

BATTLESPACE

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Editor: Julian Nettlefold

Advertising:
Battlespace Publications

Published by:
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Contacts:
Julian Nettlefold
Mobile: +44 (0)77689 54766
Email: j.nettlefold@
battle-technology.com

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In this months issue...

News in Brief

- 5 Armed Forces charities to receive £5m boost
- 6 We Need To Get Our Arm Around Afghanistan Veterans
- 8 DOD Leaders Address Bagram Departure

Features

- 10 All Go For SSAFA Chepstow Raceday – Free Entry For All Military Past And Present!
- 20 Andrew Jankel, Chairman of Jankel Group, Hands Over The Mantle of BATTLESPACE Businessman Of The Year To Paul McCarter, Managing Director – Defence at Serco – Who, In Turn Hands over the Mantle to Paul Fleming CEO of (TEK Group) TEK Military Seating Ltd.
- 24 Paul Fleming CEO of (TEK Group) TEK Military Seating Ltd. elected as our 2021 BATTLESPACE Businessman Of The Year
- 28 The British Army In Afghanistan
- 32 Remarks by President Biden on the End of the War in Afghanistan
- 40 Taliban Remains Dangerous, Harbors al-Qaida, Joint Chiefs Chairman Says
- 42 Austin Gives Senate Hard Truths of Lessons From Afghanistan
- 44 British Army Veteran suicide figures to be recorded for the first time

Dear Reader,

This issue coincides with our annual SSAFA Raceday at Chepstow. I launched the Raceday in 2014 when I sponsored the Angela Nettlefold Memorial Race in memory of my late mother who cared for my disabled father tirelessly for 63 years. He lost both his hands and an eye in a training accident whilst serving with the Welsh Guard in 1942 in North Africa.

The Raceday has grown from one race to SSAFA taking over the whole day since 2015. We have raised over £140,000 since 2014, for which we thank everyone who has contributed over the years and our team who manage the day prior to during and after the day.

This issue also coincides with the end of the 20-year Afghan and is dedicated to those soldiers who gave their lives or lost limbs in the process of serving for their country.

The Afghan war must not be seen as a wasted war as those NATO soldiers, from many countries and creeds, who fought and died or lost limbs will themselves feel forgotten. Many good things came out of the Afghan was not the least the fact that no large terrorist attack has taken place since the 9-11 attacks on the USA.

Terrorism will never be defeated but it has recently morphed into lone wolf attacks rather than planned large attacks such as 9-11 and others.

For the first time Chepstow has kindly allowed serving and past servicemen free entry to our Raceday.

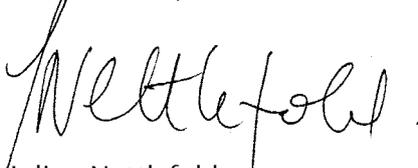
As in past years, the proceeds from this issue are donated to SSAFA.

UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said, *“The people of Afghanistan deserve a peaceful and stable future. As we drawdown, the security of our people currently serving in Afghanistan remains our priority and we have been clear that attacks on Allied troops will be met with a forceful response. The British public and our Armed Forces community, both serving and veterans, will have lasting memories of our time in Afghanistan. Most importantly we must remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, who will never be forgotten.”*

What must be remembered is that every soldier did his duty to the utmost as demanded without any question or refusal.

This was brought home to me recently when I met a veteran from the 2nd Battalion Royal Scots who had lost both legs and many fingers from an IED in Afghanistan. He had accepted his plight as is usual for wounded veterans and was doing a woodworking course.

Your sincerely,



Julian Nettlefold
Editor, Battlespace

Front cover: Courtesy of TEK Military Seating Ltd

FOR ALL THE LATEST
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Armed Forces charities to receive £5m boost



Armed Forces charities will receive an additional £5m funding to support those who have served. The Prime Minister has announced today that Armed Forces charities will receive £5m in additional funding to support those who have served, including those who may be struggling following recent events in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister made the announcement at a statement today in the House of Commons on the situation in Afghanistan.

The additional funding will be allocated to a range of projects that will increase capacity in mental health charities, improve veterans' understanding of the support available and deliver enhanced social support. The Office for Veterans' Affairs will allocate the funding over the coming months.

Funding will also enable veterans to continue helping the people of Afghanistan who have settled in the UK under the ARAP scheme, by providing social support, integration into local communities and help navigating life in the UK.

The Office for Veterans' Affairs will commission charity provision of targeted and relevant support for Afghan refugees with military links and provide surge capacity to support transition to life in the UK.

The £5 million boost will also help increase the user friendliness and accessibility of services, better signposting veterans to the range of state and charitable services available to them.

This will help to make mental health services even more accessible to the Afghanistan veteran cohort.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said, *"In addition to the extra £3 million we have invested in mental health support through NHS England's Op Courage, we are providing another £5 million to assist the military charities who do such magnificent work, with the aim of ensuring that no veteran's request for help will go unanswered."*

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Leo Docherty said, *"This targeted increase in funding to charities, both large and small, will allow those who served to receive a gold standard of care across the board. We are forever grateful to the serving personnel and veterans who aided the people of Afghanistan,*

and will ensure they get the support they need and deserve in the most accessible methods possible."

This follows a Mental Health Summit two weeks ago, where the Secretary of State for Defence, Minister for Defence People and Veterans and Secretary of State for Health discussed the current mental health and wellbeing provision for service leavers across the UK with NHS, charity and academic experts.

If you are struggling as a result of the recent events in Afghanistan, there is support available across the United Kingdom for veterans and those affected:

- in England, veterans and their families in England can get specialist help from the NHS Op COURAGE service
- in Wales, you can reach out to Veteran Therapists in each Local Health Board through Veteran Wales
- in Scotland, veterans can access veteran-led mental health and welfare support through Veterans First Point, part of NHS Scotland
- in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office links individual veterans, veterans' groups, statutory and non-statutory bodies, and charities supporting veterans
- anyone in the UK or overseas can also contact the Veterans' Gateway helpline on 0808 802 1212, or visit the website for advice and signposting to further support, including for families and the bereaved.

(Source: <https://www.gov.uk/>)

We Need To Get Our Arm Around Afghanistan Veterans

'We Need To Get Our Arm Around' Afghanistan Veterans, Armed Forces Minister Says. James Heapey told Forces News that now is *"the right time to be focusing"* on the mental health of Afghanistan veterans.

The Armed Forces Minister has told Forces News now is the time to support veterans who served in Afghanistan.

James Heapey said there have been *"far too many suicides from brave young men and women who served in our Armed Forces, particularly in Afghanistan, over the last decade."* He added veterans *"will be feeling particularly vulnerable as a consequence of what has happened in Afghanistan over the last couple of weeks."*

It comes after Western forces completed the military withdrawal from Afghanistan, with the final British troops leaving the country on 28 August.

Mr Heapey added, *"As a Government, as a set of military charities, as regimental associations and as the wider community beyond, we need to get our arm around our Afghan veterans and keep their chin up at a time when it's all too easy,*

potentially, for them to let their shoulders drop and start to question whether it was all worth it."

Mr Heapey also said he wants to encourage support for the wider veteran community who served in Afghanistan, as well as personnel who helped evacuate UK nationals and Afghan former staff from the country.

"I want the country to feel a sense of ownership of our Afghan veterans and to want to seek them out and say how proud we are of what they did," he said. *"Our regimental associations I know are all hard at work reaching out to those who served in Afghanistan and reminding them of the support that's available."*

Mr Heapey's comments come after Combat Stress, a charity providing mental health services to veterans, said it had received double the average number of daily calls after the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan.

On 16 August, staff received 70 calls, a 125% increase on the usual number; a further 50 calls on 17 August – a 61% increase; and a 103% increase – 63 calls – on 18 August.

The charity's staff blamed the unfolding crisis in Afghanistan for the increase.

Last month, the UK's most severely injured British soldier to survive the war in Afghanistan said it was for *"absolutely nothing."*

Ben Parkinson, a Lance Bombardier, lost his legs and suffered a broken spine and pelvis after his vehicle hit a landmine in Afghanistan in 2006.

Speaking to BBC Yorkshire, Mr Parkinson told of his disappointment about the country's situation, saying that the Taliban takeover has left people thinking: *"What was it all for?"*

"It must be terrible for someone who lost a member of their family for absolutely nothing, absolutely nothing at all."

"We've just turned our backs on them."

However, another Afghanistan veteran recently told Forces News he is *"very happy with the sacrifices"* made by military personnel in the country.

(Source: forces.net)



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DOD Leaders Address Bagram Departure



DOD Leaders Address Bagram Departure, Noncombatant Evacuation Operation Timing. Following the U.S. departure from Afghanistan in August, some questioned the hand-over of Bagram Air Base – about 27 miles north of the capital city, Kabul – saying the move was ill-advised and had been a tactical mistake.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III said maintaining a presence there would have been costly, and would not have helped the U.S. mission during the waning days of the 20-year war the U.S. waged in Afghanistan.

“Retaining Bagram would have required putting as many as 5,000 U.S. troops in harm’s way just to operate and defend it,” Austin told the House Armed Services Committee during a hearing today on Capitol Hill. *“It would have contributed little to the mission that we had been assigned, and that was to protect and defend the embassy which was some 30 miles away.”*

Additionally, when the noncombatant evacuation operation, or NEO, began, Bagram’s distance from Kabul would have offered little help.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley said it was expected that it would be Hamid Karzai International Airport, in Kabul, not Bagram, that would play a central part in any NEO.

“Most of the people that were required to be in an NEO were going to come out of Kabul ... HKIA was going to be the center of gravity for any NEO,” Milley

said, saying the U.S. didn’t have the forces to defend both airports.

“Staying at Bagram to continue counterterrorism operations there would also not have been advisable,” Austin said.

“[That] meant staying at war in Afghanistan, something that the president made clear that he would not do,” Austin said.

The noncombatant evacuation operation to get American civilians, Afghan citizens with special immigrant visa applications underway and at-risk Afghans out of Afghanistan, began Aug. 14 – just 17 days before the U.S. military planned to be completely out of the country. Austin said the decision on when to start the NEO came from the State Department and that a variety of factors figured into when an NEO should begin.

“On the issue of why we didn’t bring out civilians and as SIVs sooner ... the call on how to do that and when to do it is really a State Department call,” Austin said.

“Their concerns, rightfully, were that ... they were being cautioned by the Ghani administration that if they withdrew American citizens and SIV applicants at a pace that was too fast, it would cause a collapse of the government that we were trying to prevent. And so I think that went into the calculus.”

Despite what some consider to have been a delayed start for noncombatant evacuation operations, Milley said the

operation was a success, being the largest air evacuation in history, which got 124,000 individuals out of the country.

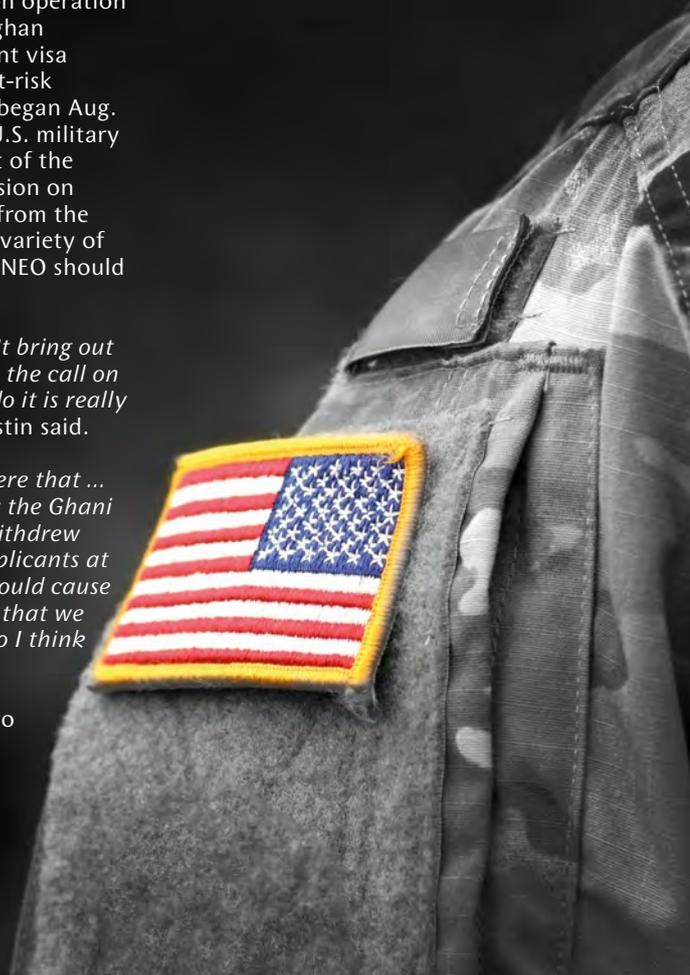
Austin said work continues now to get Americans out of Afghanistan.

