

FELIX FUND NEWS – SUMMER 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.

NEW MEMORIAL STONE UNVEILED

A new memorial stone for SSgt Brett Linley GM has been unveiled at 721 EOD Sqn, Ashchurch.

With funding from among others, Felix Fund, a new stone was carved and placed where the previous one had been in memory of Brett who tragically died on 17 July 2010 in Afghanistan.

A small ceremony was held at Ashchurch Troop on 6 June 2018.



£1 MILLION MILESTONE FOR FELIX FUND

Felix Fund has just reached the £1million mark for funds paid out in grants to individuals and groups from the Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search community.

Since its launch back in April 2011 Felix Fund has been assisting serving personnel, veterans and their dependents from the bomb disposal community by providing grants for a whole host of items, help and support.

Recent examples of help given include, the provision of living expenses for a former soldier who needed to travel to Australia for pioneering surgery, after losing both legs in Afghanistan; a football wheelchair for the disabled son of a former Sapper and a specialist medical cap was provided for the baby son of a serving soldier. In addition, we have helped purchase bespoke sporting equipment for two former Sappers which then enabled them to compete in the Toronto Invictus Games last year, one of whom went on to win a silver medal.

The support Felix Fund provides is wide ranging and is aimed at a high-profile tri-service community. At its heart is a desire to reduce the mental stress caused by conducting EOD & Search duties. For a small charity, its impact has been significant, and it is cutting edge in the services it provides.

A big thank you must go to everyone who supports the charity which has enabled us to help so many.

TOUR DE TROOPS 2018 – LANDS END TO JOHN O’GROATS

The Tour de Troops challenge for 2018 was Lands’ End to John O’Groats in 5 days! Most people can complete this trip in 8-10 days but not this team.



14 riders set out from Lands End and most of the team made it to John O’Groats in one piece. There were a number of injuries en route both to humans and machines, but 9 riders crossed the finish line.

Huge congratulations to everyone who took part, a big thank you to the support crew and of course our sponsors, without whom it could not have happened; L3-TRL Technology, Ideal Displays, Anchor Vans and the Institute of Explosive Engineers.

The team met up in Edinburgh to mark the end of the challenge and were already talking about next years event. Please support their efforts and make a donation:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tourdetroops>



THE VICTORY SWIM

Join us on 6 September 2018 for a charity open water swim to remember!

This is your chance to swim in the beautiful Cotswolds lakes. Taking place at Waterland Outdoor Pursuits, Lake 32, Wiltshire. Get involved and swim a choice of 0.5 ,1, 10 or 20 miles.

Book your place here <https://helmtickets.com/events/1277/the-victory-swim>.

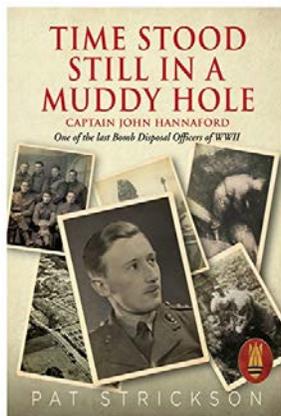
All money raised will go to Felix Fund.



TIME STOOD STILL IN A MUDDY HOLE BY PAT STRICKSON

This book written by Pat Strickson began after a chance finding of a watercolor, leading to the remarkable and heroic acts by the artist AFJ Hannaford and his colleagues.

Capt Hannaford was one of the last bomb disposal officers of WWII and the author has enthusiastically pieced together his life story. Her search lead to dark and dangerous times and the brave men blown up doing their job. It unearthed the secrecy surrounding their acts of courage and the often-untimely end from booby-trapped enemy bombs and, tragically, from our own mine clearance. Captain John Hannaford, Royal Engineer Bomb Disposal Officer WWII, was a leader of men at 24. He was told he would have only 10 weeks life expectancy in that job. But he died on Armistice Day, 2015, at the age of 98.



Sales of this book will hopefully highlight the work that was done then and that which continues to be carried out by bomb disposal and search teams today. Felix Fund will reach donations from any sales made. You can order this book at:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Time-Still-Muddy-Hole-Strickson>

BELFAST MARATHON TEAM RELAY

25 MI Coy put forward two teams to take part in the Belfast Marathon Team Relay event the May Day Bank Holiday. The race was split up into varying legs across the marathon distance. The first team: 'Lisburn Triers 1' included Cpl Gemine, LCpl Morrison, LCpl Courtliff and LCpl Jones who completed the relay in 3hrs 26mins. The second team: 'Lisburn Triers 2' included Lt Williams, SSgt Hatch, SSgt Powell, LCpl Hoskins and LCpl Wood who completed it in 3hrs 31mins.

The team raised £80 in sponsorship for Felix Fund and had a thoroughly enjoyable time doing it.



UK / US EOD CHARITIES GALA DINNER 2018

Have you got your tickets yet?

Following the success of the UK / US Joint Gala Dinner held in London back in 2016 a return event has been organised on the 15th 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 or call 07713 752901.



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 over 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.

ARMED FORCES DAY 2018

Felix Fund was once again invited to be part of DEMS Training Regiment's activity at the Bicester Armed Forces Day event.

Despite the heat we raised a few hundred pounds and lots of awareness. The brave LCpl who donned the Felix mascot costume was a real star. Thank you to everyone who supported us.



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 April, May and June:

- Sgt O'Docherty who died on 6 May 1953 in Great Britain
- Cpl Kenneth Braddock who died on 6 May 1953 in Great Britain
- WO2 (SSM) Ian Donald who died on 24 May 1973 in Northern Ireland
- Capt Barry S Gritten who died on 21 June 1973 in Northern Ireland
- WO2 Michael O'Neill who died on 31 May 1981 in Northern Ireland
- SSgt James Prescott CGM who died on 23 May 1982 in the Falklands
- Cpl Jeremy Gaulder who died on 5 April 2000 in Northern Ireland
- Spr Joel Naivalurua who died on 5 April 2000 in Northern Ireland
- Spr Jordan Rossi who died on 23 May 2009 in Afghanistan
- Cpl Jamie Kirkpatrick who died on 27 June 2010 in Afghanistan
- Capt Lisa Head who died on 19 April 2011 in Afghanistan
- Spr Connor Ray who died on 18 April 2012 in Afghanistan
- Cpl Andrew Roberts who died on 4 May 2012 in Afghanistan
- Pte Ratu Silibaravi who died on 4 May 2012 in Afghanistan

Gone but never forgotten.