

TVBC News release

National Service commemorative plaque installed in Andover's Pocket Park

A new National Service commemorative plaque has been installed in Andover's Pocket Park, recognising the contribution made by the millions of young men conscripted to serve in the Armed Forces between 1945 and 1963.

The plaque forms part of a national initiative led by the National Service Veterans Alliance to ensure the service and sacrifices made are permanently remembered in towns with strong military connections.

Andover was identified as a town of military importance, and permission to install the plaque was granted by Test Valley Borough Council.

The plaque commemorates the 2.2 million young men who were called up under the National Service Act and served across the world. Many of those men are now in their 80s, 90s and over 100 years old.

The project was made possible through a fundraising challenge completed in the summer of 2022 by Michael Homer, Chairman of the National Service Veterans Alliance. Known as The Plaque-A-Thon, the challenge saw him visit 50 towns of military importance by train within 150 hours. The challenge raised £7,200, funding the creation of 60 brass plaques for communities across the country.

Michael Homer, Chairman of the National Service Veterans Alliance, said: "National Service shaped the lives of 2.2 million young men who answered the call to serve between 1945 and 1963. Many of them are now in their 80s, 90s and beyond, and this plaque is about making sure their contribution is never forgotten. Andover has long-standing military links, so it feels entirely right that one of these plaques has a permanent home here. I'm grateful to Test Valley Borough Council for supporting this tribute, and I hope it gives people a moment to reflect on the service and sacrifice made by a remarkable generation."

The Mayor of Test Valley Borough Council, Gordon Bailey, said: "This plaque is a simple but powerful reminder of the service given by thousands of young men from across the country, including many with links to Andover. Pocket Park is a fitting location for this tribute, offering a quiet space for reflection at the heart of the town. It is important that we continue to recognise and honour the role National Service played in shaping both individual lives and our shared history."

The plaque is now in place at Andover's Pocket Park and will remain as a permanent public tribute to those who served.

