

The Project Factory empowers a new community app serving UK war veterans for military charity Blesma

App 'Blesma Connects' builds digital community for disabled veterans with access to tailored content and support

March 2020, SYDNEY AND LONDON: Australian innovation is connecting disabled war veterans and creating a new online community platform for UK based charity, Blesma, which provides lifelong supports for veterans who have lost a limb.

Blesma has launched a new free app, Blesma Connects, that aims to encourage its global membership to create an online community for updates, activities, engagement and support.

Depression, isolation and PTSD are issues that plague ex-Armed forces personnel globally and the challenge is to maintain ongoing transitional support for former serving personnel for mental, physical and social health.

A recent study from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that there were over 419 suicides in serving, reserve and ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel who have served since 2001. The research also found that these incidents were significantly higher for ex-serving men and women.

The statistics are echoed globally and in the UK loneliness and isolation impacts one in four ex-Armed Forces personnel. Blesma members range from younger to older veterans. Maintaining their quality of life, keeping active, reducing isolation and helping them call on support when necessary are all a key part of keeping the Blesma member community connected

Blesma Connects has been built exclusively for its members only and will allow them to keep up to date with relevant news, join activities with other Blesma members and their families, hear about new routes to secure medical support and grants, connect to other Blesma members and easily access the welfare counselling Blesma provides.

Blesma Connects allows for greater communication and access to peers no matter geographic location providing ongoing member-to-member connectivity via its Chat function along with personalised information and content tailored to each Member's interests and needs.

Blesma, which currently provides life-long support to 3,000 members based in the UK and internationally, has been at the forefront of connecting limbless ex-service people with one another since WWI, from the early days of championing their medical treatment and disability rights, to facilitating a series of trips, challenges and meet-ups to enable its members to help and support each other.

The free app was created with Blesma by award-winning creative agency, Way To Blue and developed by its global digital arm Sydney based, The Project Factory.

"Understanding the unique social, physical and broader needs for military service men and women globally is essential to assisting veterans to maintain a satisfying and rich life after service. Online technologies allow for powerful peer to peer community engagement and support which is fundamental to creating and maintaining communities that allow veterans to self-manage their wellbeing, interests and mental health. We are very proud to be associated with this wellness initiative," said, The Project Factory's Jennifer Wilson, who was Executive Producer on the app.

The decision to launch Blesma Connects comes following a six-month research and an 18-month development programme during which Members, Blesma's staff and Support Officers stated they would value more frequent updates from the charity along with more opportunities to connect with other Members.

Blesma Operations Director and Interim Chief Executive, Ian Waller, said, "No one really understands a military person quite like a fellow comrade, so creating connections and comradeship are two important objectives for us at Blesma to combat loneliness and social isolation. After speaking with a variety of our members from 19-year-old veterans to 95-year-old widows during the last 18 months, we know our Members need a tool that will enable them to build friendships with those who have shared similar experiences within their local communities. I'm looking forward to hearing how our Members, particularly our silver soldiers, will respond to the new Blesma Connects app and supporting sessions."

Blesma Connects is now available globally to members to download from both the Google Play and Apple app stores. It is also compatible with a Member's accessibility settings on their device, including screen readers, font sizes and dexterity controls.

-ENDS-

For further information or interview requests please contact The Project Factory : media@theprojectfactory.com

Notes to Editors

Hi-res images can be downloaded from the links below:

https://blesma.org/media/445747/blesma_app_0007.jpg

https://blesma.org/media/445754/blesma_app_0006.jpg

https://blesma.org/media/445753/blesma_app_0005.jpg

https://blesma.org/media/445756/blesma_app_0008.jpg

https://blesma.org/media/445795/blesma_app_0047.jpg

https://blesma.org/media/445799/blesma_app_0051.jpg

About: The Project Factory

The Project Factory is a multi award-winning digital production and development house that creates innovative content and platforms across web, mobile, social media and games platforms. Its' reputation is built on delivering ground breaking products in entertainment, broadcast and health with a deep specialisation in gamification for engagement and behavioural change.

Established in 2005, The Project Factory are market leaders in the field and pride themselves on being agile and something. In 2015, The Project Factory, became the global digital development arm of integrated communications agency Way To Blue. In 2019, Way To Blue was acquired by the Miroma Group, a growing agency collective with a global network reach that extends to 35 markets.

For more information, please visit www.theprojectfactory.com

About: Blesma, The Limbless Veterans

Blesma, The Limbless Veterans was formed in the years following the First World War and became a national charity in 1932. Blesma is dedicated to assisting serving and ex-Service men and women who have suffered limb loss or the loss of use of a limb, an eye or loss of sight. We support these men and women and their families in their communities throughout the UK and overseas.

Since 1932, we have been the only national Service charity that supports limbless veterans for the duration of their lives; just as we are still caring for our surviving World War II veterans, we also look after those who have survived complex trauma injuries through recent conflicts, accidents or illness, and will need our specialised support as they face the long journey ahead. Blesma aims to ensure that all serving or ex-service men and women who have lost sight, limbs or the use of limbs can lead independent and fulfilling lives and will not be failed, forgotten or left behind.

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