

Veterans' memories of National Service shared in new exhibition

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Composite portrait of Michael Wilkinson - then and now

[Wales](#)

A new photographic and video exhibition showcases the exploits of British Armed Forces veterans during National Service 60 years ago.

National Service Remembered documents the experiences of 18 former servicemen, including men who served in Egypt, Jordan, Singapore and Iraq.

It is 60 years since National Service ended in the UK. The project – run by the not-for-profit organisation Same but Different – captures an important period of the country’s cultural history through the eyes of the men who served.

The exhibition was made possible thanks to £23,400 of National Lottery funding.

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Ros Kerslake, CEO of The National Lottery Heritage Fund

A big part of growing up



Elwyn Davis: middle row, second from left

Elwyn Davies, 83, from North Wales, served in Egypt and helped guard equipment that had been sold off by the British Army at the end of the Suez Crisis. Elwyn is one of the British Armed Forces veterans included in the project.

He said: “I would think that unless our stories were documented, the whole experience of National Service would be lost for ever. It was, after all, something which affected thousands of young men at that time and was a big part of growing up.”

Preserving memories

Ros Kerslake, CEO of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: “National Service was an unique moment in British history and this project has played an important role in capturing and preserving the memories of some of those who served across the UK.

"These intriguing stories would otherwise have been completely lost to future generations and it's a perfect example of why it's so important to invest National Lottery money in preserving our heritage."

Important to remember

Ken Grain, 89, lives in Oswestry, and was posted to Singapore with the RAF as a Radio Direction Operator during the 1950s.

Ken said: “It's been fascinating going back into my National Service life and remembering. It's important to remember it because a lot of people felt that it was a wasted opportunity, but it was the best thing for young people.

“I think the project is a very good way of letting people know what happened during National Service. I was one of the lucky ones and it helped me with my future life.”

A wonderful exhibition

Michael Wilkinson (main picture), 87, lives in Chester and served at Hednesford during his National Service.

He said: “Working with the team from Same but Different on this project has brought back memories of happenings I have not thought about for many years. I look back on (my National Service) as being a very positive experience. Congratulations on National Service Remembered – you have all done a wonderful job.”

The exhibition will be touring the UK later in the year. In the meantime, you can [explore it online](#).