



WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL

We are halfway through the year and I would like to introduce you to the three C's – **Celebration**, **Confidence** and **Challenge**. We have many things to **celebrate** as a Federation. These should give us the **confidence** to meet the **challenges** that face us.

The most important thing to **celebrate** is each other and who we are. We are the WVF; I never cease to be amazed at the warmth and friendship that I have personally experienced since I became Secretary General. We should never underestimate the breadth of knowledge and experience our Member Associations offer to each other and to those in the wider international veteran landscape. We are an amazing Federation and we should never forget it.



Secondly we need to **celebrate** our Member Associations who are the heart of our Federation. Each Member Association is unique with its own character and dynamism; a diversity that makes our Federation strong and relevant. We all enjoy the support of our fantastic Secretariat team - we should **celebrate** Faye and her small team who keep our communication channels open and active. We should **celebrate** the Newsletter, the website and The Veterans Communications Platform (VCP) project. Most of all we should **celebrate** the way our relationship with each other has matured in recent times. All of these achievements give us a solid foundation on which to move forward with **confidence**. So what about the third "C", the **challenges**?

I think the first **challenge** is to continue to be ourselves – to remain different but to work together and embrace change, to accept the **challenge** to live out the ideals of the Federation, encapsulated in our core values – to be impartial, responsive, committed, accountable, resourceful and to act with respect, dignity, compassion and integrity. Play your full part in the **challenge** of bringing about harmony amongst nations in spite of legacy issues and of promoting international peace and security.

In conclusion, what I am really saying is – our Federation is precious. Nurture and look after it and it will flourish. We truly are as relevant as we were when we were first formed in 1950. The international veterans community and the different societies we all live in all need us.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of your Newsletter.

Lt. Col. Joseph Falzon
Secretary General



15th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS

It has been confirmed that the 15th Meeting of the Standing Committee on African Affairs will take place in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on 14-16 December 2016, at the invitation of the National Office for War Veterans, Ex-Servicemen and Victims of War of Cameroon, and under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Cameroon.

For more information please visit the WVF website, and click on the link on the homepage, where you can find several provisional documents for the meeting as well as the hotel details.



Once again in our WVF Newsletter we have included several articles sent to us from our Member Associations around the world. We would like to encourage more WVF Member Associations to do the same, so as to make our Newsletter more inclusive, and to share some of the fantastic activities carried out for veterans worldwide.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, GHANA (VAG), HOLDS ANNUAL REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY

This article, sent to us by EX WOI Bright Segbefia, PRO, member of VAG, describes the typical Ghanaian Annual Remembrance Day as was practiced last November 2015.

Every year, The Veterans Administration, Ghana (VAG) organises a colourful parade for military personnel, both serving and retired, of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF). This parade takes place at the nation's War Cemetery in Ghana's capital, Accra, to mark Remembrance Day on 11 November.

Members of the Diplomatic Corps, ministers, traditional rulers, pupils, and their teachers always grace the occasion. By their attendance, the pupils, in particular, tend to have a deeper understanding of the commemorative event, the Red Poppy Flower and the need to educate other members of the public to donate money towards the Poppy Appeal for the support of the nation's veterans.



In 2015, for instance, the parade had a contingent of 30 Veterans, the GAF Central Band, and a GAF contingent in attendance with the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, Mr Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur, as the guest of honour. Also present were the Women, Children and Gender Minister, the Deputy Defence Minister, the Chief of Defence Staff, Acting Inspector General of Police, the Chief of Army Staff, the VAG Board Chairman, and some traditional leaders.



Heads of several other state security agencies such as Ghana Immigration Service, Prisons Service, Customs division of Ghana Revenue Authority, and the Fire Service were also in attendance. Wreaths were laid.

The Vice President laid the first wreath on behalf of the government and people of Ghana while the British High Commissioner, HE Jon Benjamin laid one on behalf of the Commonwealth and allied countries. Another was laid by the Dean of Diplomatic corps, Mrs Paveyn Musaka Tendai, on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps. The

Chief of Defence Staff, Vice Admiral Mathew Quashie laid one on behalf of the security services. The VAG board chairman, Cdre Obimpeh (Rtd.) and the chief of Osu – the Accra suburb where the commemorations are always held – Nii Dowuona laid one on behalf of VAG and the traditional authorities.

As the Greater Accra Regional Chairman of VAG, Ex WOI Robert Kumah, read the Binyon Verse and the Band played 'Land of our Birth', the Vice President, members of the diplomatic corps and security heads went round to shake hands with the veterans, commend them on their sacrifice to Ghana and mankind.





DISABLED WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION – A PATHFINDER IN FINLAND

Juhani Saari, President of the Disabled War Veterans Association of Finland, brings you this enlightening article about the establishment and achievements of his association

After World War II in 1945 there were about 96 000 permanently disabled war veterans in Finland – a country of 4 million inhabitants.

