

News story: We must end the shameful ivory trade now

The African Elephant is a species apart – a beautiful animal that inspires awe in any who see it. Safeguarding the future of this amazing animal is a mission our species cannot shirk. And the need for action is urgent because numbers are declining dramatically, driven by human greed for ivory.

Long prized for ornaments and jewellery, ivory is increasingly seen as a symbol of wealth and social status, particularly in East Asia. And in recent decades, poaching has reached devastating levels.

The numbers are stark – about 20,000 elephants are killed every year, which equals about 55 every single day.

The unthinkable could happen – unless we take action to stop poaching today future generations will be deprived of one of the world's most majestic and inspirational creatures.

Africa leaders have called for an international response to this global problem. The Presidents of Botswana, Uganda, Gabon and Kenya have made a joint plea for the European Union to shut down ivory markets, arguing that if we want to tackle poaching we must remove the opportunity for criminals to profit from their sickening activities.

That is why we will ban the sale of ivory in the UK. The ban will cover ivory items of all ages and once it has been approved by Parliament, it will be the toughest ivory ban in Europe and one of the toughest in the world. A ban of this kind is the only way to demonstrate that ivory – and the elephant – is not a commodity for sale.

In line with the approach taken by other countries, there will be carefully-defined and narrowly-targeted exemptions for items that do not contribute directly or indirectly to the poaching of elephants. The exemptions have been narrowed since consulting conservation groups and the antiques trade. They are balanced and proportionate – and crucially they will not undermine the ban or provide loopholes that could continue to fuel elephant poaching.

All exempted items will have to be registered and the police and other enforcement agencies will pursue illegal sales with new powers. Anyone found breaching the ban could face an unlimited fine or up to five years in jail.

When it is passed, this ban will confirm the UK's place at the forefront of global efforts to end the shameful trade in one of our most beautiful natural treasures. We will continue to work with international partners to tackle illegal wildlife trade – the world's fourth most profitable criminal enterprise, worth up to £17 billion annually. Our global leadership is essential to show the world that we cannot go on as we are – we must end this trade.

The fact that ivory is still bought and sold for financial gain and status shames our generation. We need decisive action to end this abhorrent trade and take on the smugglers and poachers who are depriving some of the poorest countries in the world of their valuable natural capital. Only then will we be able to claim we have protected this iconic species for future generations.

[News story: MOD confirms death of Lance Corporal George Partridge](#)

Lance Corporal George Partridge joined the Army on 13th June 2010 at the age of 19.

After completing his basic training at Bassingbourn in Cambridgeshire, where he was awarded the prize for Fittest Recruit, he moved to 3 Royal School of Military Engineering Regiment at Minley in Surrey for combat engineer training, and from there to Leconsfield for vocational driver training, qualifying as a Military Engineer (Driver) in April 2011.

His first years in the Army were spent at 21 Engineer Regiment in Ripon, North Yorkshire, where he qualified as a Class 1 Royal Engineer Driver and deployed to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 17 in 2012-13. Successfully selected for promotion he moved to 26 Engineer Regiment in Perham Down, Wiltshire where he served as a motor transport Lance Corporal within 38 Headquarters and Support Squadron. He was responsible for allocating drivers to tasks on daily driving details as well as scheduling maintenance and repairs for the Regiment's large fleet of wheeled vehicles.

Popular and hard-working, Lance Corporal Partridge was at the hub of the Regiment and was always to be seen out in the vehicle park ensuring that his vehicles were in good condition and ready for the next task. A genuine expert in the complex area of motor transport management, he was well known across the Regiment for his frank advice and his ability to find a vehicle for every last-minute important job.

Whilst at 26 Engineer Regiment he deployed to Canada, supporting armoured engineer training and construction exercises as well as deploying in support of UK operations. He recently achieved a long-held ambition to commence training as an Army diver, successfully completed his Junior Commanders Course, and had just been selected for promotion to Corporal.

Lance Corporal Partridge loved sport and fitness. A regular in the Regiment's Gym every evening, he was also a talented sportsman who had represented the Regimental Rugby Team and the Army as part of the Under 23 Army Football squad. He also tried his hand at luge ice sports where he represented the Corps.