“We’re not finished and we’ll make sure that we stay focused on this to get out every American citizen that wants to leave and has the right credentials to be able to leave,” he said.

While the U.S. is now out of Afghanistan, it still has the ability to conduct over-the-horizon operations to deal with any threats to the homeland, which includes assets and target analysis that comes from outside of the country in which an operation occurs, Austin said.

“These are effective and fairly common operations,” he said. *“Just days ago we conducted one such strike in Syria, eliminating a senior Al Qaeda figure. Over the horizon operations are difficult, but absolutely possible. And the intelligence that supports them comes from a variety of sources, and not just U.S. boots on the ground.”*

(Source: US DoD)



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All go for SSAFA Chepstow Raceday – Free Entry for all Military Past and Present!

SSAFA, Chepstow Racecourse and BATTLESPACE are delighted to announce that the SSAFA Chepstow Raceday will take place on Friday 19 November 2021.

As part of the activities, Chepstow is offering all serving and retired military personnel free admission. A marquee with a cash bar and Tote betting facilities will be provided. To gain your free entrance please email your name, address, regiment and rank to info@chepstow-racecourse.co.uk

Julian Nettlefold, Publisher of BATTLESPACE said, “Our sponsors have continued to support us in 2021 in spite of COVID-19. These sponsors include, BATTLESPACE Publications, Briggs Equipment, Xenosor, Fujitsu, Hall & Watts, Hensoldt, Kathryn Clamp, Serco, Spectra, TVS and ViaSat. We must also thank everyone who are donating prizes for

our Charity Auction so ably managed by Steve O’Leary. I would also like to thank Chepstow for their ongoing support and our army of supporters including Bridget Rosser from The Grow Company as well as, Verity Harding and Georgia Oliver of SSAFA who slave away behind the scenes to make the day happen!”

“As in previous years, we have published advertisements for a donation to SSAFA of any amount from £200 upwards, this will add to the £140,000 raised from the BATTLESPACE SSAFA Raceday since 2014. I would also like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year and look forward to life coming back to normal in 2022 and welcoming you to Chepstow on

November 18th 2022.”

The 2021 MoD briefing will be made by General Sir Adrian Bradshaw, a former



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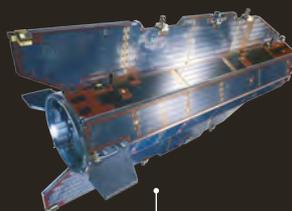
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Above: General Sir Adrian Bradshaw KCB, OBE.

British Army officer who served as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe. He also served as Director Special Forces from 2006 to 2009 and Commander Land Forces in 2013 during a business breakfast before racing.

General Sir Adrian Bradshaw KCB, OBE

Adrian Bradshaw was commissioned into the 14th/20th King's Hussars in 1980. In 1994 he became Commanding Officer of the King's Royal Hussars commanding the KRH Battlegroup in Bosnia. On promotion to Brigadier, he became Senior Advisor to the Combined Forces Air Component Command preparing for the invasion of Iraq. He was Deputy Commander of Task Force West during the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and took charge of 7th Armoured Brigade during initial stabilisation operations in April 2003. By 2006 he was Director Special Forces.

In March 2009 Bradshaw was appointed General Officer Commanding 1st Armoured Division which undertook a major training exercise in the Czech Republic in May 2009. He became Deputy Commander International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and United Kingdom National Contingent Commander in Afghanistan in the rank of lieutenant general in November 2011. He is Vice-Chairman of the Combined Services Polo Association.

Bradshaw assumed the role of Commander Land Forces in succession to General Sir Nick Parker in January 2013.

Bradshaw was promoted to general and appointed Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe on 28 March 2014.

Bradshaw was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1998 and appointed an Officer of the Legion

of Merit by the President of the United States in 2003. He was also appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath in the 2009 New Year Honours and advanced to Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath in the 2013 Birthday Honours.

As the UK's oldest, national, tri-service charity, SSAFA is no stranger to adapting to change. Having existed through six monarchies to date, weathered two World Wars and countless conflicts, Covid-19 is one more chapter in a legacy of resilience.

SSAFA's Forcesline, a free and confidential helpline for any member of the Armed Forces community in need, saw an 80% increase in requests for befriending and support from those feeling isolated by lockdown. The Forcesline team say that the most pressing issues, during this time, have been:

- Mental wellbeing
- Need for urgent help with food
- Emergency need for housing (principally due to financial issues)
- Lack of human contact
- Relationship breakdowns

Simon Davies, CEO of Spectra Group and the 2017 BATTLESPACE Businessman of the Year winner said, "Spectra Group is privileged to be able to support SSAFA who provide unparalleled support to members of the Armed Forces, both serving and veterans, in their hour of need."

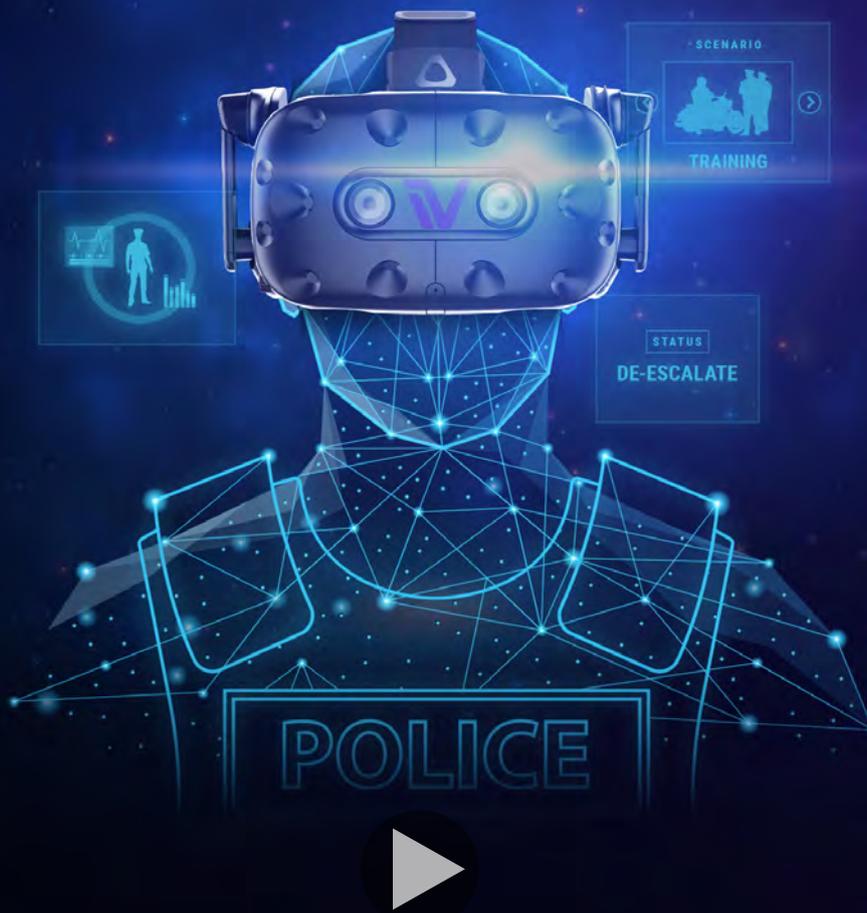
Phil Bell of Chepstow said, "We are delighted to welcome SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity, back to Chepstow Racecourse as official raceday sponsors of our November 19th SSAFA Raceday. This meeting signals the fifth year running the charity has sponsored a meeting here at Chepstow. It is a privilege to help generate exposure for SSAFA who do such vital work in supporting military families."



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**Capability Statements
By SSAFA Raceday Sponsors**

Viasat

**Viasat Industry Brief – John Reeves,
managing director, Viasat UK Ltd.**

Viasat is driven to connect every warfighter, platform, and node across the battlespace. The company powers fast, resilient connections for military forces around the world – bringing connectivity that enhances operational capabilities and ensures warfighters have the information they need – when and where they need it.

Safeguarding warfighter communications requires a unique blend of innovation,

agile development processes, and entrepreneurial thinking. Viasat delivers enhanced operational capabilities to the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), the UK’s Ministry of Defence (MoD) and other coalition forces by providing secure multi-domain battlespace connectivity so warfighters can successfully complete their missions and safely return home.

Viasat is a recognized communications leader and strategic partner within the defence sector. Its interconnected technical capabilities, sector expertise, and commercial innovation enable it to deliver technology that addresses emerging threats from near-peer adversaries. The company offers a range of solutions across tactical networking and datalinks, information assurance, cyber security and satellite communications

(SATCOM) that enable assured, resilient, integrated networks (ARIN).

Specifically, over the past two decades, Viasat has expanded its UK defence operations, growing its team and expertise both organically and through acquisition. With a focus on modernising communications technologies for defence forces globally, Viasat’s UK team has been able to deliver solutions and networks that bring resilient, end-to-end communications across transport layers (space and terrestrial), domains (land, air, space and sea) and missions.

Viasat’s UK team currently supports several international and UK MoD defence programs – including serving the Royal Air Force to the Royal Navy.

Spectra

Spectra Group is a leading global provider of tactical and strategic mission-critical communications systems and high-grade information security and network capabilities. With a proven record in delivering mission-critical solutions for governments around the globe, we specialise in reliable, resilient, and deployable communications and network solutions.

The provision of reliable and resilient voice and data communications is essential for command and control. Spectra leads in the design and delivery of award-winning voice and data services for areas with little or no communications infrastructure.



Military satellite communication specialists and leaders in the provision of Beyond Line of Sight Communications on the Move (BLOS COTM), Spectra's products keep Defence organisations secure and in control across the globe.

Winner of the Queen's Award for Innovation, SlingShot is a unique low size, weight and power (SWaP) system that enables in-service UHF/VHF radios to use Inmarsat's L-TAC service to extend their tactical radio network from line of sight to thousands of kilometres. While complementing TACSAT, it also adds communications on the move capability and creates a radio network for command and control of all platforms. System variants are available for manpack, vehicle, maritime and air. It has been in use globally with Special Forces for ten years and more recently by the British Army in Mali and Afghanistan. The L-TAC channels are non-contended and beams are targetable to the area of operations.

As specialists in BLOS communications, Spectra also design, supply and support secure deployable networks. These systems can use any available bearer and are remotely supported and configurable by our 24/7 network operations centre (NOC). If there is no terrestrial infrastructure, Spectra can supply SATCOM or Troposcatter backbones. The next-generation Troposcatter is the latest in our suite of solutions. Much smaller and more easily transportable than previous generations, today's Troposcatter can deliver data rates up to 200 Mb/s more than 200km, without the need for terrestrial or satellite repeaters.



Fujitsu

The power of AI and Quantum coupled with the constantly evolving cyber threat and global security uncertainty is the backdrop to why Fujitsu is continuously evolving to be the Digital Transformation partner of choice.

Our human-centric approach moves people higher up the value chain, where decision-making is evidence-based, data-driven and blended with intuition. We are witnessing a shift where machines can increasingly outperform conventional decision-making. Fujitsu is at the vanguard of exploiting these frontier-technologies.

In our Global Centres of Excellence, where rapid agile delivery is the norm, Fujitsu is pioneering new approaches to automating analytics, data science, supercomputing, the application of AI and quantum-inspired technologies, networking and hosting. Our vision is the sustainable integration of people and machines to revolutionise all aspects of operations, we are integrating and exploiting these frontier-technologies across fixed and deployed.

For over 60 years Fujitsu has innovated with the Ministry of Defence, other Government Departments and intelligence communities, co-creating new technologies and capabilities.