The Finnish State had limited resources to provide care for them. Therefore, the Disabled War Veterans Association – established by the disabled veterans themselves after the Winter War in 1940 – began to put together a system, building and buying institutes for their care and fraternal support. In the beginning, the Association had to finance this independently by fundraising, requesting donations and by various business ventures. Financial responsibilities were later assumed by the State.



Last summer, 800 disabled veterans, along with family and friends, celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Finnish Disabled War Veterans Association in Helsinki

One example of such activities was the building of a hospital for veterans with spinal injuries and for those with brain injuries. The Association also acquired treatment centres for war amputees and for those who were suffering from war related tuberculosis. Vocational training of blinded war veterans and training of their guide dogs were also started by the Association together with the Finnish Red Cross. All this was new in the Finnish care of the disabled.

The great majority of Finnish disabled war veterans – nearly 95 % – returned to working life. This path of disabled war veterans from war hospitals to convalescence and then back to work is one of the finest Finnish survival stories.

Disabled war veterans' rights to compensations from the State are based on the Military Injury Act (1948) that has been developed over the decades in cooperation with the authorities and political decision-makers. The amount of the military injury compensation depends on the degree of disability, not, for example, on the military rank or position in society.

Today, the amount of disabled war veterans of WW II who are still alive is about 3 000. Their average age is already 92. The surviving spouses and widows totals over 9 000. Today, the most important function of the Association is to support its members' housing conditions and to ensure that they are coping with the problems of daily life in their own homes where most of them are still living.

WVF WALK FOR PEACE 2016

As you know, since 2008, on 21 September each year, the World Veterans Federation organizes a global "Veterans' Walk for Peace" as part of its annual activities to observe the International Day of Peace. The aim of the event is to promote the International Day of Peace worldwide.

The event, which is supported by the United Nations will take place in major cities in various parts of the world. It will commence in sequence through different time zones from the East towards the West, starting from Oceania going westward through countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. Participants of the event are made up of the veteran community and other supporters of peace worldwide.

You can find the event on our Facebook page, on which you can share your plans for this year's Walk for Peace: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1604834196475405/>



MEMORIAL FOR BATTLE OF THE SOMME CENTENARY

The month of July 2016 marks a very special date for veterans around the world. This month saw the centenary of the Battle of the Somme—one of the bloodiest and most important campaigns of World War I. Starting on 1 July 1916, the battle lasted 4 months, as a result of which over 1,000,000 servicemen from each side were captured, wounded or killed during the hostilities. At the Thiepval Memorial, on 1 July 2016, the French President and the British Prime Minister were in attendance for the commemoration ceremony, as well as the French Secretary of State for Veterans, Mr. Jean-Marc Todeschini. The WVF was represented at the ceremony by its Honorary President, Mr. Jacques Goujat.



WVF NEWS IN BRIEF

Since this Newsletter's last edition, the WVF has enjoyed a very active few months, with its Executive Board presenting our hard work across the world – from America to Malaysia. To read more about these articles, we invite you to visit the News page of our website at: <http://www.wvf-fmac.org/new/index.php/homepage-en/news>

Apr 16 - WVF President, Dan-Viggo Bergtun, attended the 26th General Assembly of the Arab Veterans Union (AVU) held in Amman, Jordan. Representatives from 24 countries came together to discuss plans to enhance peace and stability in the Arab world.

May 16 - WVF President Dan-Viggo Bergtun travelled to the United States. On this trip, he visited numerous organisations and governmental bodies in both New York (including the United Nations Headquarters - *pictured left*) and Washington, DC, to encourage further partnership between the WVF and American associations, as well as looking at the possibility of creating a Standing Committee on the Americas.



Jun 16 - The Secretary General, Lt Col Joe Falzon completed the famous 24 mile walk – 'The Clarendon Way' – with over 1000 Euros in sponsorship money being donated to the WVF. You can read Lt. Col. Falzon's article about the walk on the News page of our website.



Jun 16 - Lt. Col. Falzon went on a private visit to Malaysia and Singapore where he met up with the WVF Deputy President, Admiral Mohd Anwar, as well as Member Associations from Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and more.

On 1 July he was invited to attend the Singapore Armed Forces Day Parade as a guest of the Col Lau Kee Siong - Vice President, Singapore Armed Forces Veterans league (SAFVL).

Dates for your diary - We also have some exciting news concerning the dates of WVF Standing Committee Meetings. As you may have seen on Page 1 of this issue, the 15th Meeting of the SCAA will be taking place from 14-16 December 2016 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Furthermore, the 22nd Meeting of the SCAP will be taking place on 8-12 October 2017 in Taipei, Taiwan. Remember that you can keep up with all the latest WVF News by following us on Facebook, and by visiting our website: <http://www.wvf-fmac.org/new>