

VALOUR VRC PRESENTATION TO AFC CONFERENCE (IAN MILLEN)

[Slide 1] - Good morning. I'm Ian Millen, Chief Executive of Veterans Outreach Support, and I'm speaking today from the perspective of one of the Round 1 VALOUR Recognised Centres – in Neil's terms, one of the ships of the fleet he describes.

As a Royal Navy veteran, I'm delighted that Neil, as a former Army Officer, has chosen a maritime metaphor to underpin his presentation today, in the home of the Royal Navy, not least as HMS Victory is just a fifteen-minute walk from our venue today.

As one of 14 VALOUR grantees, I've been asked to give you some insight into what VOS does, why we bid to be VRC, and what the future might look like for VALOUR.

I'll start with the first page, which looks a bit like the arm of a boy/girl scout with multiple badges, but it's important as testament to the common standards and quality we already embrace on joining Neil's Fleet.



[Slide 2 – VOS Flyers and Map of SE England]

The Falklands scarf I proudly wear today as a veteran of the conflict in the South Atlantic in 1982 is not just a personal touch. It speaks to where VOS comes from and why we exist, because the charity was established by three Falklands veterans and the mother of a soldier killed in action during the conflict.

After returning home to Portsmouth from the 25th anniversary pilgrimage to the Falklands in 2007, these four visionary individuals saw the need for community-based support for veterans and decided to do something about it. Today, we are 18 years old and have served over 3,000 veterans and family members, in our area alone, and many more beyond our traditional boundaries.

We support all arms of the UK Armed Forces and, importantly, the Merchant Navy, because the operation that inspired our beginnings in 1982 depended on collaboration across all of those elements, with no single component alone capable of mission success.

Beyond the support we deliver in our local area, we have stretched beyond these boundaries, with leadership roles in wider areas, including regional leadership in SE of England, as a ship in Anna Wright's AFCFT fleets named, Veterans Places, Pathways and People, and latterly Thrive Together respectively.

Now a scarf only works because separate, coloured yarns are knitted together into one garment. That has been the secret of our success in VOS and, by extension, the picture we have of VALOUR: different services, organisations and local strengths have been woven into something stronger – just like the different coloured woollen strands in the scarf make it warmer and useful for those that wear it. And goodness knows we need scarves on a cold day like today! 😊



[Slide 3 – VOS Partners – Deliver Locally, Lead Regionally, Influence Nationally]

The partners you see in this slide, were not created for our VALOUR Recognised Centre bid, but were what existed before. It's our person-centred, collaborative and partner-enabled operating model, and it works. The partners on the left are the yarn we weave together to support those we serve, at our Drop-ins and in our day-to-day work.



The column on the right shows our extended partnerships we have in our wider community that are critical to success; local authorities, the NHS, MOD, Government agencies and other charities, all brought together, in our case, in our Solent Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Board.

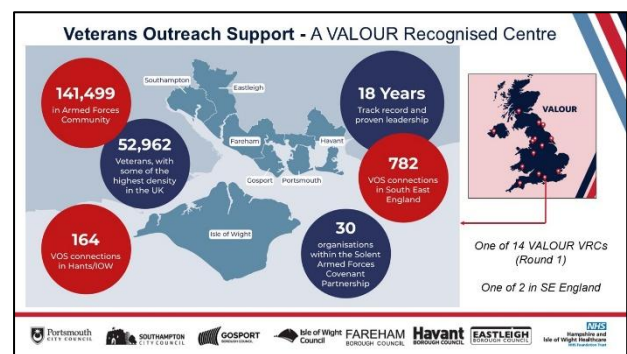
We **deliver locally, lead regionally and influence nationally**. Our base port is our community, but we work across boundaries, because the needs of the people we serve do not stop at them. We don't want postcodes to be a barrier to supporting needs – an extremely solid point of agreement with the VALOUR initiative.

So, our existing ways of working were already built around the power of partnerships, locally, regionally and nationally, and that's why VALOUR felt like a natural fit for us rather than a forced change. We had already honed our collaborative skills with our local delivery, and our regional leadership of VPPP, and Thrive Together, so we felt we were well-equipped to be one of the ships in the VALOUR fleet. We get the concept; we understand the environment and have the capability to make a difference.

[Slide 4 – VOS A VALOUR Recognised Centre – Front page]

So, this is what we brought to the party. An evidence-based record of success in delivery and leadership but in a relatively small geography (initially Portsmouth and the IOW).

The opportunity that VALOUR brought to us was one of greater reach and capacity to serve more areas in the most densely populated area in the UK for veterans and the Armed Forces Community. VALOUR funds our bigger sails to go further and faster, and additional specialist crew members to add to our current capability. So far, we are one of 14 grantees across 17 locations, but Round 2 is on the horizon, with reinforcements on the way.



The greatest achievement to date is undoubtedly the buy-in we've got from our strategic partners, our local authorities and the NHS, shown at the bottom of this slide. They didn't join us in a consortium bid because they had been tricked into accepting the King's shilling, but because they too saw the value of joining forces and integrating support for their own communities. They too get the concept of unity of effort and what it can deliver.