We understand that within the military, end-to-end digitalisation is crucial, and we are committed to developing innovative digital solutions that overcome the complexities of transformation and deliver decision advantage. As a result, Fujitsu has security cleared staff and experience to deliver and manage both generic industry offerings and those tailored to specialist needs at all levels of classification. From IT Service Management, secure cloud, software defined networking, information and application integration, Artificial Intelligence and Dev Ops.

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<https://www.fujitsu.com/uk/solutions/industry/defence-national-security/>

JANKEL – Driving Mission Success

Built on a strong heritage of innovation, Jankel brings nearly 5 decades of defence and security expertise to militaries and OEM partners around the world. From a rich heritage in the automotive sector, born in performance cars, today our teams are experts in providing specialist conversions, complex integrations, occupant survivability systems, incorporating advanced technologies and ensuring on the road support for military, security, government, aid agencies and NGOs globally.

Customers are at the heart of our work. All of our innovation and expertise stems from solving and meeting the specific

needs of our vast range of international customers across all sectors. From necessity comes invention, and hence the Jankel vision of providing protection, performance and quality (ISO 9001 and 14001 certified) to meet our customer's needs, exceed their expectations and drive mission success.

OEM partners seek agile and creative solutions to complex survivability and integration challenges, and look to Jankel for their answers, because we use the very latest technologies and adapt, develop, test and produce innovative and battle proven occupant survivability solutions. Jankel are the very best armour and protection experts in the industry, we provide a one-stop-shop for occupant protection including an array of armour, seating and specialist integration products and services.

Jankel works with the best base vehicles to deliver our customers capability and are approved partners / body-builders for some of the largest base vehicle OEMs in the world including Mercedes Benz, Ford, Toyota, Renault, Iveco and many more. Our workforce are the very best at taking COTS OEM platforms and converting them for military, security and fleet applications.

Jankel's focus is to keep our customers' fleets on the road so that they can succeed in their missions today and tomorrow. Whether we are supporting existing Jankel fleets, or helping keep non-Jankel fleets on the road, our comprehensive range of through life support packages ensures security and peace of mind. From warranty, spares and obsolescence, to training and destruction our global support services are there to





Kathryn Clamp
Business Development Services



KC4Business Ltd

KC4Business is a business development, sales support consultancy offering an extension of businesses without the cost and need to commit to a full-time member of staff.

KC4Business offers a diverse range of outsourcing services, being adaptable to a client's needs in terms of focus and time commitment offering benefits, including attendance at defence and rail *'meet the buyer'* events, often on a cost share basis. Client tasks include relationship building within the supply chain and partnership stand management including DVD, within the defence, rail, energy and aerospace industries.

By way of examples, a client may wish to outsource the development of new or existing customers; the client may need help in relationship building within a supply chain; they may require support at trade shows – administering, staffing the stand installation, or finding and developing new contacts and following up potential new customers.

Business development services – outsource your business development work.

Business management consultancy KC4Business Ltd has thrown its support behind Julian Nettlefold and Battlespace for this special SSAFA edition.

Kathryn Clamp is delighted to support this special Battlespace annual publication to help raise money for this incredibly worthy cause.

SSAFA's is a cause close to Kathryn's heart as she served in the British Army at the start of her career.

She was a Staff Clerk in the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) with postings including an attachment to the Royal Engineers with the British Army on the Rhine (BAOR).

During this time Kathryn was involved in operational programmes and possessed high level security clearance.

After leaving the army, Kathryn worked as a business account manager and member of the UK management team at leading electrical component manufacturer for more than 20 years.

T: 01844 215968

M: +44 (0) 7484 124614

E: Kathryn.clamp@kc4business.co.uk

W: www.kc4business.co.uk



Above: Simon Davies CEO of Spectra Group Businessman of the year 2017 handing over to the Businessman of the year 2018 winner Ken Peterman, Viasat's Government Systems President, and Julian Nettlefold of Battlespace in the background at Chepstow 2018.

ensure you get the maximum from your fleet investment.

Since 1955, with the development of Robert Jankel's iconic Panther motorcar, Jankel has been at the forefront of advanced technologies. We partner with leading thinkers and developers in key areas of interest to our industry to bring into service the very latest cutting-edge technologies. We continually look to the future, identify new requirements and bring investment to continue Robert Jankel's legacy to turn concepts and ideas into mission critical products and services for those who need it.

TVS Supply Chain Solutions (TVS)

TVS SCS offer Government Defence Departments and Prime Contractors advice and a comprehensive range of solutions to give advantage in the military environment.

We develop effective supply chain solutions and deliver them via a range of service delivery models. Our innovation, capabilities, reputation and performance enable us to manage technical and logistic information in a secure and scalable environment. In addition, we are entrusted to transform supply chains and decide what to buy, when to buy and how

to buy inventory and services to ensure maximum availability at a minimal cost.

Today, we manage more than 400,000 items (NATO Stock Numbers) across a wide range of military equipment including; armoured fighting vehicles, construction vehicles, workshop spares, warships consumables, clothing, food, fuel, medical equipment, field catering,

pharmaceuticals and general engineering hardware.

TVS SCS have significant experience in supply chain transformation programmes across different business sectors and are focussed on exploiting current and future digital and IS technologies to underpin our proven supply chain proposition.

We strive to be '*digitally savvy*' and are focussed on exploiting current and future digital and IS technologies to underpin our proven supply chain proposition. Our Msys Information System is testament to this as it has recently been recognised as one of the world's Top 10 Defence Logistics Information Systems (Insight Partners September 2020). Msys provides customers with optimised technical and logistics data, enabling them to enhance the support they provide to a range of Defence assets and equipment.

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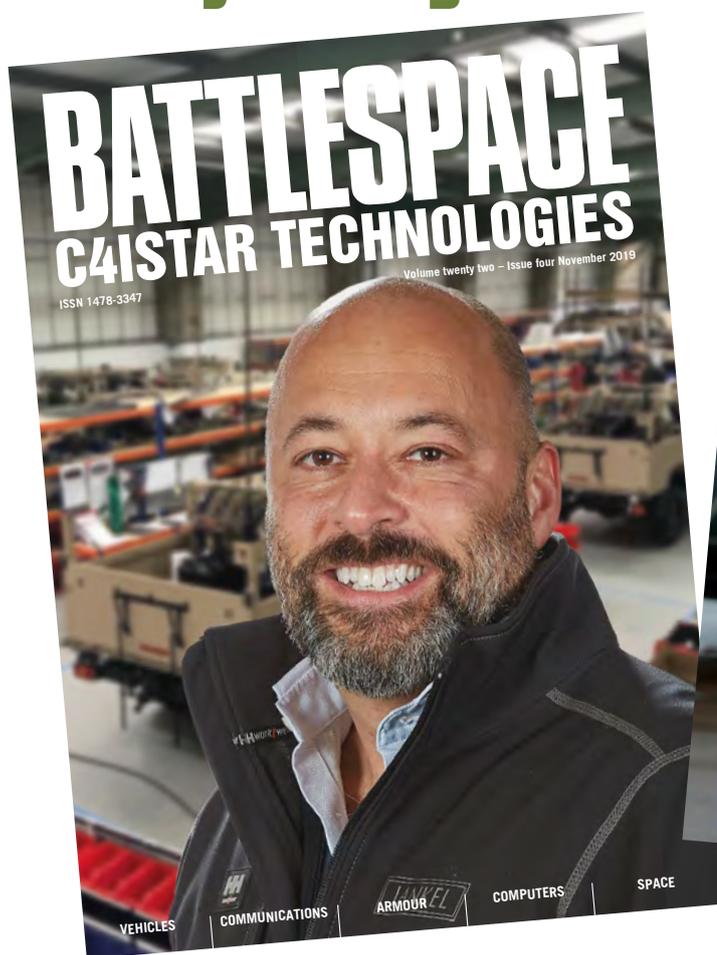
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Andrew Jankel, Chairman of Jankel Group, Hands Over The Mantle of BATTLESPACE Businessman Of The Year To Paul McCarter, Managing Director – Defence at Serco – Who, In Turn Hands over the Mantle to Paul Fleming CEO of (TEK Group) TEK Military Seating Ltd.



“After a delay of a few months due to Covid-19, I’m handing over to my successor following a 14 month period that none of us could have foreseen. Here at Jankel we rose to the challenges of 2020 and having adapted, made changes and remained flexible and resilient, we’ve continued to win business and deliver our range of products and services, albeit in a very different way. I am handing over the Battlespace award to Paul McCarter, Managing Director – Defence at Serco.

Paul has led the Serco Defence team through some key successes, driving technology and capability in the forward reaching area of Space whilst delivering revenues in excess of £450 million per annum. Notably, in 2020 the formation of Team Athena UK will pull together the sector leading businesses in UK to develop and deliver enhanced space-based technologies and services from the UK through on-shore industry collaboration - a particularly admirable post-BREXIT

initiative.” Andrew Jankel, Chairman of Jankel Group said.

Paul McCarter, Managing Director, Serco Defence replied, “Can I begin by once again applauding SSAFA for all the work they do – particularly during the pandemic – to relieve suffering and distress amongst the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families in order to support their independence and dignity. As an ex-Serviceman I have seen this first-hand and



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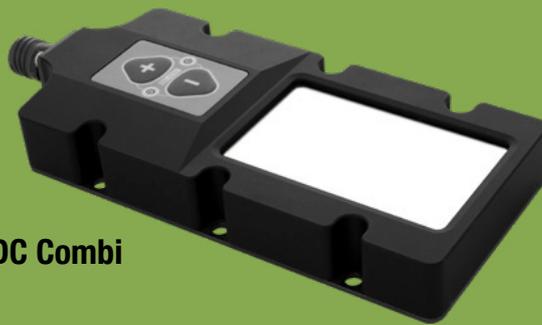
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Serco is delighted to be supporting them at the SSAFA Race meeting.”

“Secondly, I want to express my appreciation to Battlespace for this award. As I said at the time, I was very proud to accept on behalf of the c.2,500 Serco employees who work in our UK defence business. Any leader is only as good as the people who work for them, so, for me, this is a real tribute and a testament to the people at Serco and all of the fantastic work that they do everyday. I am now delighted to hand over the baton to Paul Fleming, CEO of (TEK Group) TEK Military Seating Ltd., who has been elected as the 2021 BATTLESPACE Businessman Of The Year.”

“And what an extraordinary year it has been for Serco Defence!”

“In amongst all the challenges that COVID-19 has thrown at everyone, our people have been doing some remarkable things to ensure that the support we provide to the UK’s Armed Forces did not falter. Serco employees have been quietly going about their business and continuing to provide critical support to the UK Armed Forces across the domains of land, sea, air and space.”

“Of particular note, they have responded superbly to the requests of the Ministry of Defence and the wider Government.”

“This response has included our work at the Defence Academy at Shrivenham, where our team stepped up to enable continuous operations and set up a new isolation facility for the Armed Forces.”

“Meanwhile our Maritime Services team has continued its high tempo of operations,

helping prepare the Royal Navy’s Carrier Strike Group for its first operational deployment to the Far East; playing its role at the commissioning ceremony of the latest RN submarine, HMS Audacious and supporting Exercise Joint Warrior off Scotland.”

“Elsewhere across the country, teams drawn from across our Defence business, including many veterans, have continued to run numerous of the country’s Coronavirus Testing Centres.”

“We are also extremely proud that VIVO, our Joint Venture with ENGIE, has been awarded a series of substantial new contracts by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation; first to provide asset and facilities management services for the UK Defence built estate in the South West and Central regions of the UK, the largest two regions of the four that were competed and valued at around £900m over the initial seven-year period. Secondly, an £810m contract to maintain MoD service family accommodation, centred on improving the lived experience of the Armed forces and their families. We are very excited about these awards and looking forward to starting the contracts next year.”

“Finally, I would like to reflect on the growing profile and understanding of our Space business, whose light we had been hiding under a bushel for too long!”

“Today, Serco has over 1,600 employees working on civil and military space programmes, operating in the UK, several European Countries, the US, Canada and Australia. Amongst others, we work for US Space Force, NASA, the UK Ministry of Defence, the European Space Agency and EUMETSAT. Serco has been working on

Space programmes for more than 55 years, since our first contract at RAF Fylingdales in the UK where we still provide specialist support services.”

