNbryi5reOjaiqCwam
Meeting ID: 313 910 913 585 398
Passcode: 2Ty2qB2W

Non RAVC Events - But supported by the Corps

AWAMO

AUSTRALIAN WAR ANIMAL MEMORIAL ORGANISATION

Lest We Forget

THE DONKEY BREED SOCIETY (NR)

WAR HORSE MEMORIAL
STRENGTH IN ADVERSITY

PLEASE JOIN US FOR

The **Installation of stunning Silhouettes** of a Donkey and a Horse and a **Ceremony of Re-dedication**, remembering and honouring the brave animals that served alongside our Military Personnel.

Light refreshments to follow at Town Hall.

SATURDAY
12TH 2026
SEPTEMBER

LE MÉMORIAL DES ANIMAUX
Le Parc du Moulin,
Pozieres, France.

12:00PM



RSVP: *Kindly RSVP by 12.08.2026 to northerndonks@gmail.com*

Kind Regards,

Nigel Allsopp

MA | President AWAMO

We express grateful thanks to AWAMO for the creation of this most poignant of memorial sites along with our friends from ***Association Moulin Coeur de Patrimoine Pozieres*** *and* ***Association Digger-Cote 160****.*

Pozières

THE DIGGER · COTE 160

SERVICE DOGS UK
for those with PTSD who have served

nfrsa

UK Service Dogs Conference & Awards



An opportunity to shine a national spotlight on one of your incredible dogs or partnerships.

The UK Service Dogs Conference & Awards returns on 1st October 2026 at the beautiful Avisford Park Hotel, Arundel, and we're now welcoming nominations for this year's prestigious Medal of Honour Awards.

These awards celebrate the dogs whose actions, dedication, and partnerships have made a real difference — from lifesaving alerts and life-changing assistance to extraordinary service, therapy work, and inspirational journeys. Last year's winners included diabetic alert heroes, digital detection dogs, therapy dogs supporting frontline officers, and even a military dog awarded the Dickin Medal.

If you know a dog whose story deserves to be recognised, we would love to hear from you.

Award categories include: • Military Dog Medal of Honour • Assistance Dog Medal of Honour • Lifesaving Dog Medal of Honour • Lifetime Achievement Medal of Honour • Rescue Dog Medal of Honour • Wellbeing or Therapy Dog Medal of Honour • Emergency Services Dog Medal of Honour

Each nomination can include photos, videos, or supporting documents — and it only takes a few minutes to submit.

The awards form part of a national event that brings together organisations, practitioners, volunteers, and supporters from across the sector. It's a chance to celebrate the partnerships that change lives and to highlight the incredible work charities like yours do every day.

If you'd like to nominate a dog or partnership, you can do so here: [Nomination Link]

Thank you for everything you do to support dogs and the people whose lives they transform. We can't wait to celebrate more extraordinary stories this year.

If you would like any further information about the awards, please do not hesitate to contact:
Katherine Wainwright Events Coordinator (Volunteer) **079 8000 7727** events@servicedogsuk.org
www.servicedogsuk.org

The Forces Pension Society Update - The challenges ahead in 2026

2026 presents several significant challenges.

Challenge 1: Clarity on the AFPS 15 Remedy RSS delivery plan

Our top priority remains achieving clarity on the AFPS 15 Remedy RSS delivery plan and progressing towards a sustainable “steady state” of implementation. Given the collective experience of recent years, there is understandable scepticism about progress in this area. Following our intervention, the MoD has confirmed that its 31 March 2026 RSS deadline will be missed, and is working on a comprehensive schedule for completion with their next update scheduled for April 2026.

We will continue to press the MoD for this essential clarification and keep you informed through our Remedy Situation Reports and other communications. We will also continue to support members with their individual decision-making as Election RSSs are received.

Challenge 2: Publicising the Early Leavers pension rectification exercise
A second major issue emerged with the publication of the AFPS Annual Accounts for FY 2024/25* on 17 December 2025. In summary, since April 2006, service personnel leaving with at least three months’, but less than two years’ qualifying service have been entitled to either a refund of any employee pension contributions (e.g. AVCs/Added Pension) if made, or a transfer value paid into another registered pension scheme.

The MoD has acknowledged that this requirement has not been met since the legislation came into force. It estimates that around 60,000 former service personnel may be affected, at a cost of approximately £40 million. The Department is now revising its processes and has launched a rectification exercise to identify and engage those who may be entitled.