The loss of such a popular and capable soldier is hard felt by his Squadron, the Regiment and the Corps, as well as everyone in the wider Army who had the privilege of working with him. He will be remembered fondly by his many friends and colleagues throughout the Corps. He leaves behind his wife Zoe, who is expecting their first child, parents Alyson and Stephen and siblings Lucy and Ben.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

It is with great sadness we must confirm the death of Lance Corporal George Partridge. It's clear from the testimonials of his colleagues that he had a bright future in the Army and was held in the highest regard. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this extremely difficult time.

Lance Corporal Ash Skerten said:

If I could be half the man he was I would be proud, he was the best soldier.

Corporal Anthony Matthews said:

George was a motivated and determined individual, who was a role model to all those around him. His peers also looked up to him and would come to him for advice. He was a family-orientated man who was looking forward to starting his family with wife Zoe. He was both a physically and mentally fit person who relished any challenge thrown in his direction.

Sergeant Chris Brignull said:

I have had the honour and pleasure of knowing LCpl George Partridge for well over 2 years now, from the start he was an outstanding character and a great role model for younger Sappers within the troop.

George had a very calm and collected approach to everything he did, robust and professional during all tasks put his way, which he always tackled head on. He was a true leader and had the potential to progress through all ranks. Well liked throughout the whole Regiment and Corps, he will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him. Royal Engineers like George are a special type of person who are hard to find.

His Troop Commander, Lt David Thornett said:

Lance Corporal George Partridge was a gift to me as a Troop Commander. He had everything that I could have expected of a Junior Non Commissioned Officer. He could always be relied upon to carry out a task to the best of his ability and to get the best out the individuals who were working for him. Having already been selected to promote to Corporal, I have no doubt he would have climbed through the ranks with ease and had a very successful Army career. On top of this he was genuinely a good bloke who knew how to make people laugh, he will be sorely missed.

His Squadron Commander, Major Matt Walker said:

Every member of the Squadron, regardless of rank, looked up to and respected Lance Corporal George Partridge – we all aspire to be as fit, humble and capable as he was. The loss of this epic Junior Non Commissioned Officer leaves a void in the Squadron that can't be filled.

His Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Simon Doyle said:

Quietly determined, hard-working and immensely popular, Lance Corporal George Partridge was an exemplary soldier. Humble but hugely capable, he was always ready to lend a helping hand where it was needed the most and at some point everyone in the Regiment has had cause to be grateful for his ability to find you a car when the vehicle park seemed empty. Our clearest memories of him will always be on the rugby pitch and in the gymnasium, where he was the epitome of a Royal Engineer Junior Non-Commissioned Officer, always pushing himself and his soldiers to the next level, and always with a smile on his face. He will be sorely missed, and our thoughts are with his wife and family at this sad time.

Fatality notice: Sergeant Matt Tonroe has been killed in action in the Middle East

Updated: Picture added.



Sergeant Matt Tonroe.

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that Sergeant Matt Tonroe from the 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment was tragically killed in action whilst on duty in the Middle East on the 29th March 2018.

Sergeant Tonroe was born in Manchester on the 14th of August 1984. He enlisted in the Army on the 27th September 2004. On completion of his initial training he joined the 3rd Battalion of The Parachute Regiment in Colchester where he served as part of the Sniper Platoon. He rapidly developed an array of competencies and combat experiences that were to lay the foundations of an outstanding career.

During his service, Matt deployed numerous times on operations to Afghanistan and the Middle East. His distinguished service reflected a man that was happiest when professionally tested on operations. He relished responsibility, the opportunity to contribute and when the time came, to lead. He was a natural in this role.

Matt was also a capable and respected parachutist. As a gifted instructor he was free with his time and his advice, and would dedicate himself to support and develop this skill in others.

He was well known within his unit, well-liked by all and he will be sorely missed. When talking of Matt, his colleagues recount his humour, mischief and endless endeavours. Laid back, but a consummate professional, Matt was utterly selfless and always strived to achieve excellence.

Matt was very much a family man, making every effort to see his beloved mum around numerous overseas deployments. He is survived by his mother Michelle, his brother Alex and girlfriend Olivia.