“To complement these capabilities, there is no doubt that the formation of Athena with CGI, Inmarsat and Lockheed UK has caught people’s eye. We have been striving to utilise all of Athena’s considerable knowledge and expertise in the Space sector to support the Government’s push to drive growth and development for British STEM jobs and investment to make the UK a global focus for space capability. We welcome the Government’s new Space Strategy and I look forward to working with our Space team and our partners as we continue to engage Government and Industry to make the UK a world leader in the sector.”

“There is no doubt in my mind that all of these achievements this year are due to the immense effort and dedication of everyone in our defence business and I could not be prouder of each and every one of them.”

Paul McCarter BEng CEng MIET MBA CV

Paul McCarter served for twelve years in the Royal Signals and then developed a second career in the Technology and Defence sectors. His roles since military service have included Programme Management, Strategy, Business Development and, for the last 15 years, General Management as CEO or Managing Director of UK and International businesses. He has worked for Thales, Cobham and now Serco with an expertise and focus on Defence businesses with technology or engineering intellectual property at their core.

His current role, as leader of Serco’s UK Defence business, has responsibilities that include Space, Maritime, Aerospace and Nuclear domains, with multiple critical national infrastructure assets. Through his career Paul has always been involved in adventure sports and ran several expeditions in his military career to train soldiers in skiing, scuba diving and free fall parachuting. During his second career he has supported Sir Ranulph Fiennes as his technology planner and advisor for all communications capabilities for ‘The Coldest Journey’. The expedition was an attempt to be the first ever unsupported Antarctic crossing during polar winter. Paul has a degree in Software Engineering, gained his chartered engineer in communications through the IET and his MBA through London Business School. He lives in Buckinghamshire with his family.





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Paul Fleming CEO of (TEK Group) TEK Military Seating Ltd. elected as our 2021 BATTLESPACE Businessman Of The Year

BATTLESPACE is delighted to announce that Paul Fleming CEO of (TEK Group) TEK Military Seating Ltd. Has been elected as our 2021 BATTLESPACE Businessman Of The Year succeeding Paul McCarter Managing Director, Defence, Serco Group Plc. The other candidate was Chris Wiltsey, Senior Vice President and General Manager of the Curtiss-Wright Defense Electronics Segment.

“Many thanks to Julian and Battlespace for the nomination and of course anyone who thought I was worthy of their vote. Very much looking forward to catching up with past winners and industry colleagues at the Chepstow Race Day in aid of SSAFFA in November,” Paul Fleming said.

BATTLESPACE is delighted to announce that Paul Fleming CEO of (TEK Group) TEK Military Seating Ltd. Has been elected

as our 2021 BATTLESPACE Businessman Of The Year succeeding Paul McCarter Managing Director, Defence, Serco Group Plc. The other candidate was Chris Wiltsey, Senior Vice President and General Manager of the Curtiss-Wright Defense Electronics Segment.

BATTLESPACE Editor Julian Nettlefold visited TEK at their Rearsby, Leicestershire, UK, facility earlier this year to interview Paul Fleming.,

“You have had the dual challenges of Brexit and COVID since your selection by the Dutch MoD, how did you manage these challenges?”

“Brexit was no problem in the end, there are some additional processes and procedures but no more really than we currently do for non European exports,

there were a few minor delays initially at point of entry/exit but these now seem to have been resolved. COVID did throw up some challenges though. We closed both facilities for three weeks at the start of the pandemic. This obviously put all production and deliveries on hold for a short time but it gave us the time to rearrange the production areas and implement other Government HSE requirements to allow us to get back in to full production safely. Fortunately we had only just upgraded all our IT and telecoms to the very latest cloud-based systems so we easily transitioned to a home working environment, allowing our sales and support staff to continue supporting our customers without any interruption, some home working will actually remain in place going forward as we have found it beneficial in certain areas. Production output got back to normal relatively

quickly and has actually increased significantly over the last 12 months, which is a great credit to the management team and staff.” Paul Fleming said.

“What was behind the formation of TEK Military Seating?”

“My father and I took over Transport Equipment Kingston (TEK Seating Ltd) 39 years ago, a small commercial seat distribution company based in Kingston Upon Thames that was about to close its doors, I was just 17. I started driving my old Mini 1000 from Tunbridge Wells to Kingston each day, the M25 wasn't finished in those days so it took a while! For the first year I worked with the manager who had agreed to stay on, learning the products and cutting my teeth in sales, Dad then joined full time and we worked together for 9 years before he retired. TEK Seating now specialises in the supply of all types of seating to civil and military customers in the truck, bus, agricultural, heavy construction, light commercial vehicle and marine markets, with facilities in Tunbridge Wells and here in Leicester, where we employ a total of 40 people. We supply aftermarket end users as well as large work vehicle fleets and have supply agreements with a number of key (OEM) manufacturers such as Plaxton, ADL, Wrightbus and Optare. One key customer that demonstrates our depth of products is the Port of Felixstowe where we manage the seating for all their work vehicles, ship to shore cranes, tugs, fork lift trucks and container handlers, Felixstowe are a 24/7 - 365 operation and they can't afford to have a vehicle down due to seat issues, we also supply all of their office chair requirements. We have also moved in to automotive seating, recently working with Morgan Motor Company to design, develop and manufacture their driver and passenger seats for the Plus 4 and Plus 6 models for 2022 production and beyond. To broaden the strength and depth of TEK Group, we acquired Sitsmart 17 years ago which specialises in work place seating for 24/7 users such as emergency services, control rooms, government agencies, power stations and CCTV operators, one of our largest customers is Network Rail who we have supplied for over 10 years and have just been awarded another 5 year contract after a competitive tender process. We also supply seating for individuals that may need something a little extra such as people dealing with a disability, the Army's Headley Court facility (now Stanford Hall MoD Rehabilitation Centre) is a regular customer. Ten years ago, given the terrible injuries received in Afghanistan and Iraq we saw a need for the design and production of specialist IED mine blast mitigation military vehicle seating, so TEK Military Seating was formed.”

“TEK Military Seating is a global supplier of ProTEK® OEM vehicle seating to the

military vehicle sector. Designed and manufactured in the UK to the highest standards of safety and protection, the ProTEK® brand includes a wide range of Driver, Commander, Crew, Gunner, Turret, Loaders and bespoke seating for most types of military vehicle, both legacy and new build. With modularity and flexibility at the core of each seat design, ProTEK® seating can be modified to offer maximum fit and function without the need for additional tooling or major design changes, utilising innovative modules which can be attached to most seats to create a solution for our customers' requirements. Most ProTEK® seats are available in Stanag 4569 AEP55 blast protection versions, in both stroking and non-stroking variants.”

“Who was your first customer?”

“MIRA in the UK approached us to design and build a blast and vibration mitigating seat for the Buffalo MRAP vehicle. For our first project we customised an existing civil seat. The seat was successfully tested and integrated by MIRA and entered service. We went through a big learning curve after this contract and developed a team of expert designers and engineers to develop our own range of military seating from lightweight Special Forces mesh seating to MRAP blast mitigating seats. To that end, my brother Mike who was senior product designer for one of the major worldwide commercial seat manufacturers joined TEK.”

“How many seats have you sold since you formed TEK Military Seating and how many worldwide customers do you have?”

TEK Military Seating brings together the group's vast portfolio of tried and tested seat components with in-house seat design and manufacture offering defence customers the highest levels of

safety and protection. The creation of the ProTEK® brand of military seating has introduced new innovations, modularity and new technologies to the market place, with ProTEK® now recognised as a global market leader valued for its quality, robustness and cost effectiveness.

“As far as numbers go, let's just say it's in excess of 20,000. For obvious reasons a number of our customers are confidential but we have an extensive international customer base which includes most of the major military vehicle manufacturers and integrators, BAE Systems, RBSL, Supacat, Lockheed Martin, RUAG, Patria and NIMR to name just a few, we are also actively involved with a number of new and ongoing requirements in the UK.”

“Do you see future growth prospects for military seating?”

“Very much so, we only formed TEK Military Seating 10 years ago, which in military terms still makes us the new kid on the block. The combination of an increasing appetite for innovations in IED protection and safety cases has created strong demand for military vehicle seating which will continue for many years to come, at TEK we also have decades of experience in shock and vibration mitigation gained from the commercial sector which is becoming a very hot topic in the military vehicle environment which will also drive future demand. We have a strong order book, and we also provide lifetime support for our customers which can extend to 30 years. We are fully qualified to ISO 9001/14001, AQAP standards as required by all the major defence contractors. Military seating will account for around 50% of our forecast £12 million + turnover this year and is expected to grow significantly over the coming years”



“Do you have a large R&D budget?”

“The international terrorist is a clever, cunning and innovative individual who is constantly inventing IEDs and other explosive devices to overmatch existing armoured vehicles. To that end our R&D and design team is dedicated to keeping abreast with all these devices as best they can to build in the resilience and safety factors into our seating products. TEK Military Seating is a major global designer and manufacturer of vehicle seating for the defence sector, with a wealth of experience and innovative solutions whilst raising protection and safety standards across all platforms. Innovation and modularity are at the core of our product development, which enables us to offer a wide range of modules to tailor seats to customer requirement, without the need of additional engineering and tooling. TEK Military is constantly looking to design products to help improve safety and protection, to that end we developed our ProTEK® seating range. The development of ProTEK® seat belt pads are another example of simple, low cost products making a huge difference. The fitting of ProTEK® pads on a harness seat belt reduces shock impact by over 65% when a vehicle is involved in a blast event or traffic accident. The ProTEK® SV foam within the pads protect occupants from excessive shock forces, often experienced

by occupants in such events.”

“The ProTEK® seating range includes solutions for driver, commander and crew, as well as more bespoke requirements such as loaders, turrets and limited space seating within main battle tanks and tracked artillery howitzers. Our expertise within legacy fleets, improvement of safety and protection standards, improved functionality, utilising modern materials and processes to reduce weight, whilst making stronger seats, has become a benchmark within our brand. Working closely with our customers on both new build and legacy fleets, we offer a full CAD integration service and FEA modelling to maximise protection and safety levels, whilst keeping costs down. Our advances in blast attenuation seating have been industry and market leading, with the introduction of ProTEK® SV – a specially formulated foam insert developed to be integrated into most of our ProTEK® range of seats, further improving on the blast mitigation performance. ProTEK® SV has been designed to reduce shock forces during a blast event in a none stroking seat – fully tested and certified it offers Stanag 4569 AEP55 blast protection levels of mitigation that are normally only achievable in a fully stroking mine blast seat, the benefits of a none stroking seat are obvious, less weight, less space claim, less maintenance and lower cost.”



Battlespace has been holding the Businessman of the Year Award since 2004, listed below are the previous winners.

Mark Newman
DRS
2004

Ian Stopps
Lockheed Martin
2005

Malcolm Peto
Astrium
2006

Peter Hobson
Hobson Industries
2007

Michael Holm
Systematic
2008

Roger Medwell
NP Aerospace
2009

Earl Lewis
FLIR Systems Inc.
2010

Jeff Palombo
Northrop Grumman Corporation
2011

Lennart Ljungfelt
Aimpoint AB
2012

Richard Skan
Oldbury UK Limited
2013

David Beatty OBE
Thales UK
2014

Mark Radford
Blighter Surveillance Systems
2015

Nick Ames
SC Group
2016

Simon Davies
Spectra Group
2017

Ken Peterman
Viasat
2018

Andrew Jankel
Jankel Group
2019

Paul McCarter
Defence at Serco
2020

Paul Fleming
TEK Group
2021



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ProTEK[®] military vehicle seating offers the highest protection levels available today. Our superior seat design and innovative shock foam development has revolutionised protection standards, tailoring vehicle seat performance, reducing seat weights and increasing modularity. Operations have shown that seats designed to complement vehicle configuration and protection levels offer improved troop protection, reducing trauma and saving lives.



