

# FELIX FUND NEWS – SPRING 2018

Supporting bomb disposal and search personnel and their families from all British Army Regiments, Royal Navy Clearance Divers, Royal Air Force and the UK Counter Terrorism Command.

## CT EXPO 2018

Once again Felix Fund was a partnering charity for the Counter Terror Expo at Olympia. The 2-day event was a great opportunity to catch up with old faces and chat with new contacts about the work of the charity.

A big thank you must go to Clarion Events for their continued support. Hopefully see you at next year's event!



## UK / US GALA DINNER 2018

A date for your diary!

Following the success of the UK / US Joint Gala Dinner held in London back in 2016 a return event has been organised on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018, near Washington DC.

An evening to celebrate and support the men and women of the wider EOD and Search community at the Lansdowne Resort in Leesburg, VA. This joint fundraiser will raise money for Felix Fund and the EOD Warrior Foundation; helping personnel on both sides of the Atlantic.

This special event is not to be missed so for ticket information and sponsorship options please contact [melanie@felixfund.org.uk](mailto:melanie@felixfund.org.uk) or call 07713 752901.



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*An event you won't want to miss!*

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## MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN 2018

Each year Felix Fund receives donations and support from a wide variety of people, organisations and fundraising activities. Why not make a difference in 2018 to the men and women of the EOD & Search community?

- Organise an event
- Make a donation
- Get involved with an existing event or challenge

All the funds you raise will go towards helping this unique group of men and women from across all three services and SO15, the Met Police Counter Terror Unit and their families.

## HELPING OWAIN

Felix Fund recently helped Owain move into his new home. On celebrating his 18 birthday he was no longer eligible to stay in the care facility he had been in for some years. Severely autistic he is unable to live at home, so the local authority secured him sheltered housing accommodation. The problem came when his mother was expected to furnish it. Widowed for many years, following the death of her former AT husband, she was unable to afford even the basics.

Felix Fund provided a sum of money to enable her to purchase a range of items, such as a bed, sofa and white goods, all of which have allowed Owain to experience some independence and start the next chapter of his life in a new home.





## VETERANS GATEWAY

Felix Fund is proud to be part of the new Veterans' Gateway service, which promises to be the first point of contact for veterans and their families seeking support.

Independent research commissioned by Veterans' Gateway shows the military charity sector currently leaves two thirds (64 per cent) of veterans 'confused', while one fifth (20 per cent) of veterans having been referred to between three and 10 charities before eventually finding support.

*Felix Fund is a partner charity of Veterans Gateway.*

Veterans' Gateway aims to make this process easier by assessing needs at the first point of contact and connecting people with the right help when they need it, wherever they are.

The service has a network of over 30 expert partners, including Felix Fund, coming from across the military and non-military not for profit sector. With more partners being added, the service can help on several areas, including:

- Housing
- Employment
- Finances
- Living independently
- Mental wellbeing
- Physical health
- Families and communities

### Who is part of Veterans' Gateway?

Veterans' Gateway is made up of a consortium of organisations and Armed Forces charities, including The Royal British Legion, SSAFA – the Armed Forces charity, Poppy Scotland, Combat Stress and service provider Connect Assist.

Funded by The Armed Forces Covenant, this is the first time a group of this kind has come together formally to deliver a service to help the Armed Forces community.

### How to access Veterans' Gateway

There are five main ways to contact Veterans' Gateway, with advisors available 24 hours a day, seven days a week – many of whom are veterans themselves.

Call the helpline around the clock on [0800 802 1212](tel:08008021212)

Visit the website [veteransgateway.org.uk](http://veteransgateway.org.uk) for a host of self-help information and partner information.

## TOUR DE TROOPS



The Tour De Troops endurance event is back for 2018, after huge success in 2017 and we are very pleased to have L3-TRL Technology on board as this year's sponsors.

This charity event is the ultimate cycle ride, starting at Lands' End on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June and finishing at John O'Groats on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June after an epic 5-day challenge. Stops on the 874-mile route include Bridgewater, Warrington, Moffat and Newtonmore.

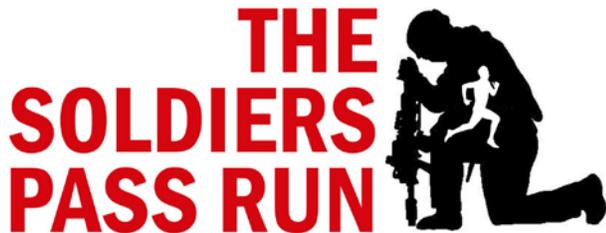
Cyclists will be placed in groups who will each have a ride captain. All participants of Tour De Troops will receive a pre-cycle briefing and a Ride Support Plan.

