



# Support Reading Force

and help keep British military families close

*"Dad's away from home and I miss him, but I love how we can still share stories and books"*



# Forces family life is different...

Children with parents in the Armed Forces face challenges that go beyond the experience of the majority of children living in the UK.

While there are lots of positives to being part of a military family, sometimes life is disruptive and unsettling. Forces families are often highly mobile and children have to adapt to changes of home and school. Long separations from a parent can cause stress and worry.

**These children go through so much and yet their flexibility and resilience is an inspiration to us all.** They deserve to be supported every step of the way.

*“There need to be some positives to being a military child – it can be so hard at times – your reading initiative is a lovely thing. Thank you so much.”*

**Reading Force mum**



# The Reading Force charity helps keep family members connected through shared reading



Reading Force was founded by Army wife and mother of four, Alison Baverstock, following her own family's experience of military life. The idea of Reading Force is a simple but powerful one – to build a bridge of books between absent parents and the children they've left behind; to offer a shared experience, something to talk and laugh about together, an intimate experience that dissolves distance.



Reading Force is like a book club for the family. Chatting about books and stories in messages and over Skype or FaceTime connects families who are separated, and provides bonding time for Forces families together at home.

**This supports emotional wellbeing and creates positive shared memories.**

An additional benefit is a boost to children's literacy levels.

We give families free books and special scrapbooks to fill with thoughts, notes, photographs and drawings about the story they're sharing. Families receive a special certificate and another story book when they complete a scrapbook.



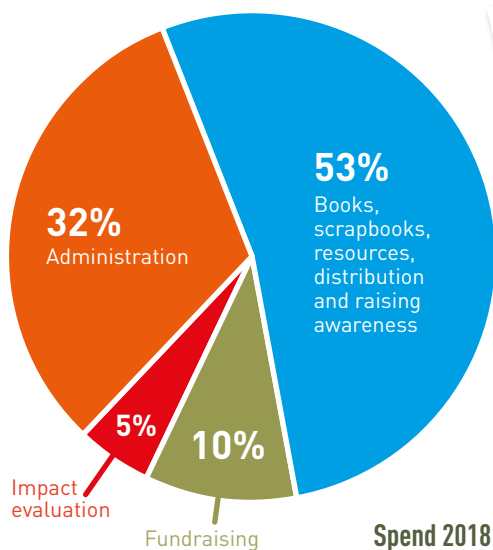
Reading Force is a fun shared reading and scrapbook activity, freely available to all families with a British Forces connection, including reservists and veterans – and families who are separated/divorced from a Forces partner.

# Can you help us reach more Forces families and children?

We are reaching out to companies like yours to continue and expand our charity's work, and to develop a sustainable future.

Since 2011, Reading Force has been financed through donations, government and military charity grants and funding, and some corporate sponsorship.

**If your organisation has signed the Armed Forces Covenant, is a supplier to the Armed Forces or is located within an area of military presence, donating to Reading Force is a way you can show your support to our military families and the sacrifices they make.**



*"We were impressed by the support Reading Force is giving those Service families dealing with the challenges of separation and by the simple premise that chatting about a book helps parents and children remain connected. We were delighted to help."*

**James Hopkins, CEO of Annington, Reading Force sponsor**



# There are an estimated 130,000 Forces children and we're asking for your support to reach as many of them as we can

Reading Force sends every family who joins a book and a scrapbook for each child.

Research has shown how important it is for children to own books and how this directly correlates to their reading ability and desire to read for pleasure, in turn influencing their long-term academic achievements and goals.

When a family fills a scrapbook with thoughts about the book they're reading together, it provides an added level of interaction with the story and inspires a deeper connection with each other, and creates a valuable keepsake.

We reach children and families through a variety of ways to increase participation.

Working through schools, we not only reach the Forces children, but also help other children and their teachers and parents understand what it's like to be on the move so often.