This will inevitably take time. We are examining the details and will share official communications to ensure as many eligible early leavers as possible are aware of their entitlement and understand the actions they need to take.

Challenge 3: Preventing a return of pre-Budget pension tax speculation
While we welcomed the fact that the 2025 Budget did not reduce the level of the tax-free Lump Sum Allowance, we remain concerned that — absent a clear statement from Government — the risk of renewed pre-Budget speculation persists.

Another cycle of rumours would further undermine trust and confidence among the serving and veteran community, something Defence — and wider society — can ill afford. We will therefore continue to press Ministers for a clear assurance that no such changes are planned for the foreseeable future.

Challenge 4: Reducing the unacceptably high number of unclaimed Armed Forces pensions
We have campaigned on this issue for several years and, despite progress, the fact remains that around 2,000 deferred Armed Forces pensions go unclaimed each year, with potentially significant sums involved.

Recent efforts have resulted in a modest but welcome reduction, from over 17,000 un-claimed pensions in 2023 to around 15,000 today. Our work to raise awareness and unite entitled veterans with their deferred pensions — payable from age 60, 65, or State Pension Age de-pending on scheme and circumstances — is supported by the Forces Pension Society Chari-table Fund. Please help us spread the word and make 2026 the year we achieve meaningful progress in this area.

Challenge 5: Preparing for a pre-2025 Reserve Service Remedy (the Milroy case)
On 29 Jan, the Milroy Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) refused the MOD’s appeal against the original Employment Tribunal’s decision on all 4 grounds, finding that the claimant was a part time worker who had been treated less favourably than his regular counterparts in pension and pay terms. This is a significant outcome and the scale of the remedy exercise that lies ahead should not be underestimated.

MoD officials are reviewing the judgement in detail and will provide an update once their assessment is complete. We will remain very close to this and provide updates and guidance to those who may have been affected over the coming months. Our 30 Jan update and links to previous guidance we published in October 2024 remain extant. Please monitor our website as we are not able to answer individual enquiries until the MoD publishes a de-tailed remedy plan.

Challenge 6: Fair treatment for members facing pension overpayment recovery
An increasing number of AFPS members are receiving correspondence from Equiniti Pay-master seeking recovery of apparent overpayments of their Armed Forces pension. We are aware of recurring issues relating to Pension Sharing Orders, Early Departure Payments, Guaranteed Minimum Pension, and calculation errors.

We have written formally to the MoD seeking clarification across a range of related policy issues and await their response before issuing further guidance. In the meantime, our September 2025 update should be read and acted upon by anyone affected. While the Government is obliged to seek recovery of overpayments, members are entitled to a full explanation and the opportunity to agree an appropriate repayment plan.

‘Early Leaver’? You may be owed benefits.
Are you or someone you know a so-called ‘Early Leaver’? You may be entitled to pension benefits or a potential cash refund.

When the AFPS Annual Accounts for FY 2024/25* were published on 17 Dec 25 a major is-sue emerged, affecting so called ‘Early Leavers’.

The issue is this: since April 2006, service personnel leaving with at least three months’, but less than two years’ qualifying service have been entitled to either a refund of any employee pension contributions (e.g. AVCs / Added Pension), if made, or a transfer value paid into another registered pension scheme, but this did not happen.
This requirement has not been met since the legislation came into force in 2006 although the MoD has corrected this for those currently serving.