ProTEK[®] Mesh-Plus Seat



ProTEK[®] DC Seat

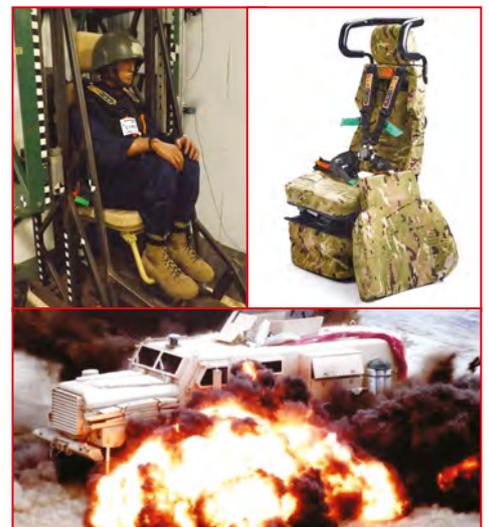
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- PROVEN TECHNOLOGY – IN-SERVICE GLOBALLY
- UP TO 50% LIGHTER THAN STROKING SEATS
- MODULAR DESIGN
- LESS SPACE CLAIM
- MULTIPLE USE
- LOW MAINTENANCE
- DEF STAN 25-9 INTEGRATED RESTRAINTS

Seats available include:

- ProTEK[®] Blast Attenuation Seating - are available in driver, commander and crew configurations, which offer protection from both IED and slam down, with multiple usage.
- ProTEK[®] Mesh-Plus Seat - designed for use as a driver, commander or crew seat, follows the ProTEK[®] range of modularity and flexibility enabling modules to be added for a bespoke solution.
- ProTEK[®] DC Seat - available in driver, commander and crew configurations, combines superior design and comfort to offer market leading protection levels and safety and features integrated harness restraints and blast attenuation options.

TEK Military Seating is a UK - based designer and manufacturer of military seating, which has modularity, flexibility and innovation at its core.



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For more information contact

David Parkman
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The British Army In Afghanistan

The Taliban gave safe haven to Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, which allowed terrorists to plan and carry out attacks around the world. We joined many other nations in a NATO/ISAF-led military intervention to bring Al-Qaeda's leaders to justice, remove the Taliban from control in Afghanistan and prevent the country again becoming a safe haven for international terrorists. The UK joined many other nations in a NATO/ISAF-led military intervention, supported by a UN Security Council Resolution, to prevent the country once again becoming a haven for international terrorists.

Why We Were There

As of June 2021, the British Army deployment to Afghanistan since 2001 and in that time more than 100,000 soldiers have been deployed on operations including Veritas, Fingal, Tarrock, Herrick and Toral, alongside our international partners.

The UK has played a leading role throughout including forming and commanding the first International Stabilisation and Assistance Force (ISAF) with Headquarters HQ 3 (UK) Division in

November 2001.

The international military campaign has reduced the terrorist threat from this region and helped train a 350,000 strong Afghan National Security Force.

At its height, in 2011, ISAF was approximately 132,000 personnel strong, with troops from 50 NATO and partner nations.² Troop numbers fluctuated according to the security situation on the ground.

On 31 December 2014, coalition combat operations end, including the US Operation Enduring Freedom. On 1 January 2015, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) assumed responsibility for security in Afghanistan and NATO transitioned to a new, non-combat, mission called Resolute Support. The core mission of Resolute Support has been to support the ANSF.

This briefing looks at the UK's military contribution to the operations in Afghanistan, detailing the number of fatalities and casualties sustained by UK armed forces personnel; the cost of the operations; the number of aircraft missions flown; and the number of

Afghan refugees that have come to the UK during the period.

Over the last 20 years of deployment in Afghanistan there have been 457 deaths of UK armed forces personnel. The number of fatalities peaked during 2009 and 2010, when over 100 personnel were killed. Of the total 457 personnel who died whilst on deployment to Afghanistan 405 died because of hostile action.

During Operation Herrick, the codename for which all British military operations were conducted from 2002 to 2014, there were 616 serious or very serious casualties among armed forces and civilian personnel. As with deaths, these casualties peaked in 2009 and 2010.⁴

There were a total 7,807 field hospital admissions, although most admissions were related to disease or a non-battle injury. Around 28% (2,209) of admissions to field hospitals were those wounded in action.

Additionally, there were 7,477 medical air evacuations during the 12-year operation. It's important to note that personnel listed as seriously or very seriously injured may also appear in field

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hospital admissions as well as medical air evacuations.

Cost of UK operations in Afghanistan

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) publishes information on the cost of military operations and interventions undertaken by the UK armed forces. The cost of these operations is reported in terms of the net additional costs, meaning costs over and above those that the MoD would have incurred if the operation not happened. For example, expenditure on pay, or savings from cancelled training exercises, are deducted from the total cost of the operation.

On this basis, the Afghanistan operations Herrick and Toral have cost around £27.7 billion, in 2021 prices.

The cost of initial operations in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002 was between £300-400 million. This fell by around 85% for the following couple of years. As the focus of the armed forces shifted to Helmand province, the cost of operations began to increase quickly. Between 2005/06 and 2009/10, costs increased by an average of 132% per year.

Operation Toral, the UK operation as part of NATO's Resolute Support Mission post-2014, has cost an average of £90 million per year.

UK aircraft missions in Afghanistan

During operation Herrick, there were a total 14,467 missions flown by the Royal Air Force. A mission is a particular task which one or more aircraft has been

ordered to complete.

At the beginning of the operation, RAF missions were mostly conducted with the Harrier jet, although by 2009 the Tornado jet and Reaper drone had an equal share of missions. From 2010 onwards, missions were roughly split equally between the Tornado and Reaper.

Afghan refugees in the UK

Since 1996, there have been around 63,000 applications for asylum in the UK from Afghan nationals. During the same period, 30,600 asylum applications from Afghans have been successful on the initial decision and at least 5,400 more have been granted on appeal.

Since 2003, 354 Afghans have been resettled to the UK. Resettlement is the process of transferring recognised refugees directly to the UK from third countries of asylum (for example, in this case, Iran and Pakistan). It is separate to the UK's in-country asylum system.

The most asylum applications submitted by Afghan nationals was in 2001 (8,918). Afghans were the largest nationality group to submit applications in that year and were the second largest group in 2002, after Iraqis.

(Source: UK MoD)

Overview of the UK and Afghanistan

On 11 September 2001 nearly 3,000 people were killed in coordinated terrorist attacks against the United States (US); 67 were British. 9/11, as it became known, was the work of Al-Qaeda terrorists, led by Osama bin Laden. At that time they enjoyed the freedom and security of bases in Afghanistan, under the protection of the brutal Taliban regime.

The UK government stood alongside international partners in our condemnation of Al-Qaeda's actions. When the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, we joined the US and many other nations to bring Al-Qaeda's leaders to justice, remove the Taliban from control in Afghanistan and prevent the country again becoming a safe haven for international terrorists.

Over the last 13 years the international military campaign has reduced the terrorist threat from this region and helped train a 350,000 strong Afghan National Security Force who now have lead security responsibility for Afghanistan's 30 million citizens. The





process of handing over security to Afghan forces – ‘transition’ – has seen the international military’s role change from leading combat operations to training, advising and assisting.

Development and diplomatic activities have also improved the lives of Afghan people and helped deliver basic needs, such as access to health, education and the opportunity to vote.

“Britain has played a huge and honourable role in trying to do everything we can to give Afghanistan the chance of stability and security, and to make sure that it never again is a haven for terror. I know that the real long-term answer for Afghanistan is not simply security and stability and peace with its neighbours, but the real answer for Afghanistan is prosperity and growth and jobs and investment and wealth. That is absolutely key to the future of the country.” – Prime Minister David Cameron, March 2013.

The UK’s involvement helped to create the opportunity for a more secure, stable and increasingly self-sufficient future for Afghanistan. The cost has been high, but our national security has been strengthened by enabling the Afghans to take control of theirs.

For information on recent UK activities in Afghanistan see UK and Afghanistan: latest updates.

“You’ve got to examine – “What if we and the international community had not done what we have?”. Afghanistan was close to being in a state of incipient civil war. The great chances are that the country would have split, a huge swathe of the country would have become ungoverned space, a haven for more

international terrorism.” – General Nick Houghton, Chief of Defence Staff.

Despite the appalling violence of 9/11 that led to the UK’s military involvement in Afghanistan in 2001, our engagement has not simply been a ‘war in Afghanistan.’ We, along with international partners, quickly realised that creating a more secure Afghanistan would be impossible without trying to address the country’s poverty, insecurity, poor infrastructure, weak governance and fragile economy.

That is why the UK became involved in a wide range of projects to improve education, healthcare and governance.

These projects have made a difference to the lives of many Afghans:

- nearly 6 million children now attend

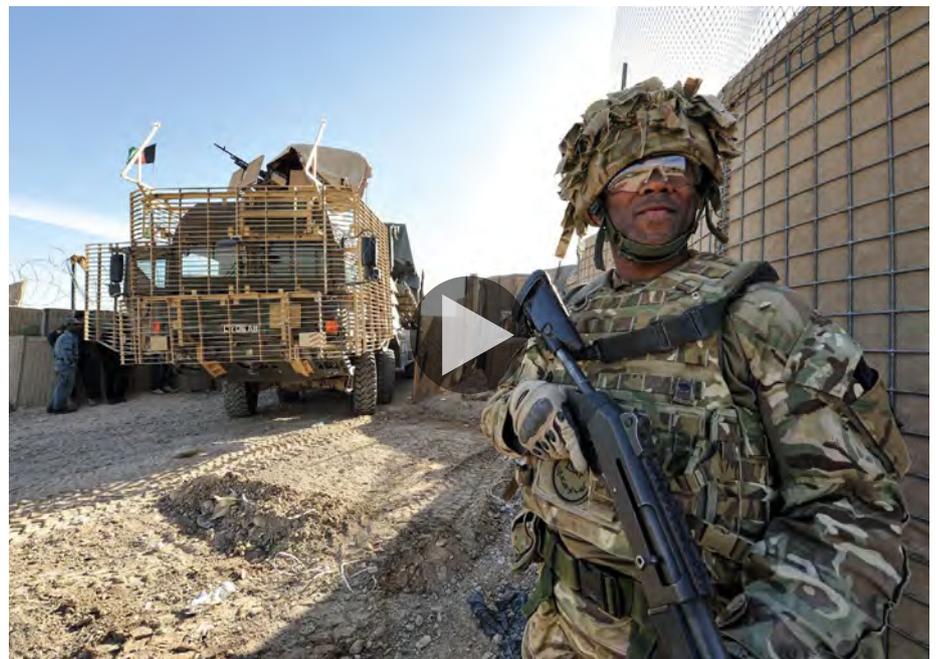
school, up from 1 million in 2001, nearly 40% of them are girls, which would have been unthinkable under the Taliban control

- access to primary health care has increased from 9% in 2003 to over half of the population now
- maternal mortality has halved since 2001 and life expectancy for Afghans is at its highest ever level
- Afghanistan’s \$18 billion GDP is seven times higher than 10 years ago and Afghan Government revenue has grown eight fold since 2004 to \$2 billion in 2012
- a written constitution, a democratically elected government and a system of local democracy now exist – Afghans now have an unprecedented voice in how their country is run, nationally and locally

International actions in Afghanistan since 2001 have significantly reduced the terrorist threat to the UK from this region. But no one could doubt the high price paid, particularly in Helmand, where UK troops have been based since 2006. We are proud of the dedication and courage of our Armed Forces and we owe particular tribute to the service personnel who have been killed in Afghanistan and many more who have suffered life-changing injuries. They will have our long term respect, support and assistance.

Nothing can ease the tragic loss for families of those who have died. Their ultimate sacrifice has strengthened the UK’s national security and they will never be forgotten. Sadly tens of thousands of the Afghan National Security Forces and civilians have also lost their lives and continue to face ongoing risk of violence in Afghanistan.

(source: US Report to Congress of Afghan Progress and Stability, November 2013)





Remarks by President Biden on the End of the War in Afghanistan on 31 August 2021

Last night in Kabul, the United States ended 20 years of war in Afghanistan – the longest war in American history.

We completed one of the biggest airlifts in history, with more than 120,000 people evacuated to safety. That number is more than double what most experts thought were possible. No nation – no nation has ever done anything like it in all of history. Only the United States had the capacity and the will and the ability to do it, and we did it today.

The extraordinary success of this mission was due to the incredible skill, bravery, and selfless courage of the United States military and our diplomats and intelligence professionals.

