# Soldiering On Awards announces 2017 winners

**Monday 27 March, 2017**

## Media:













The 2017 Soldiering On Award winners were announced on Friday, 24 March during a ceremony at the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel, London in the presence of the charity's patron the Rt Hon Earl Howe PC.

Hosted by award-winning journalist Angela Rippon and former Royal Marine medic Cassidy Little, the Awards ceremony recognized 46 finalists in 10 categories, naming each category winner.

Finalists were nominated by members of the public and more than 40 charities and not-for-profit organisations either representing or associated with the wider Armed Forces Community.

Winners were then selected by a distinguished Independent Judges Panel, co-chaired by General the Lord Dannatt GCB CBE MC DL and Debra Allcock Tyler, Chief Executive of the Directory of Social Change.

The Pets at Home Animal Partnership and Sunday Express People's Choice awards finalists were selected by the judges from among all nominations and the winners chosen by the public via the charity's media partner, the Sunday Express.

**The 2017 Soldiering On Award Winners are:**

**Animal Partnership Award** (sponsored by Pets at Home)

WINNER: **Jock Hutchinson & HorseBack UK** – Jock Hutchison set up HorseBack UK when he was made aware of sixteen young marines that had been injured in Afghanistan. He thought it would be a great idea to get the lads up to the farm for a while to get them away from the clinical part of their recovery. Today, HorseBack UK is a unique charity delivering mental and physical rehabilitation to predominantly military personnel via horsemanship and outdoor activities.

**People's Choice Award** (sponsored by the Sunday Express)

WINNER: **Simon Brown** – nominated by Blind Veterans UK, Simon had just successfully led a mission in Iraq to rescue six stranded colleagues when he was shot in the face by a sniper and had to be put into an induced coma, after initially giving himself first aid. Since his injury, Simon has dedicated himself to working with charitable and voluntary organisations and using his experience to motivate others. Thanks to his perseverance, good humour and positivity, many ex-Service men and women living with severe sight loss are receiving life-changing support today, no matter when they served or how they lost their sight.

**Business Enterprise Award** (sponsored by telent Technology Services)

WINNER: **X-Forces:** Free to the entrepreneur, X-Forces offers budding businessmen and women from the armed forces community with comprehensive access to start up loans, mentoring and support. Working with Service leavers, reservists, spouses, dependents, veterans and cadets, they provide business planning support and mentoring even after the business is launched.

**Family Values Award** (sponsored by NetApp)

WINNER: **Mr & Mrs J. Clayton:** On many occasions Mr & Mrs Clayton have stepped in to look after their two grandchildren, when their daughter and her husband have deployed simultaneously or when service needs have required them to leave the family home. "There is no mechanism to recognise the unsung heroes (our families) that support us 24/7 and who are always there when we need them. Their loyal service, dedication and support allows us to serve our country."

**Healthcare & Rehabilitation Award** (sponsored by Redwood Technologies Group)

WINNER: **Mr Ash Clare:** A founding architect of BattleBack, Ash has dedicated the last eight years supporting wounded, injured and sick personnel from across the Armed Forces, including the reserves. To date, the Battleback programme has supported over 1500 individuals through activities such as sailing, swimming, cycling, rock climbing, horse-riding, water-skiing and alpine skiing. Through the use of Adaptive Training and Sports as a vehicle for Rehabilitation, Battle Back programmes are designed to

promote confidence and independence and help accelerate physical, psychological and social recovery throughout the duration of recovery.



**Inspiration Award** (sponsored by Skanska)

WINNER: **Mr Adam Francis:** Losing his legs to an IED in Afghanistan, Adam's first goal when he woke in hospital was to get home to his family by Christmas. He continued to challenge himself, first walking within three months, then volunteering for experimental robotic prosthetics. Later he returned to his civilian job as an HGV driver, passing his test without the examiner's awareness of his condition. Today his employer, impressed by his attitude and performance, invites Adam to speak to company employees as an inspiration to others



**Sporting Excellence Individual Award** (sponsored by Spectra Group UK)

WINNER: **Mr Owen Pick:** Owen was a soldier who lost a leg in a Taliban blast in Afghanistan and now has become a competitive snowboard athlete. He tried out the sport after being discharged from the Army and within 18 months hurtled up the World rankings, beating experienced able-bodied competitors. Owen is now rated 7th in the World and is on target for a podium place in the 2018 Winter Paralympics in South Korea.