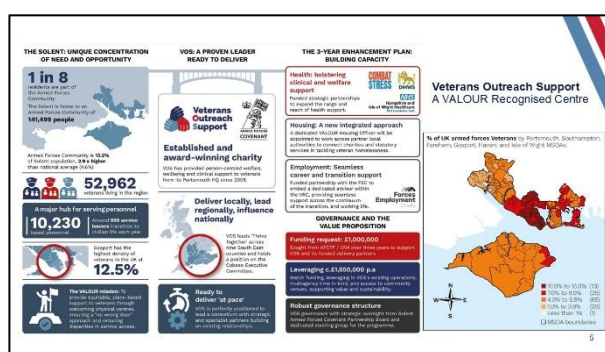
In a sector that is beautifully diverse, but sometimes fragmented, this is the right thing to do, and our partners have recognised this.

Slide 5 – Our VALOUR proposition and the Heat Map

On the right of this slide, you can see why we are needed. Our region has a high density of veterans and a large, serving Armed Forces community. Sail on the four-and-a-half-minute ferry crossing to Gosport, and 1 in every 8 people you walk by in the street is likely to be a veteran, the highest concentration in the UK (12.5%).

The busy area on the left, shows the model we put forward to VALOUR. It builds upon our 18 years of operation, strengthens our strategic partnerships with seven local authorities, and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, and adds additional funded specialist partners including DMWS, the Forces Employment Charity and Combat Stress. And, I think a first, a plan to embed a dedicated Armed Forces Community Housing Officer behind the wire in one of our local authorities, serving the AF community across the region.

So, what about Admiral Neil's ask about what the future looks like.



Slide 6 – Opportunities for VALOUR – A VRC perspective - Binoculars

You'll see I've upgraded from Nelson's telescope to a pair of high-powered bridge binoculars.

In answering the question about the future of VALOUR, I want to be honest and balanced. I'm not here to be a VALOUR Super Fan on the basis of our funding, but VOS is nevertheless a willing and able crew member in the voyage we are about to undertake.



There are a number of **headwinds** for our fleet of VRCs, for VALOUR HQ and the VFOs that work to it. There are plenty of issues to resolve, boundaries to clarify, roles to refine and shared understanding and ways of working to be agreed and developed.

There are also **risks**. In today's highly connected world, you need only look to the events of yesterday in London to know that expectations when are high, there is little tolerance for slow delivery, which could result in a disgruntled beneficiary cohort, if VALOUR doesn't live up to its promises, and there have been many. Therefore, the VALOUR fleet needs to focus on getting into action quickly, minimising time spent on manoeuvres and exercises.

This delivery needs to be joined-up in nature, but this can only result from open dialogue and shared understanding with all components of Neil's fleet. To get there, the new Admiral will need to seek the views of those experienced ships' Captains who sailed these waters long before VALOUR's masts appeared on the horizon. Nelson had his band of brothers, who knew his mind and what 'England' expected of them in the heat of battle. We VRC 'ships' need to enjoy a similar understanding across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. For many of us here today, this is not our first voyage and there's plenty of experience we can share our new OVA shipmates, to make this more a voyage of delivery rather than a voyage of discovery.

[POSITIVES]

Whilst there may be headwinds, and hazards to safely navigate, there are also many **favourable currents** that will speed us to our destination. The first of these, is the wide awareness of VALOUR and what it promises, alongside a much wider circle of interest from across the sector, from our local authorities, the NHS and many others.

There has never been a more engaging and connected dialogue between those who have an interest in their 'duty' under the AF Covenant. And, whilst the prospect funding should not be the main reason for joining the VALOUR fleet, it is a powerful lever in encouraging involvement and, in some cases, has delivered resource that has been transformational.

I'm sure our new Admiral will agree that we are a coalition of the willing, and not a homogenous national fleet under central command. Our strengths lie in our willingness to be partners and our diversity - and our winning concept depends upon the agreed standards, common language and common way of 'turning best practice into common practice', you heard earlier.

For those larger organisations who wouldn't get out of bed for the amount of funding available from VALOUR, it's worth noting that you too have a big part to play in this new eco-system. Your charities may be long-established, well-founded and national. You may not need VALOUR, but I can assure you that VALOUR needs you – in leadership roles, as well as in supportive and enabling roles.

Overall, we should welcome VALOUR and its aims and objectives. The HQ team is formed with Neil Thomas now at the helm. His trusty lieutenants responsible for data, assurance, operations, communications and other areas are engaged with existing VRCs and are doubtless preparing for many new ships that will join the fleet on the completion of VALOUR Round 2. They are strongly motivated, they are collaborative and they are listening, aiming to build a system that will serve the needs of our worthy beneficiaries.

In summary, I think that the future looks bright for VALOUR and what it will bring. There's a lot of work to be done before this fleet 'sails together', not least in terms of shared understanding and agreed standards, but we are well on the way to our destination and very much look forward to the voyage.

[Slide 7 – Contact Details]

The slide features a white background with a thin blue border. At the top, there are three logos: The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the AF Covenant logo, and a circular logo with a star. The main title 'Veterans Outreach Support' is in a large, bold, blue font, with 'A VALOUR Recognised Centre' in a smaller, grey font below it. The contact information for Ian Millen, Chief Executive, is centered: 'Ian Millen', 'Chief Executive', 'ian.millen@vosuk.org' (in red), and 'Telephone: 02392 731767' (in red). At the bottom, there are four logos: a yellow box with a blue star, the FR Regulator logo, the Charity Commission for England and Wales logo, and the Confederation of Service Charities logo. A small number '7' is in the bottom right corner.

Veterans Outreach Support
A VALOUR Recognised Centre

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FR REGULATOR CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES Confederation of Service Charities