For weeks, they risked their lives to get American citizens, Afghans who helped

us, citizens of our Allies and partners, and others onboard planes and out of the country. And they did it facing a crush of enormous crowds seeking to leave the country. And they did it knowing ISIS-K terrorists – sworn enemies of the Taliban – were lurking in the midst of those crowds.

And still, the men and women of the United States military, our diplomatic corps, and intelligence professionals did their job and did it well, risking their lives not for professional gains but to serve others; not in a mission of war but in a mission of mercy. Twenty servicemembers were wounded in the service of this mission. Thirteen heroes gave their lives.

I was just at Dover Air Force Base for the dignified transfer. We owe them and their families a debt of gratitude we can never

repay but we should never, ever, ever forget.

In April, I made the decision to end this war. As part of that decision, we set the date of August 31st for American troops to withdraw. The assumption was that more than 300,000 Afghan National Security Forces that we had trained over the past two decades and equipped would be a strong adversary in their civil wars with the Taliban.

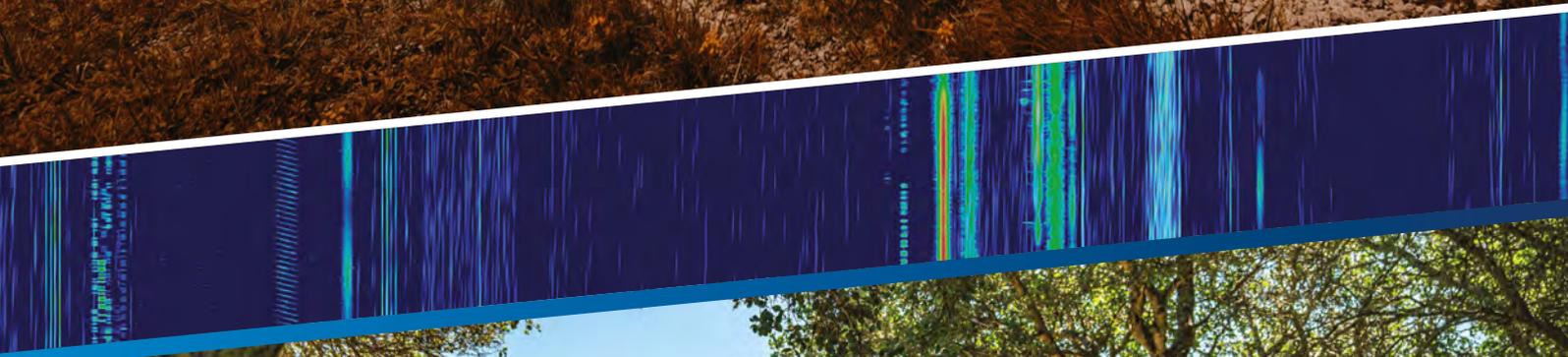
That assumption – that the Afghan government would be able to hold on for a period of time beyond military drawdown – turned out not to be accurate.

But I still instructed our national security team to prepare for every eventuality – even that one. And that's what we did.

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In fact, just yesterday, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution that sent a clear message about what the international community expects the Taliban to deliver on moving forward, notably freedom of travel, freedom to leave. And together, we are joined by over 100 countries that are determined to make sure the Taliban upholds those commitments.

It will include ongoing efforts in Afghanistan to reopen the airport, as well as overland routes, allowing for continued departure to those who want to leave and delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

The Taliban has made public commitments, broadcast on television and radio across Afghanistan, on safe passage for anyone wanting to leave, including those who worked alongside Americans. We don't take them by their word alone but by their actions, and we have leverage to make sure those commitments are met.

Let me be clear: Leaving August the 31st is not due to an arbitrary deadline; it was designed to save American lives.

My predecessor, the former President, signed an agreement with the Taliban to remove U.S. troops by May the 1st, just months after I was inaugurated. It included no requirement that the Taliban work out a cooperative governing arrangement with the Afghan government, but it did authorize the release of 5,000 prisoners last year, including some of the Taliban's top war commanders, among those who just took control of Afghanistan.

And by the time I came to office, the Taliban was in its strongest military position since 2001, controlling or contesting nearly half of the country.

The previous administration's agreement said that if we stuck to the May 1st deadline that they had signed on to leave by, the Taliban wouldn't attack any American forces, but if we stayed, all bets were off.

So we were left with a simple decision: Either follow through on the commitment made by the last administration and leave Afghanistan, or say we weren't leaving and commit another tens of thousands more troops going back to war.

That was the choice – the real choice – between leaving or escalating.

I was not going to extend this forever war, and I was not extending a forever exit. The decision to end the military airlift operations at Kabul airport was based on the unanimous recommendation of my civilian and military advisors – the Secretary of State, the Secretary of

So, we were ready when the Afghan Security Forces – after two decades of fighting for their country and losing thousands of their own – did not hold on as long as anyone expected.

We were ready when they and the people of Afghanistan watched their own government collapse and their president flee amid the corruption and malfeasance, handing over the country to their enemy, the Taliban, and significantly increasing the risk to U.S. personnel and our Allies.

As a result, to safely extract American citizens before August 31st – as well as embassy personnel, Allies and partners, and those Afghans who had worked with us and fought alongside of us for 20 years – I had authorized 6,000 troops – American troops – to Kabul to help secure the airport.

As General McKenzie said, this is the way the mission was designed. It was designed to operate under severe stress and attack. And that's what it did.

Since March, we reached out 19 times to Americans in Afghanistan, with multiple warnings and offers to help them leave Afghanistan – all the way back as far as March. After we started the evacuation 17 days ago, we did initial outreach and analysis and identified around 5,000 Americans who had decided earlier to

stay in Afghanistan but now wanted to leave.

Our Operation Allied Rescue [Allies Refuge] ended up getting more than 5,500 Americans out. We got out thousands of citizens and diplomats from those countries that went into Afghanistan with us to get bin Laden. We got out locally employed staff of the United States Embassy and their families, totaling roughly 2,500 people. We got thousands of Afghan translators and interpreters and others, who supported the United States, out as well.

Now we believe that about 100 to 200 Americans remain in Afghanistan with some intention to leave. Most of those who remain are dual citizens, long-time residents who had earlier decided to stay because of their family roots in Afghanistan.

The bottom line: Ninety [Ninety-eight] percent of Americans in Afghanistan who wanted to leave were able to leave.

And for those remaining Americans, there is no deadline. We remain committed to get them out if they want to come out. Secretary of State Blinken is leading the continued diplomatic efforts to ensure a safe passage for any American, Afghan partner, or foreign national who wants to leave Afghanistan.

Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and all the service chiefs, and the commanders in the field.

Their recommendation was that the safest way to secure the passage of the remaining Americans and others out of the country was not to continue with 6,000 troops on the ground in harm's way in Kabul, but rather to get them out through non-military means.

In the 17 days that we operated in Kabul after the Taliban seized power, we engaged in an around-the-clock effort to provide every American the opportunity to leave. Our State Department was working 24/7 contacting and talking, and in some cases, walking Americans into the airport.

Again, more than 5,500 Americans were airlifted out. And for those who remain, we will make arrangements to get them out if they so choose.

As for the Afghans, we and our partners have airlifted 100,000 of them. No country in history has done more to airlift out the residents of another country than we have done. We will continue to work to help more people leave the country who are at risk. And we're far from done.

For now, I urge all Americans to join me in grateful prayer for our troops and diplomats and intelligence officers who carried out this mission of mercy in Kabul and at tremendous risk with such unparalleled results: an airlift that evacuated tens of thousands to a network of volunteers and veterans who helped identify [identify] those needing evacuation, guide them to the airport, and provided them for their support along the way.

We're going to continue to need their help. We need your help. And I'm looking forward to meeting with you.

And to everyone who is now offering or who will offer to welcome Afghan allies to their homes around the world, including in America: We thank you.

I take responsibility for the decision. Now, some say we should have started mass evacuations sooner and *"Couldn't this have been done – have been done in a more orderly manner?"* I respectfully disagree.

Imagine if we had begun evacuations in June or July, bringing in thousands of American troops and evacuating more than 120,000 people in the middle of a civil war. There still would have been a rush to the airport, a breakdown in confidence and control of the government, and it still would have been a very difficult and dangerous mission.

The bottom line is: There is no evacuation from the end of a war that you can

run without the kinds of complexities, challenges, and threats we faced. None.

There are those who would say we should have stayed indefinitely for years on end. They ask, *"Why don't we just keep doing what we were doing? Why did we have to change anything?"*

The fact is: Everything had changed. My predecessor had made a deal with the Taliban. When I came into office, we faced a deadline – May 1. The Taliban onslaught was coming.

We faced one of two choices: Follow the agreement of the previous administration and extend it to have – or extend to more time for people to get out; or send in thousands of more troops and escalate the war.

To those asking for a third decade of war in Afghanistan, I ask: What is the vital national interest? In my view, we only have one: to make sure Afghanistan can never be used again to launch an attack on our homeland.

Remember why we went to Afghanistan in the first place? Because we were attacked by Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda on September 11th, 2001, and they were based in Afghanistan.

We delivered justice to bin Laden on May 2nd, 2011 – over a decade ago. Al Qaeda was decimated.

I respectfully suggest you ask yourself this question: If we had been attacked on September 11, 2001, from Yemen instead of Afghanistan, would we have ever gone to war in Afghanistan – even though the Taliban controlled Afghanistan in 2001? I believe the honest answer is *"no."* That's because we had no vital national interest in Afghanistan other than to prevent an attack on America's homeland and are our friends. And that's true today.

We succeeded in what we set out to do in Afghanistan over a decade ago. Then we stayed for another decade. It was time to end this war.

This is a new world. The terror threat has metastasized across the world, well beyond Afghanistan. We face threats from al-Shabaab in Somalia; al Qaeda affiliates in Syria and the Arabian Peninsula; and ISIS attempting to create a caliphate in Syria and Iraq, and establishing affiliates across Africa and Asia.

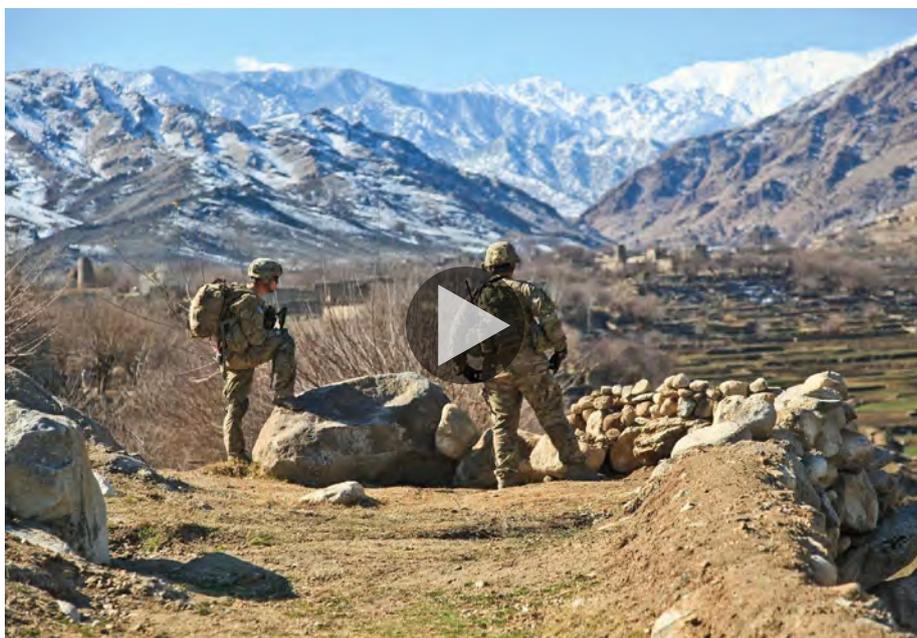
The fundamental obligation of a President, in my opinion, is to defend and protect America – not against threats of 2001, but against the threats of 2021 and tomorrow.

That is the guiding principle behind my decisions about Afghanistan. I simply do not believe that the safety and security of America is enhanced by continuing to deploy thousands of American troops and spending billions of dollars a year in Afghanistan.

But I also know that the threat from terrorism continues in its pernicious and evil nature. But it's changed, expanded to other countries. Our strategy has to change too.

We will maintain the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and other countries. We just don't need to fight a ground war to do it. We have what's called over-the-horizon capabilities, which means we can strike terrorists and targets without American boots on the ground – or very few, if needed.

