HERITAGE CRAFTS

ABF THE SOLDIERS' CHARITY
The Army's National Charity

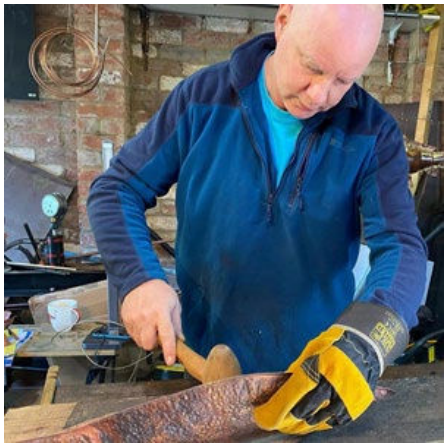
# NEWS RELEASE

Monday 9 October 2023

## Heritage Crafts and ABF The Soldiers' Charity award three new training bursaries for Army veterans

**Heritage Crafts and ABF The Soldiers' Charity are delighted to award three new bursaries for Army veterans to train in heritage crafts**.

The need for gainful employment utilising a range of practical skills gained through military service is well-documented, along with the mental wellbeing benefits of such employment. These bursaries are the first to be provided through the partnership between **Heritage Crafts** and **ABF The Soldiers' Charity**, and are intended to support Army veterans otherwise unable to meet the cost of their training, as the UK continues to deal with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.



**Roy Evans** trained as a metalsmith in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. After leaving the Army he got a job in IT but always wanted to return to his passion, and started making metal sculptures in his spare time before giving up the day job in June this year. His bursary will allow him to train with Michael Johnson at Newlyn Copperworks in Cornwall, a workshop with an international reputation in a number of coppersmithing techniques. He plans to go on to teach the craft to others.

**Andrew Fisher** is an early-career leatherworker who served in the Army and Reserves for 22 years in the Royal Corps of Transport, Royal Logistic Corps and 21 SAS. He currently works part time as a training provider in construction skills but his passion lies in leatherworking, especially for vintage vehicle interiors. His bursary will allow him to attend three courses on leather restoration and repair, seat upholstery, and industrial sewing machine repair. As well as

restoring vehicles and making leather products, he also intends to run short courses for veterans.

**Gareth Roberts** was introduced to the craft of bookbinding by Bound by Veterans (BBV), after serving in the British Army. BBV is a charity which supports wounded, injured and sick ex-service personnel using the restorative powers of manual bookbinding to assist rehabilitation and develop employment skills. His bursary will allow him to continue to train with BBV and at Cit Lit College, London, under experts Kate Rochester, Sue Doggett, Ina Baumeister and 2018 Heritage Crafts Trainer of the Year Kathy Abbott. He plans to pass on his craft, believing that every sector of society has the right to learn this age-old skill.

**ABF The Soldiers' Charity** is the Army's national charity, here for soldiers, past and present, and their families for life. It stands at the forefront of support for the Army family, last year supporting 70,000 people in 45 countries around the world.

Chief Operating Officer of ABF The Soldiers' Charity **Brigadier (Ret'd) Peter Monteith** said:

> *"Supporting former soldiers to explore new and rewarding civilian careers is a priority area for our charity. In making our donation, we were impressed with how Heritage Crafts helps people with such diverse career backgrounds, including the armed services, to train for such a highly skilled and specialist industry."*

Heritage Crafts Co-Chair **Jay Blades MBE** said:

> *"If we are going to keep traditional craft skills alive we are going to have to reach people from all backgrounds, to show them there are opportunities out there they might not have thought possible. Linking up with former services personnel with a wealth of life experience behind them makes perfect sense, so we are delighted to be working with ABF The Soldiers' Charity to provide these bursaries."*

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- For more information contact **Tess Osman**, Grants and Awards Officer – tess@heritagecrafts.org.uk.

**Photo captions:**

- Roy Evans, metalsmith and sculptor
- Andrew Fisher, leatherworker
- Gareth Roberts, bookbinder

**About Heritage Crafts**

Founded in 2009, the Heritage Crafts is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered as the 'Heritage Crafts Association', the advocacy body for traditional heritage crafts. Working in partnership with government and key agencies, it provides a focus for craftspeople, groups, societies and guilds, as well as individuals who care about the loss of traditional crafts skills, and works towards a healthy and sustainable framework for the future. Its aim is to support and promote heritage crafts as a fundamental part of our living heritage.

www.heritagecrafts.org.uk

**About ABF The Soldiers' Charity**

ABF The Soldiers' Charity is the Army's national charity. It stands at the forefront of support for the Army family, last year supporting 70,000 people in 45 countries around the world. As one of the largest funders in the sector, it awards grants to individuals and families, and fund leading organisations that support soldiers, former soldiers, and their families.

https://soldierscharity.org