

Ocean Turtle Diving: a Forces Friendly dive school

Ocean Turtle Diving are a premier dive school, one of only three PADI 5-star Career Development Centres in the whole of the UK. They have shown their commitment to the armed forces community through signing the Armed Forces Covenant and offer support and services in a number of important ways.

Each Covenant signatory is different, their pledges reflect the individual ways an organisation is able to support and uphold the principles of the Covenant. OTD have pledged to support the whole armed forces community and as a Forces-Friendly organisation they offer a forces discount on their courses and work with local CCF schools to arrange dive trips and training.

Ocean Turtle Diving are also a CTP Preferred Supplier, meaning they're instantly recognised by service leavers and CTP Career Consultants, as a supplier of quality approved training. CTP accreditation comes at no extra cost, but provides Ocean Turtle Diving with access to a pool of hard-working and motivated students, whose desire to learn and improve guarantees great results and provides an opportunity for OTD to raise their profile and reputation as a training provider that has achieved accreditation by the Ministry of Defence.

Importantly, for divers who may feel like there are barriers (physical or mental) to pursuing Scuba Diving as a recreation activity, Kerrie (Platinum Course Director, Elite Instructor & Owner) is an instructor trainer in adaptive techniques. This means that Kerrie and her team are able to offer bespoke training programmes that adapt to meet a divers individual training needs. This includes working with amputees and divers who suffer from Mental Health issues.

Kerrie Eade, OTD owner, Platinum Course Director, Elite Instructor:

We see the opportunity to work with veterans and service leavers as an absolute privilege. Over the years I've been lucky enough to see many learn to dive and go on to great things and become instructors themselves. Being underwater is a well-known healer, the benefits of being in nature and slow, deep breathing are well documented, and those with physical disabilities are able to be free and independent.

Taking the leap and rediscovering a passion!

Paul Ungi under the water. RFCA Crown Copyright.

Diving isn't a new passion for Paul, he has fond memories as a child of his

dad (who also served) letting him lay in the bath with a cylinder and regulator so he could experience breathing under water. Once in the British Army he took advantage of the training on offer and took up Sub Aqua.

Dad would take me with him to Lulworth Cove, Durdledor, Swanage and other locations to watch the club dive and we would often eat the crab and shellfish that the club would bring ashore, from that point that's what I wanted to do. The Army gave me that in abundance.

After leaving the military in 1998 Paul faced challenges with his mental health, today he firmly believes that being in the water and dive therapy has made a huge difference to his ability to stay positive and manage his mental wellbeing.

The water helps with my Mental Health Issues. I know that when I am in the water, whether under it, on top of it or by it, the water just eases the stress of life and makes me feel positive.

What's next for Paul?

For me to take that step to introduce myself to Ocean Turtle took a giant leap of faith and confidence, but without doing so I would not have been able to complete my Reactivate Course and regain my confidence.

Having now completed his course, Paul is saving up for a dry suit so that he can continue his UK diving, but admits the warmer climates do appeal.

First I've booked myself a wee trip to get some wreck diving experience in a warmer climate, and I have to say having done a lot of my Army diving in Northern Ireland, I do prefer the warmer clearer waters abroad. Lol.

Although I do still suffer with 'issues' it's been just the tonic so far to get me back where I want to be...under the sea in An Octopus' garden in the shade!!

Find out more about being a [Forces-Friendly organisation](#).