We've shown that capacity just in the last week. We struck ISIS-K remotely, days after they murdered 13 of our servicemembers and dozens of innocent Afghans. And to ISIS-K: We are not done with you yet.



As Commander-in-Chief, I firmly believe the best path to guard our safety and our security lies in a tough, unforgiving, targeted, precise strategy that goes after terror where it is today, not where it was two decades ago. That's what's in our national interest.

And here's a critical thing to understand: The world is changing. We're engaged in a serious competition with China. We're dealing with the challenges on multiple fronts with Russia. We're confronted with cyberattacks and nuclear proliferation.

We have to shore up America's competitive[ness] to meet these new challenges in the competition for the 21st century. And we can do both: fight terrorism and take on new threats that are here now and will continue to be here in the future.

And there's nothing China or Russia would rather have, would want more in this competition than the United States to be bogged down another decade in Afghanistan.

As we turn the page on the foreign policy that has guided our our nation the last two decades, we've got to learn from our mistakes.

To me, there are two that are paramount. First, we must set missions with clear, achievable goals – not ones we'll never reach. And second, we must stay clearly focused on the fundamental national security interest of the United States of America.

This decision about Afghanistan is not just about Afghanistan. It's about ending an era of major military operations to

remake other countries.

We saw a mission of counterterrorism in Afghanistan – getting the terrorists and stopping attacks – morph into a counterinsurgency, nation building – trying to create a democratic, cohesive, and unified Afghanistan – something that has never been done over the many centuries of Afghans' [Afghanistan's] history.

Moving on from that mindset and those kind of large-scale troop deployments will make us stronger and more effective and safer at home.

And for anyone who gets the wrong idea, let me say it clearly. To those who wish America harm, to those that engage in terrorism against us and our allies, know this: The United States will never rest.



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We will not forgive. We will not forget. We will hunt you down to the ends of the Earth, and we will – you will pay the ultimate price.

And let me be clear: We will continue to support the Afghan people through diplomacy, international influence, and humanitarian aid. We'll continue to push for regional diplomacy and engagement to prevent violence and instability. We'll continue to speak out for basic rights of the Afghan people, especially women and girls, as we speak out for women and girls all around the globe. And I've been clear that human rights will be the center of our foreign policy.

But the way to do that is not through endless military deployments, but through diplomacy, economic tools, and rallying the rest of the world for support.

My fellow Americans, the war in Afghanistan is now over. I'm the fourth President who has faced the issue of whether and when to end this war. When I was running for President, I made a commitment to the American people that I would end this war. And today, I've honored that commitment. It was time to be honest with the American people again. We no longer had a clear purpose in an open-ended mission in Afghanistan.

After 20 years of war in Afghanistan, I refused to send another generation of America's sons and daughters to fight a war that should have ended long ago.

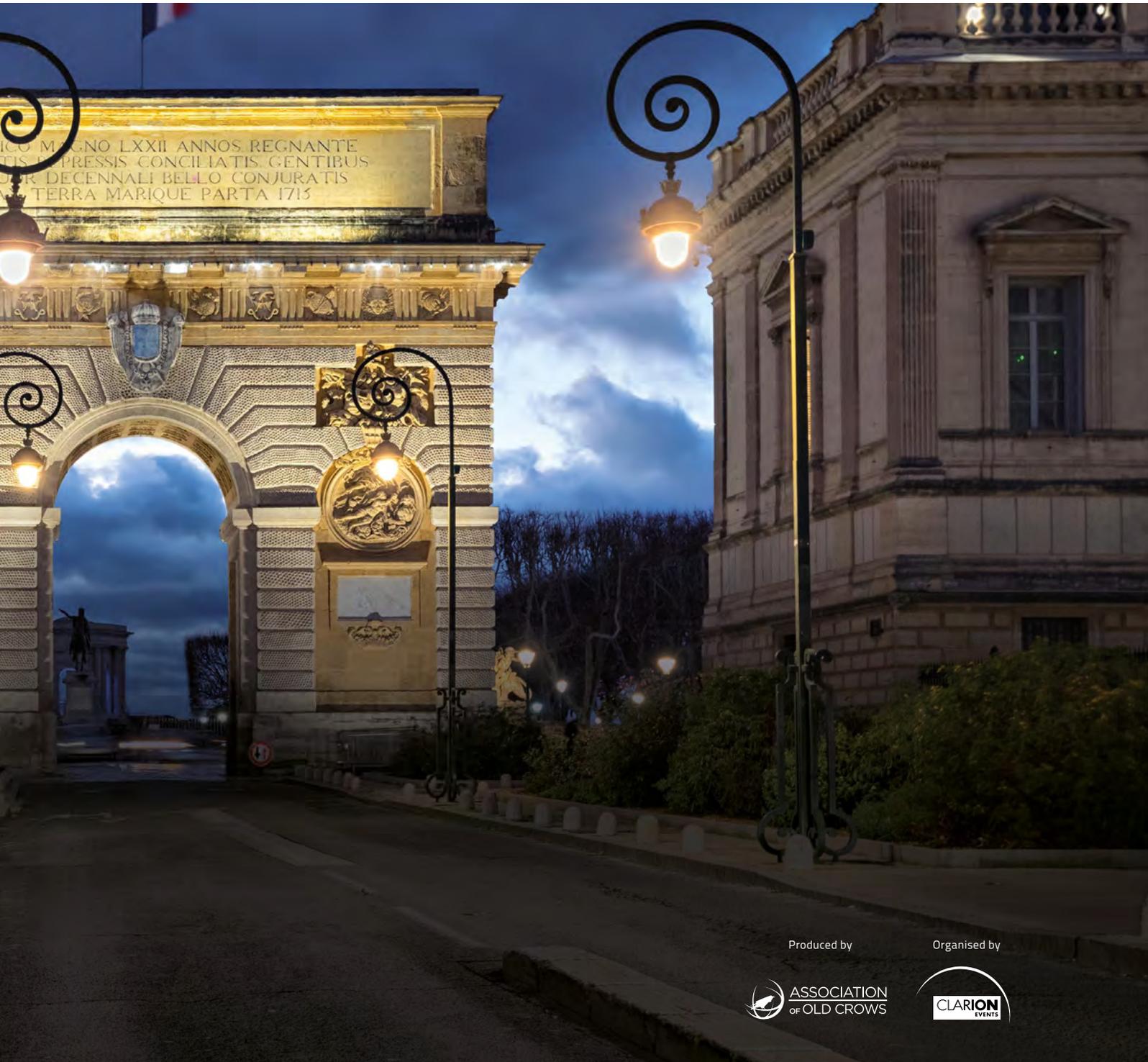
After more than \$2 trillion spent in Afghanistan – a cost that researchers at Brown University estimated would be over \$300 million a day for 20 years in Afghanistan – for two decades – yes, the

American people should hear this: \$300 million a day for two decades.

If you take the number of \$1 trillion, as many say, that's still \$150 million a day for two decades. And what have we lost as a consequence in terms of opportunities? I refused to continue in a war that was no longer in the service of the vital national interest of our people.

And most of all, after 800,000 Americans serving in Afghanistan – I've traveled that whole country – brave and honorable service; after 20,744 American servicemen and women injured, and the loss of 2,461 American personnel, including 13 lives lost just this week, I refused to open another decade of warfare in Afghanistan.

We've been a nation too long at war.



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If you're 20 years old today, you have never known an America at peace.

So, when I hear that we could've, should've continued the so-called low-grade effort in Afghanistan, at low risk to our service members, at low cost, I don't think enough people understand how much we have asked of the 1 percent of this country who put that uniform on, who are willing to put their lives on the line in defense of our nation.

Maybe it's because my deceased son, Beau, served in Iraq for a full year, before that. Well, maybe it's because of what I've seen over the years as senator, vice president, and president traveling these countries.

A lot of our veterans and their families have gone through hell – deployment after deployment, months and years away from their families; missed birthdays, anniversaries; empty chairs at

holidays; financial struggles; divorces; loss of limbs; traumatic brain injury; posttraumatic stress.

We see it in the struggles many have when they come home. We see it in the strain on their families and caregivers. We see it in the strain of their families when they're not there. We see it in the grief borne by their survivors. The cost of war they will carry with them their whole lives.

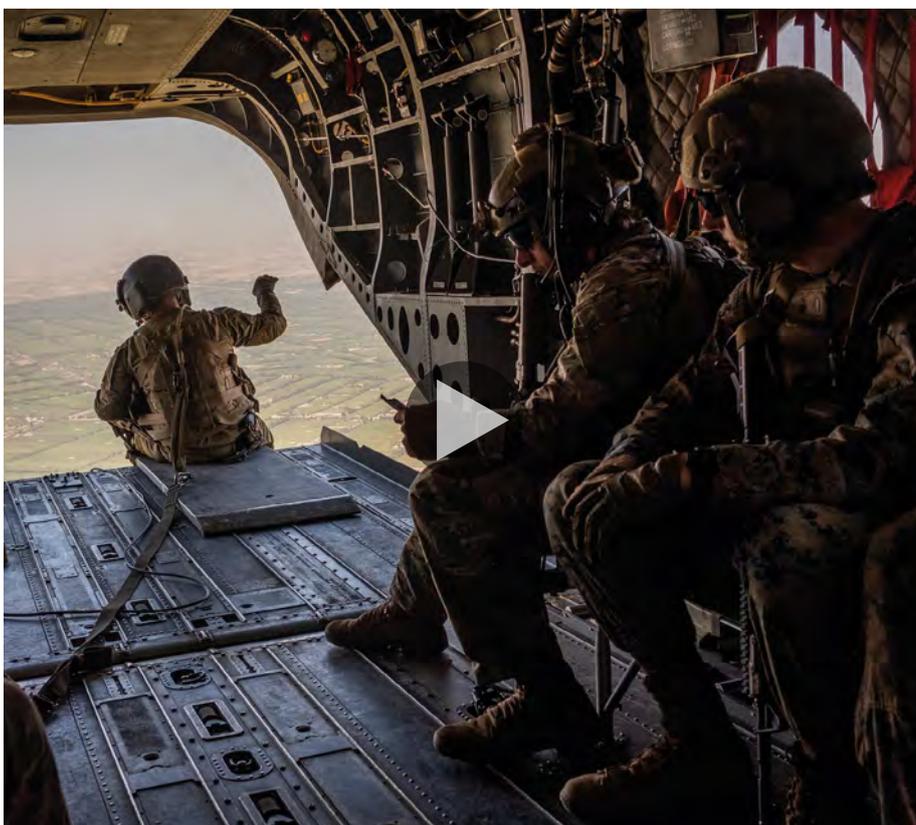
Most tragically, we see it in the shocking and stunning statistic that should give pause to anyone who thinks war can ever be low-grade, low-risk, or low-cost: 18 veterans, on average, who die by suicide every single day in America – not in a far-off place, but right here in America.

There's nothing low-grade or low-risk or low-cost about any war. It's time to end the war in Afghanistan.

As we close 20 years of war and strife and pain and sacrifice, it's time to look to the future, not the past – to a future that's safer, to a future that's more secure, to a future that honors those who served and all those who gave what President Lincoln called their *"last full measure of devotion."*

I give you my word: With all of my heart, I believe this is the right decision, a wise decision, and the best decision for America.

Thank you. Thank you. And may God bless you all. And may God protect our troops.'



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Taliban Remains Dangerous, Harbors al-Qaida

Taliban Remains Dangerous, Harbors al-Qaida, Joint Chiefs Chairman Says. The Taliban remains dangerous and is harboring al-Qaida, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told the Senate Armed Services Committee. Army Gen. Mark A. Milley told the panel that when President Joe Biden was inaugurated in January the situation in Afghanistan was at a stalemate with roughly 10,000 U.S. and NATO troops in the nation. The Trump administration had negotiated the Doha Agreement with the Taliban in Qatar in February 2020. Under the agreement, the United States would begin to withdraw its forces contingent upon the Taliban meeting certain conditions. This would lead to a political agreement between the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan.

“There were seven conditions [in the Doha Agreement] applicable to the Taliban and eight conditions applicable to the United States,” Milley said. “While the Taliban did not attack U.S. forces, which was

one of the conditions, it failed to fully honor any, any other condition under the Doha Agreement. And perhaps most importantly for U.S. national security, the Taliban has never renounced al-Qaida, or broke its affiliation with them.” Milley said the United States adhered to every condition.