Sgt Tonroe's Officer Commanding said

If you had met Matt Tonroe, then you would have liked him. He bristled with the contentment of a life lived to its full. His bravery and talent as a soldier, was matched by his compassion as a human being. He was an individual, with the courage to set his own course, and the perspective to see new possibilities at every turn. He was destined for great things in our unit; his leadership was both natural and apparently effortless. He is already missed. Without Matt, our company has lost some of its humour; some of its warmth; and some of its sheer opportunism. We will always remember him.

Sgt Tonroe's Commanding Officer said

Matt Tonroe was a deeply intelligent man and one of life's characters. He was a caring and considerate soul, a loving and dutiful son, and a friend to many. Yet he had a steel core, served his country with pride and was a first class soldier, proven in combat, faced risk willingly and was ever ready for more. He thus died as he lived: daring and fearless in duty. We mourn his loss dearly, are proud to have known him and will honour him by continuing this fight.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said

My thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Sergeant Matt Tonroe at this dreadful time. Sergeant Tonroe served his country with great distinction and it is clear from the tributes made by his colleagues that he was not only exceptionally dedicated and courageous but also a gifted and intelligent instructor who was respected by everyone he served with. Sergeant Tonroe fought to protect British values, our freedoms and to keep us back at home safe. His sacrifice, unflinching commitment and bravery will never be forgotten.

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[Press release: British Army re-joins Boxer programme](#)

The British Army has taken a step towards exploring a deal for a fleet of new armoured vehicles, potentially supporting at least 1,000 British jobs, by announcing it is re-joining the Boxer programme today.

The UK will re-join the Boxer programme and explore options to equip the Army with the 8x8 troop carriers to modernise its vehicle fleet and meet the Army's Mechanised Infantry Vehicle requirement.

The UK played a major role in the original design, development and testing of the Boxer, and would reassume the rights it had as a project partner if a deal was to go through – allowing the option for the vehicle to be built and exported from the UK. The deal could see the Boxer fully assembled in the UK with at least 60% of the manufacturing with British industry, sustaining and developing UK industrial capabilities, facilities and skills.

Artec, the consortium who manufacture the Boxer vehicle, have already made commitments to British industry by signing partnership agreements with BAE Systems, Pearson Engineering and Thales UK, in anticipation of a deal being struck.

It is expected that British companies would compete for the manufacture and supply of many of the vehicle sub-systems, as well as for a full production and assembly line in the UK. Estimates suggest Artec's planned investment in the UK could secure or create at least 1,000 jobs, based across the country including locations such as Glasgow, Newcastle, Sheffield, Stockport, Telford and Wales.

With the likes of Rolls Royce already powering Boxers with engines and Parker-Hannifin, William Cook Engineering and other British companies also supplying sub-systems for the vehicle, this deal could secure a broader industrial UK partnership.

The MOD is now taking forward negotiations with the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR) and Artec. Looking forward to the Assessment Phase, concluding in 2019, this will consider the comparable benefits of manufacturing locations and different supply chains for Boxer, as well as value-for-money. Any deal will be subject to commercial negotiation and assessment in 2019 and the aim is to have the first vehicles in service with the Army in 2023.

OCCAR is a European intergovernmental organisation which facilitates and manages collaborative armament programmes through their lifecycle between the UK and European allies. The organisation manages the Boxer programme and, as an OCCAR member state, the UK has the necessary Intellectual Property Rights to the Boxer and greater control over ensuring Britain benefits from supply chain work.

The MOD conducted a comprehensive market analysis of Mechanised Infantry Vehicles in-service, entering service and in development. The analysis was guided by the British Army's requirements and how best to deliver them. The Boxer delivered on protected mobility, capacity, flexibility, utility and agility.

As part of the proposed deal, the UK is also expected to see substantial inward investment from Rheinmetall, one of Artec's parent companies, who signalled their intention to launch a production and integration centre for armoured vehicles in the UK as part of the programme. This would represent a significant commitment which would lead to long-lasting armoured vehicle capability in the UK.

The other of Artec's parent companies, Krauss-MaffeiWegmann (KMW), already has a substantial UK manufacturing facility in Stockport, from where it designs, manufactures and supports complex military equipment as far afield as the US and Australia, as well as parts of Europe.