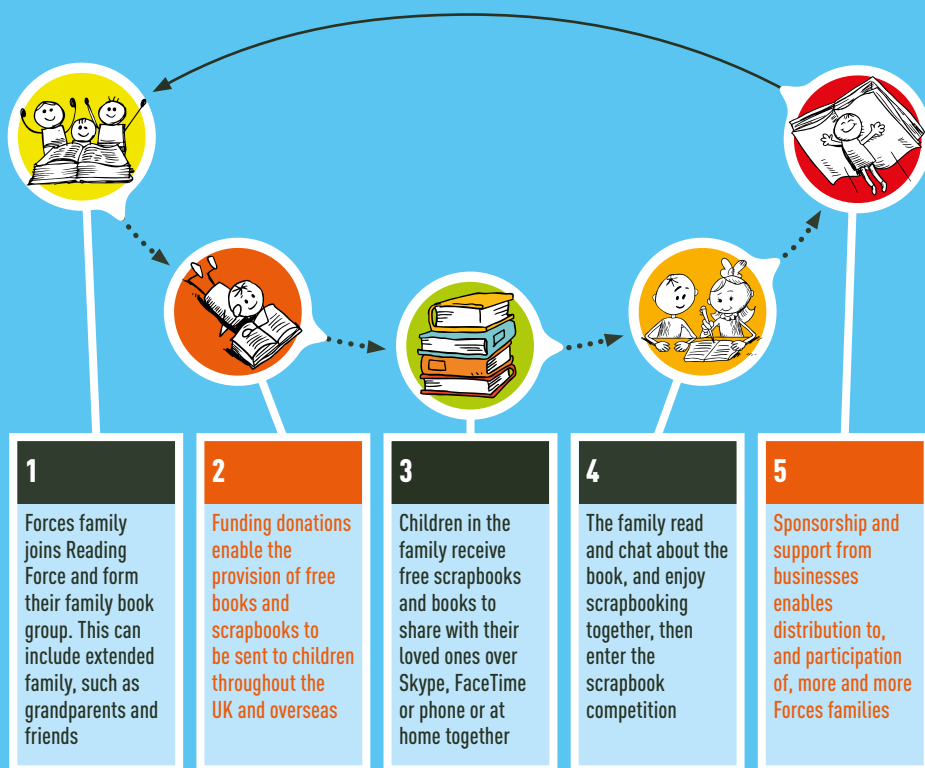
## If you choose to sponsor Reading Force, you'll facilitate:



- **Purchasing and giving books to Forces families** – since Reading Force began in 2011, over 12,000 Forces children have received a free book
- **Printing and distribution of scrapbooks** – over 120,000 scrapbooks have been given to Forces children over 8 years
- **Collaboration with schools and welfare settings** – over 800 different organisations have worked with us so far
- **Promoting Reading Force directly to families** – continuing to build our online reach and word-of-mouth recommendations



# How Reading Force works



*"If you've ever read a picture book to a baby or lay in bed with an almost-teenager sharing a book you love, you know the amazing feeling of connecting through books. Reading Force allows parents and children, even when separated by thousands of miles, to read the same book. Then, over Skype or Facetime, they can imagine for a few minutes that they're snuggled up together, talking about the book, choosing their favourite characters or arguing about the ending."*

*Meg Rosoff, award-winning children's author*



# How Forces families benefit from doing Reading Force



All parents know how difficult family separation can be. Yet for Forces families, separation is a fact of life. Add to this the emotional strain of having a parent working in a war zone, frequent moves of home and school and having to leave friends and extended family.

Doing Reading Force enables families to share the same book, even when separated by thousands of miles, and helps:

- Maintain the family bond during challenging times
- Encourage dads to be reading role models for their children
- Build reading confidence
- Strengthen English as a second language for parents and children
- Divorced/separated parents have a child-focused activity
- Regroup during illness or recovery
- Support children's friendships

*"The best thing about reading a book together is that it helped to bring our family together and we all laughed and smiled. I love reading stories in my bed at bedtime with my mum, dad and sister Isla. Family reading is fun and great!"*

**Freya (7)**



# How sharing stories helps Forces families...

***“My daughter refused to speak to her deployed Dad.”***

Dan is in the Navy and is deployed for long stretches of time. He has been away from the family home for the majority of the last two years. When Olivia spoke with her Dad on the phone she became upset and angry because she missed him, and so she refused to speak with him at all.

Just before Dan's last deployment, Nicky (Mum) was given a deployment pack containing a Reading Force scrapbook. She decided to give Reading Force a try and see if it would help Olivia to keep in touch with her Dad.

Olivia and Dan both read David Walliams' *Mr Stink* and then they chatted about it on the phone. This broke the pattern of difficult phone calls and enabled Olivia and her Dad to talk freely. Importantly, it also meant Dan had the opportunity to connect and communicate with his family.