In the fall of 2020, Milley’s analysis of the situation in Afghanistan was that an accelerated withdrawal would risk *“losing the substantial gains made in Afghanistan, damaging U.S. worldwide credibility, and could precipitate a general collapse of the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] and the Afghan government, resulting in a complete Taliban takeover or general Civil War,”* he told the Senate panel. *“That was a year ago.”*

Then-President Donald J. Trump ordered an immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan to end by Jan. 15, 2021. That order was subsequently rescinded by

Trump before leaving office, and one of the Biden Administration’s first duties was to examine the situation in the country and recommend a course moving forward.

Milley participated in a rigorous interagency review of the situation in Afghanistan in February, March and April. The advice and recommendations were given serious consideration by the administration, he said. *“We provided a broad range of options and our assessment of their potential outcomes,”* he said. *“On 14 April, President [Biden] announced his decision, and the U.S. military received a change of mission to retrograde all U.S. military forces.”*

The United States would keep a small unit to protect the embassy in Kabul and ensure access to the airport.

“It is clear, it is obvious, that the war in Afghanistan did not end on the terms we wanted, with the Taliban now in power

in Kabul,” Milley said. “Although the [non-combatant evacuation operation] was unprecedented as the largest air evacuation in history evacuating 124,000 people, it came at an incredible cost of 11 Marines, one soldier and a Navy corpsman. Those 13 gave their lives so that people they never met, will have an opportunity to live in freedom. And we must remember that the Taliban was – and remains – a terrorist organization. And they still have not broken ties with al-Qaida.”

Milley said he doesn’t know if the group can consolidate power in the country or if the country will further fracture into civil war. “But we must continue to protect the United States of America and its people from terrorist attacks coming from Afghanistan. A reconstituted al-Qaida or [Islamic State] with aspirations to attack the United States is a very real possibility.”

(Source: US DoD).

No Debate About Courage, Commitment of Americans Who Served in Afghanistan

No Debate About Courage, Commitment of Americans Who Served in Afghanistan. How the Afghanistan conflict ended must not obscure the pride Americans should have for the men and women who fought there, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III told the Senate Armed Services Committee today.

“As a veteran of the war, I am personally reckoning with all of that,” the secretary said during testimony about the war’s last days and the evacuation of 124,000 people from Kabul. “But I hope ... that we do not allow a debate about how this war ended to cloud our pride in the way that



our people fought it.”

More than 800,000 service members deployed to Afghanistan over the course of the 20 year war. “They prevented another 9/11, they showed extraordinary courage and compassion in the war’s last days, and they made lasting progress in Afghanistan that the Taliban will find difficult to reverse and that the international community should work hard to preserve,” Austin said.

Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaida used Afghanistan as a launching pad for its attacks on America on 9/11 that killed 3,000. American forces moved into the country in October 2001, drove the Taliban from power and denied al-Qaida sanctuary.

“Most importantly, 2,461 of us gave the ultimate sacrifice, while 20,698 of us were

wounded in action, and countless others of us suffer invisible wounds of war,” Milley said. “There’s no doubt in my mind that our efforts prevented an attack on the homeland from Afghanistan, which was our core original mission, and everyone that served in that war should be proud. Your service mattered.”

Austin told the senators that it is well and good that they discuss and debate the decisions and policies that led to the turning points in the war. “We can debate the decisions over 20 years that led us to this point,” he said. “But one thing not open to debate is the courage and compassion of our service members, who – along with their families – served and sacrificed to ensure that our homeland would never again be attacked the way it was on September 11, 2001.”

(Source: US DoD).





Austin Gives Senate Hard Truths of Lessons From Afghanistan

"We helped build a state, but we could not forge a nation," Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III told the Senate Armed Services Committee today, encapsulating America's 20-year involvement in Afghanistan.

Austin gave context to U.S. decisions in Afghanistan and also detailed U.S. actions during the fall of Afghanistan.

The United States spent billions outfitting and training Afghan security forces over the 20-year conflict. *"The fact that the Afghan army [that] we and our partners trained simply melted away – in many cases without firing a shot – took us all by surprise,"* Austin said. *"It would be dishonest to claim otherwise."*

The secretary said American leaders need to consider some uncomfortable truths in regards to the Afghan military. The United States underestimated the damage that corruption in the Afghan military's senior ranks played in building the security

forces. *"We did not grasp the damaging effect of frequent and unexplained rotations by [former Afghan] President [Ashraf] Ghani of his commanders,"* Austin said.

In addition, the Doha Agreement – negotiated between the United States and the Taliban – had a negative effect on Afghan government forces, he said. *"We did not anticipate the snowball effect caused by the deals that Taliban commanders struck with local leaders in the wake of the Doha Agreement, that the Doha Agreement itself had a demoralizing effect on Afghan soldiers, and that we failed to fully grasp that there was only so much for which – and for whom – many of the Afghan forces would fight,"* Austin said.

Over 20 years, tens of thousands of Afghan soldiers and police died in battle. Many fought bravely, he said. *"But, in the end, we couldn't provide them with the will to win. At least not all of them,"* the

secretary said.

Austin also addressed questions that arose following the most successful mass, non-combatant airlift evacuation in history.

Austin also addressed questions raised in interviews on some 24-hour news channels that questioned why the U.S. didn't use Bagram Airfield in the evacuation, why planning for the NEO effort didn't start earlier, and why the U.S. forces didn't stay longer to ensure all U.S. citizens were evacuated. Austin said planning for a non-combatant evacuation began early. The fact that U.S. troops were able to get to Kabul so quickly as the Taliban approached the capital is proof that planning had been done.

"By late April, two weeks after the president's decision, military planners had crafted a number of evacuation scenarios," Austin said. *"In mid-May, I ordered Central Command to make*

preparations for a potential non-combatant evacuation operation. Two weeks later, I began pre-positioning forces in the region, to include three infantry battalions.”

By the time the State Department called for the NEO, forces from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit and the 82nd Airborne were in the pipeline for deployment.

“The first days at Hamid Karzai International Airport were chaotic with civilians storming onto the flightline trying to get aboard aircraft. But within 48 hours, our troops restored order, and the process began to take hold,” Austin said. “Our soldiers, airmen and Marines – in partnership with our allies, our partners and our State Department colleagues – secured the gates, took control of airport operations and set up a processing system for the tens of thousands of people they would be manifesting onto airplanes,” he said.

They exceeded all expectations. At the beginning, plans called for evacuating between 70,000-80,000 people. They evacuated more than 124,000 people. “On military aircraft alone, we flew more than 387 sorties, averaging nearly 23 per day,” Austin said. “At the height of this operation, an aircraft was taking off every 45 minutes. And not a single sortie was missed for maintenance, fuel or logistical problems. It was the largest airlift conducted in U.S. history, and it was executed in just 17 days.”

Austin said the circumstances in mid-August were particularly challenging with U.S. forces and the evacuees facing extreme heat, evacuating from a landlocked country without a functioning



government, and an “active, credible and lethal terrorist threat.”

“In the span of just two days – from August 13th to 15th – we went from working alongside a democratically elected, long-time partner government to coordinating warily with a long-time enemy,” he said. “We operated in a deeply dangerous environment. It proved a lesson in pragmatism and professionalism.”

Retaining Bagram airfield as an evacuation point would not work.

It would have required about 5,000 American service members to run and defend the base. In addition, it's 30 miles from Kabul, – the main population center, so it wouldn't have been an easy place for evacuees to reach.

Austin also spoke about over-the-horizon operations in Afghanistan. This refers to assets and target analysis that come from outside the country in which the operation occurs. “These are effective and fairly common operations,” he said, noting that just days ago the United States conducted an over-the-horizon strike against a senior al-Qaida figure in Syria.

“As for when we started evacuations, we offered input to the State Department's decision, mindful of their concerns that moving too soon might actually cause the very collapse of the Afghan government that we all wanted to avoid and that moving too late would put our people and our operations at greater risk,” Austin said.

The same judgments apply for ending the NEO mission on August 31. “Extending beyond the end of August would have greatly imperiled our people and our mission,” he said. “The Taliban made clear that their cooperation would end on the first of September, and as you know, we faced grave and growing threats from ISIS-K. Staying longer than we did would have made it even more dangerous for our people and would not have significantly changed the number of evacuees who we could get out.”

(Source: US DoD)





British Army Veteran suicide figures to be recorded for the first time

A new method of recording veteran suicides in England and Wales has been announced, alongside a 10 year look back to examine veteran deaths through suicide.

For the first time, numbers of ex-service personnel who take their lives will be recorded officially by the government, following an agreement between the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA), the MoD and the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

This data will be used to further understand where there is a need for dedicated services in England and Wales. The data will allow the government to ensure that these targeted services are signposted to veterans, where they are needed most.

The new reporting method will use data collected from the recent veterans question in the 2021 Census and match it with ONS-held data on suicides. This

will allow the government to produce a statistic, known as a national measure, of the total number of veterans who die by suicide each year. This is the first time such a figure will be produced. It is expected that the first annual statistics will be published in 2023.

To better understand the lives lost prior to 2022, the government is also conducting a 10 year look back to examine veteran deaths through suicide. This research will be published in 2022.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Leo Docherty said, *"Any suicide is a tragedy and collecting better data on these instances will help government better target support for those who need it. This builds on a number of studies which are already taking place to better understand why some veterans take their lives. Support is out there and hope that today's agreement will help us reach more people who may be struggling."*

Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, said, *"The Office for National Statistics is constantly working to provide new insight that can be used to make a real difference to some of the most vulnerable in society. Understanding an issue is the first step to solving it and producing this new measure will help inform decisions to tackle deaths by suicide of our incredible armed forces veterans. It is important that we invest the time and effort to produce high quality estimates that properly shine a light on this critical issue."*

Hannah Blythyn, Wales' Deputy Minister for Social Partnerships, including veterans' support, said, *"One life lost is always one too many. Their service for our country has enabled us to live in the safe communities we have today. Preventing suicide is complex and no one organisation can tackle the issues in isolation. Strengthening the data is a key element of helping us to understand the risk factors and to better target preventative approaches. We continue*

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FIND

Suicides are preventable. Use your courage and compassion to find the 'combat indicators' of suicidal thoughts and suicidal behaviour.



FIX

Fix suicide with direct and open talk about suicide:
"Are you thinking about suicide?"



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Strike at suicide by listening, with kindness and understanding.

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No interruptions.
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to prioritise the mental health of our veterans and have recently invested an additional £235,000 annually into Veterans NHS Wales.”

This ensures that specialist, priority support is available for individuals who have served in the Armed Forces and are experiencing mental health difficulties related specifically to their military service.

Current data on veteran suicide is drawn from bespoke research projects examining specific veteran cohorts. The new data from the census will offer a new opportunity to identify veterans and match this information to other datasets to better understand veterans’ experiences. Approaches for replicating this in Scotland and Northern Ireland are being investigated. It is a robust solution that will allow for high quality and consistent data to feed into future policy making.

The statistics will be kept up to date through a new agreement between the OVA, MoD and ONS on data sharing for those leaving the military each year.

The new work will continue alongside existing research into the mental health and frequency of suicide within the veteran community. In addition to this new reporting method, the OVA is funding the next stage of a study by Kings Centre for Military Health Research looking at all aspects of the lives of veterans, including mental health.

Through the statistics and data from the 2021 Census, the government will be able

to ensure that support services will be targeted to regions of higher levels of suicide in veteran populations.

The government is also providing £2m from 2019/20 to 2020/21 to the Zero Suicide Alliance, which aims to achieve zero suicides across the NHS and in local communities by improved awareness and prevention training and developing a better culture of learning from deaths by suicide across the NHS.

The MoD continues to monitor deaths in those who served in the 1982 Falklands

campaign and the 1990/1991 Gulf conflict to understand the long term impact of military service. They are also finalising a study to track the cause of deaths, including suicides, in all personnel who have served in the UK armed forces since 2001.

This work forms part of the government’s commitment to improve the collection and analysis of data on veterans to inform future policy, as set out in the Strategy for our Veterans.

(Source: <https://www.gov.uk/>)



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