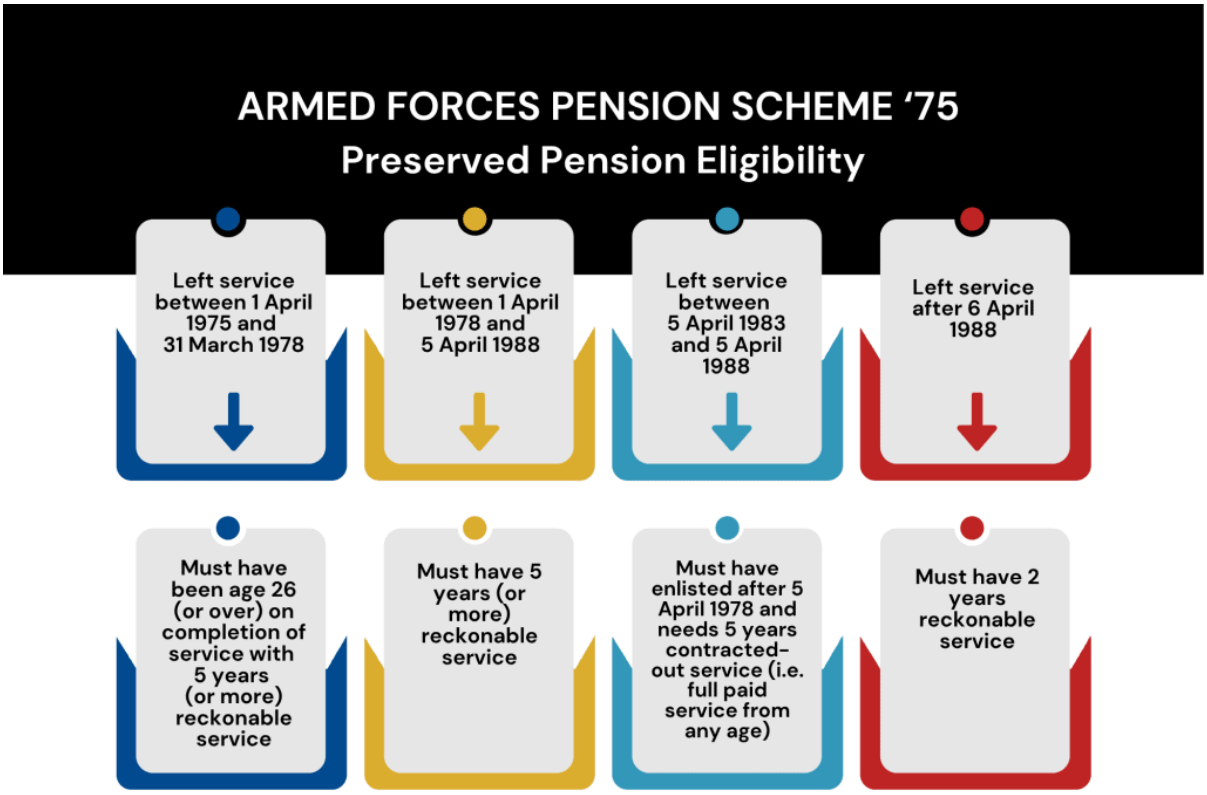
The MoD estimates that around **60,000 former service personnel may be affected, at a cost of approximately £40 million.** The MoD has launched a rectification exercise to identify and engage those who may be entitled and published this short update in December: Early Leavers – Pension Rights Notice

What happens next? It is now down to the MoD to develop and publish its plan to provide those early leavers affected the choice of a cash transfer sum to another pension scheme or a refund of their employee contributions. The processes and systems required to confirm eligibility and deliver this redress are now being urgently developed. Once plans are finalised, a further update will be provided by the Department.

Once we receive that update, we will provide further guidance to those who may be affected. We’re monitoring this closely and will keep you informed.

Help reunite Veterans with their pensions

Every year some **2,000** deferred Armed Forces pensions go unclaimed and the sums involved can be significant. The latest MoD report* states more than 15,000 pension benefits that remain unclaimed, down from 17,100 in 2023. This is progress but more needs to be done which is why the **Forces Pension Society Charitable Fund** is supporting the Unclaimed Pensions campaign.
We aim to raise awareness and signpost eligible Veterans to unite them with their pension benefits.



Yes? Next steps.

The pension is **NOT** paid automatically – Veterans must apply to Veterans UK using **AFPS Form 8 or call 0800 085 3600** for further information.
If you were married to a Veteran who met the eligibility criteria above and they have sadly passed away, you may be entitled to dependant's benefits. If this applies to you, follow the same steps.

Unclaimed Pensions and the Armed Forces Covenant
The Government has indicated its strong support for the Armed Forces Covenant. In that spirit, we invite it to do two things: update the rules so that all Veterans, current and future are notified of their pension entitlement, and to increase their efforts to identify those who have not claimed their pension to date and endeavour to contact them.

Applying for Deferred or Preserved Pension. **–** When you discharge from the Armed Forces, you may leave with deferred or preserved pension entitlement. This is a pension which is due to you at a later date. It is important to note that your pension will not be paid automatically, and you must claim this by completing and submitting an AFPS Form 8 which is available on **GOV.UK**

You do not have to apply in advance, but it is helpful if you submit your application up to 6 months in advance of your pension due date, if you are able. This helps the AFPS to prevent delays in making your payments.

Once your application has been completed, Equiniti Paymaster will arrange to pay your pension to you. This will be paid monthly and in arrears. If you are unsure about when your Deferred or Preserved pension can be claimed, more information is available at:
A_Guide_to_Deferred_and_Preserved_Pension_Entitlement.pdf