***“Reading Force has very much helped my children get through this very long deployment.” Nicky***



The Broome family with their Reading Force scrapbooks and books

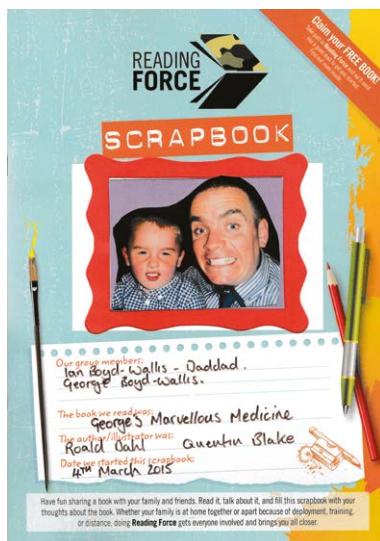


***“My Dad fixes helicopters and sometimes goes to work for a very long time.”***

When Ian was deployed away from home his son’s behaviour at school suffered. “The school were so supportive and understood his anxieties around me coming and going all the time.” George’s teacher told Ian about Reading Force, suggesting it could be used to support him.

When Ian was deployed in Afghanistan they both read *George’s Marvellous Medicine* over FaceTime. They enjoyed connecting in this way, and the process gave George continuity and eased the difficulties around missing his dad. When Ian was deployed in Dubai and couldn’t get FaceTime, George read to him over the phone.

***“It gave us something to talk about, what medicine we would make and who we would give it to. When I came back home we made our medicine. George really loves reading so this was ideal for us do together. On future deployments we will choose another book and do the same thing. For me this was special as it was something only I did with him.” Ian***



Find out more about how you can support Reading Force on page 11.

Or contact Elaine Boorman on 0300 123 1029 or email [elaine@readingforce.org.uk](mailto:elaine@readingforce.org.uk)

# £5,000

a year would pay for 1,000 children to receive a book and scrapbook in the post



# £3,000

would pay for printing 5,000 special scrapbooks for Forces children



# £1,500

would pay for an author led event with free books and scrapbooks in a local school where there are lots of Forces families



*"The Reading Force team absolutely understand what it means to be a family and work tirelessly to help Forces families remain connected. That is why we nominated them for the Soldiering On 2019 Family Values Award."*

Annington



# Support us through corporate sponsorship

## Gold Sponsor Contribution of £2,500-£9,999 per annum

### Your organisation will receive:

- Website presence – logo and company bio on Sponsors page and link to your website
- Company bio and how your support is helping Reading Force in one of our newsletters each year

## Platinum Sponsor Contribution of £10,000+ per annum

### Your organisation will receive:

- Social media recognition on our social media profiles
- Website presence – logo on home page + sponsors page with short biography and link to your website
- Company bio and how your support is helping Reading Force in one of our newsletters each year
- Logo on event sponsor banners and on printed materials
- Press release and blog announcing your support
- Our Founder, Alison Baverstock, would be happy to talk at one of your events or to your staff about Reading Force and the benefits of reading

*“Malvern Optical provides professional scientific and technical services in support of a number of MoD/OGD programmes, defence primes and integrators.*

*As a consequence we deal with service personnel virtually on a day-to-day basis and we understand how important it is to support them and their families in their wider lives. After discussions and a meeting where the objectives of Reading Force were explained to us, we were delighted to be able to offer core funding support for a minimum of 3 years. Reading Force is an organisation that Malvern Optical is proud to support.”*

*Dr Gilbert Smith, of Malvern Optical*

## Become a corporate sponsor

**Every pound helps us to reach more military families and your support will benefit them in many different ways.**

To discuss how your organisation can become a sponsor, please contact Elaine Boorman on **0300 123 1029** or **[elaine@readingforce.org.uk](mailto:elaine@readingforce.org.uk)**

# Reading Force is a fun shared reading and scrapbook activity that helps bring military families closer



*"Given how much of their family life these military kids have sacrificed for us, the least we can do is give something back to them. It may seem like a small gift, but the Reading Force shared experience of reading can be a powerful expression of love."*

*Meg Rosoff, Carnegie Medal winning children's author*

**Can you help us reach more Forces families and children?**



Reading Force Founder Alison Baverstock and Reading Force family, Aldershot

**[www.readingforce.org.uk](http://www.readingforce.org.uk) • [info@readingforce.org.uk](mailto:info@readingforce.org.uk) • 0300 123 1029**

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @readingforce for news and regular book giveaways

