



## **PRESS RELEASE TO ALL NATIONAL MEDIA**

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### **THE PRINCE OF WALES, PATRON, COMBAT STRESS, WILL TODAY LAUNCH THE COMBAT STRESS APPEAL – ‘THE ENEMY WITHIN’**

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales will today launch an appeal by the Veterans’ charity Combat Stress at St. James’s Palace State Apartments:

The appeal is launched to:

- raise £30m to enhance and develop mental health services for Veterans
- raise awareness of the plight of Veterans suffering from psychological injury
- encourage Veterans and their families to seek help earlier

In an article published by the Daily Telegraph today, The Prince of Wales refers to the 14 years after leaving the Services that it takes before Veterans seek help for significant psychological injuries.

“Fourteen years is a very long time to suffer,” he writes. “After such a long gap many veterans are at the end of their tether.” He writes: “Social isolation is common, alcohol and/or drug abuse is often seen as a refuge, and I am afraid that this downward spiral leads many to contemplate taking their own lives.” His Royal Highness then forewarns “the impact of recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan may only be seen in the years to come.”

Combat Stress – which was founded 90 years ago to provide specialised treatment for Veterans with psychological injuries – is launching the appeal in order to meet projected future demand for its services. Over the last 5 years the number of new Veterans seeking help has risen by 66%.

The funds raised will put in place a national network of Community Outreach Teams, to enable Veterans and their families to receive support and treatment within their own communities, whilst continuing to provide short-stay residential treatment in any one of the charity’s three existing regional treatment centres.

Each community outreach team will consist of a Regional Welfare Officer, a Welfare Support Team member, a Clinical Psychiatric Nurse, a Therapist and access to a regional psychiatrist/psychologist, all of which will provide welfare support, primary assessment, on-going treatment and group therapy, as well as vital support for the family too.

Dr. Chai Patel who is the Chair of the appeal panel said: “We have to do what it takes to ensure that these brave men and women have appropriate mental healthcare services to enable them to seek care when they enter civilian life.”

**For All Media Enquires Call 0800 098 8821**

Combat Stress is a Registered Charity: England & Wales No. 206002; Scotland No. SC 038828 / Company Limited by Guarantee No. 256353.



## Notes for Editors

1. Combat Stress is the UK's leading military charity specialising in the care of Veterans' mental health. Many of the conditions we treat are chronic and long term in nature.
2. We celebrated our 90th anniversary on 12 May 2009 – and have provided a vital lifeline to almost 100,000 ex-Service men and women from every campaign that British Forces have been involved in since the First World War.
3. We have a current caseload of 4,375 Veterans. This includes 94 who have served in Afghanistan and 390 who served in Iraq. The youngest Veteran on our books is 20 and our oldest, is 103.
4. The majority are ex-Army: 81.9%
5. On average, it takes over 14 years from Service discharge for Veterans to make the first-step approach to Combat Stress for help, by which time their condition is often chronic. In 2009, six of our new Veterans had waited 50 years or more.
6. Other and co-existing mental health conditions include: depression, alcohol and/or drug abuse, mood disorders, anxiety and phobic disorders.
7. We provide a tailored treatment and care programme, based on the psychological, social and welfare needs of the individual. Our bespoke treatment plans range from brief therapy to chronic disease management.
8. Clinical treatment is delivered at our three short-stay centres in Shropshire, Surrey and Ayrshire. They provide a range of therapies within a unique, peer-group setting which provides a safe and familiar environment for Veterans.
9. The MOD and Department of Health are working increasingly closely with Combat Stress to ensure better treatment of Veterans with psychological injuries. On 11 January 2010 Combat Stress signed a partnership agreement with the MoD and the Department of Health, resulting in a statutory grant of £140,000. This will help fund Combat Stress staff to work directly with NHS mental health Trusts to ensure that the services they provide are accessible to and appropriate for military Veterans.

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