**Sporting Excellence Group Award** (sponsored by Spectra Group UK)

WINNER: **Row2Recovery:** In 2016 the Row2Recovery Atlantic Mission set a world record as the first all amputee crew to row across an ocean. The feat, which begun in La Gomera in the Canary Islands and finished in Antigua's English Harbour, took 46 days, six hours and 49 minutes to complete. The team finished eighth out of 26 taking part in the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge after 1.4 million strokes pulled by 4 men with 3 legs across one ocean of 3,000 miles in 46 days to achieve this world record.

**Forces in Mind Trust Working Together Award**

WINNER: **Forces Friends Project:** Age UK Nottinghamshire has come together with The Royal British Legion in the East Midlands to develop the "Forces Friends" Project, a recipient of TRBL External Grant Funding. The project provides a volunteer visitor to befriend and support lonely or socially isolated older veterans living in Nottinghamshire. It provides a short-term intervention to help veterans to re-engage socially, develop their confidence and find out what is available to them within their wider local communities.




**International Award** (sponsored by Airbus Defence & Space)

WINNER: **Project Gemini:** Project Gemini was set up in 2011 for British and American former Service personnel who had lost their sight. Its objective is to share knowledge of rehabilitation and training and to strengthen relations between Blind Veterans UK and Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) as well as the veterans they support. Every year participants meet for a week in both the United Kingdom and the U.S., to take part in local activities, share stories, and learn from each other to improve the lives of blind veterans in both countries. It is the perfect example of international cooperation being fostered and grown to benefit both countries' armed forces communities.



**Lifetime Achievement Award** (sponsored by Square Mile Salute and CSARN)

WINNER: **Ms Meg Atkinson:** A constant friendly face at RAF Brize Norton, Meg is a SASRA (Soldiers' & Airmen's Scripture Readers Association) Scripture Reader; the only Scripture Reader to wear the RAF's light blue uniform as all other SASRA Scripture Readers work in army units. Regarded as a walking morale boost; Meg has been at Brize Norton since the closure of RAF Lyneham in 2011, where she had previously served since 1974 – 42 years (and counting) of faithful SASRA service to the RAF community.



Two additional awards were given on the night. The first, in the Inspiration Award category for **Outstanding Contribution**, the Soldiering On Awards recognised **Mr Simon Weston:** Struggling to overcome his injuries (46% burns), Simon endured years of re-constructive surgery following the attack on the Sir Galahad during the Falklands War. His road to recovery saw him active in a number of highly successful ventures and his tireless work for charity earned him an OBE in 1992. He was awarded Freedom of the City of Liverpool in 2002 in recognition of his bravery and his charity work in the region. He appeared in the Top 100 Merseysiders list in 2003 and was honoured as one of the top 100 Welsh Heroes in 2004. In 2015 Simon was awarded the Freedom of the City of London and in 2016 received a CBE for his charitable work. Simon's message is one of single-minded determination, to not only accept what is, but to turn that to your advantage.



A special **Trustees Award**, given at the discretion of the Soldiering On trustees, was presented to **The Taylor Family:** Sixteen-year old George Taylor is a member of a very unique family, all dedicated to the supporting our military personnel past and present. Dad, Dave is a Poppy Appeal Organiser for Gravesend whilst Mum, Cheryl, sister Katie and Nan all support the legion in various ways including trialling a Veterans Breakfast Club in their local area. Every member of this family dedicates their time to support the RBL Poppy Appeal all year round.

“The Soldiering On Awards recognise the amazing contribution that former members of the Armed Forces – and animal partners – continue to make to society and also those individuals, charities and groups in the wider community who support their journey,” said Earl Howe. “We believe that we are all part of one community and are stronger together supporting each other.”

The Soldiering On Through Life Trust encourages support for the UK’s Armed Forces Community by nationally recognising the achievements of groups or individuals supporting this Community through the annual **Soldiering On Awards.**

Soldiering On Awards: National Recognition for the Armed Forces Community.

For highlights of the 2017 Soldiering On Awards visit: www.soldieringon.org





## Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits ::

## Related Keywords:

Soldiering On Awards ::

## Scan Me:

## Company Contact:

_

**Soldiering On**

E. info@soldieringon.org
W. https://www.soldieringon.org

**Additional Contact(s):**
Kaija Larke
Communications
07841 166232

Registered Address: First Floor, 6-7 Market Place, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1HT | Charity No. 1144828

View Online

**Additional Assets:**
www.soldieringon.org

**Newsroom:** Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
**https://www.soldieringon.pressat.co.uk**