Accommodation, food, medical and bike support are included for every entrant.

To book your place visit:

<https://origintickets.co.uk/store/?event=1066>

## THE SOLDIERS PASS RUN



Following the Tour de Troops will be a second challenge, The Soldiers Pass Run. Taking place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July it will offer a range of distance options of 5K, 10K, Half, Full and Ultra marathon routes. All run routes start and finish from Vauxhall Barracks, Didcot and are open to civilian and military personnel alike. To book your place visit: The Soldiers Pass

Run: <https://origintickets.co.uk/store/?event=1065>

## DASHBOARD COURSES – A REPORT ON OUR MINDFULNESS TRAINING



Did you know that in 2014/16 the PTSD rate in veterans and those still serving in the military had risen to 6%, compared to 4.4% within the civilian population?

Within the wider Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search community the levels of stress and other mental health issues are particularly high. Not just following their experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan but the day to day nature of the roles they carry out have a big impact on those serving and their family members. Many keep quiet suffering in silence.

Felix Fund is focusing on this important issue and, in late 2015 we launched a programme providing training in mindfulness techniques. Known as the Dashboard Courses; the aim is to provide individuals with tools and techniques which will enable them to recognise warning signs of stress and other mental health illnesses and to allow them to develop their ability to relax, clear their minds and focus on the positive aspects of their life. This will then feedback into a more productive and stress reduced work and home environment.

Running since early 2016 the Dashboard courses have proved very effective. The key is a totally relaxed environment away from work and home stresses, where individuals can focus on themselves. The two civilian trainers are totally committed to helping this unique group of men and women and we are now looking at rolling out this programme to the whole reach of Felix Fund, that means all three services plus the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terror Unit.

To date Felix Fund has had nearly 200 Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search personnel go through these courses, with excellent results.

The course is not stand alone, it can be used as a signposting mechanism for additional help from Welfare Officers, medical practitioners or other charity programmes where necessary. Aimed at all ranks, ages and regardless of where they are in their military career it has helped to break down barriers, formed tighter working relationships and enabled many people to realise what effects their personal lives and work environment can have on their own mental health.

If you are interested in attending or just for more information about the programme please contact [melanie@felixfund.org.uk](mailto:melanie@felixfund.org.uk).

## EXERCISE TIGER FREEZE

There comes a time in every operational EOD and Search Group Headquarters' lifespan when a short break away from regular flurry of activity is called for and an escape to the mountains must be made for some down time and team-bonding. Early in February 2018, this is exactly what 29 EOD and Search Group elected to do and with some financial assistance from the Felix Fund they embarked upon a week-long, military instructor led skiing expedition, Ex Tiger Freeze, in the quiet French Alp resort of Les Contamines.

18 service men and women participated in the expedition, across the entire spectrum of abilities; from a complete novice who had never seen a pair of skis to a former university downhill racing team member, everybody gained a valuable experience from the expedition, both on and off the slopes. Lessons were learned, personal boundaries were overcome, and friendships were forged on this expedition and 29 EOD and Search Group would like to formally thank the Felix Fund for helping to make it a reality.

For those looking for a new place to ski, the resort of Les Contamines is not the biggest in the French Alps but it was delightfully quiet; there were days where we met less than 10 people on the slopes and we never queued for a lift for more than 30 seconds. A week away from the daily stresses of work was very welcome for all.



## TIME TO REMEMBER



In each quarterly newsletter, we commemorate and sustain the memories of the sacrifices made by EOD and Search personnel who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

**This time we remember those who died during January, February and March:**

- SSgt Christopher R Cracknell who died on 15 March 1972 in Northern Ireland
- Sgt Anthony Butcher who died on 15 March 1972 in Northern Ireland
- Maj Bernard C Calladene who died on 30 March 1972 in Northern Ireland
- SSgt Allan N Brammah who died on 18 February 1974 in Northern Ireland
- SSgt James G Crawshaw who died on 22 January 1975 in Great Britain
- Sgt Martin E Walsh who died on 9 January 1977 in Northern Ireland
- Cpl Barry Warburton who died on 19 March 1994 in Bosnia
- Spr Luke Allsopp who died on 23 March 2003 in Iraq
- SSgt Simon Cullingworth who died on 23 March 2003 in Iraq
- SSgt Christopher D Muir who died on 31 March 2003 in Iraq
- Capt Daniel Read who died on 11 January 2010 in Afghanistan
- WO2 David Markland who died on 8 February 2010 in Afghanistan
- Spr Guy Mellors who died on 15 February 2010 in Afghanistan

**Gone but never forgotten.**