

[News story: Your chance to question Ministry of Defence medals and records experts at Family History Shows](#)

Updated: Updated Live post 1921 paragraph

The MOD Medals and Records Offices, part of DBS are to attend the [Family History Show](#) events at York on 23 June and Sandown on 22 September. The shows are attended by family historians, societies and genealogical organisations. The MOD stand, supported by TNT UK Ltd, will be staffed by a DBS team, with colleagues from the Air Historical Branch and TNT Navy Record Search Service.

They will offer:

Live post 1921 service record search facility

The MOD continues to hold all service records where the individual had a discharge date of post 1921, these total around 10 million records, with about 500,000 having seen service in World War 1. Subject to access to the database that supports the MOD's main archive, an assisted search facility will be offered that will in many cases enable confirmation of whether or not the MOD holds a record for an individual. This information can then be used to apply for the record using the forms on Gov.uk. To assist the search, some or all of the following information is required: surname, initials, date of birth and service number.

World War 2 RAF casualty packs search facility

RAF casualty packs from World War 2 are being transferred from the MOD to The National Archives. Using the MOD's archive and cataloguing database, an assisted search facility will enable identification of the pack that may relate to an individual. This information can then be used to either access the pack at The National Archives, or, for those yet to be transferred, apply for details from the pack using the forms on Gov.uk. To assist the search, the following information is required: the name of the individual(s), date of incident and type of aircraft.

Interpretation of service records

If you already have a service record, but are unsure what it says or how to interpret it, then DBS experts will be on hand to assist you.

- John Reynolds from the MOD's record office, a keen army historian and serving reserves officer, John has conducted battlefield tours across the world
- Stuart Hadaway from the Air Historical Branch, Stuart has previously worked at the RAF Museum, Hendon, and is the author of military books,

including “Missing believed killed: casualty policy and the missing research and enquiry service 1939 – 1952”

- Sue Pass, team leader of TNT’s navy search service who respond to more than 6,000 enquiries a year

The DBS team look forward to seeing you!

[News story: New Royal Navy operations hub opens in Gulf](#)

The Naval Support Facility will play a central role in the UK’s ability to operate in the region, and will be the hub of the Royal Navy’s operations in the Gulf, Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

Gavin Williamson Defence Secretary said:

Our Armed Forces are the face of Global Britain and our presence in Bahrain will play a vital role in keeping Britain safe as well as underpinning security in the Gulf.

Britain is a major player on the world stage and this new Naval Support Facility will help us tackle the growing threats to our nation wherever they are across the globe and protecting our way of life.

The facility will provide an enduring, self-sufficient operating base capable of meeting the needs of any British warship operating in the region including Britain’s new aircraft carriers future flagships HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales. It will be home to just over 300 British military personnel and supporting civilians, and accommodates up to nearly 550 for short periods. The facility will also provide a key strategic base east of Suez for Britain, its allies and coalition partners.

The ceremony was attended by General Sir Chris Deverell Commander of the UK’s Joint Forces Command, Commodore Steve Dainton United Kingdom Maritime Component Commander (UKMCC) and Prince Andrew Duke of York as well as HRH Crown Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa and Field Marshal Khalifa Bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander in Chief of the Bahrain Defence Force.

Speaking at Mina Salman port, General Sir Chris Deverell Commander Joint Forces Command said:

With the opening of this base, the UK’s presence in Bahrain and the wider Gulf is guaranteed into the future, ensuring Britain’s

sustained deployment east of Suez. In meeting HRH Crown Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa today, I thanked him for the continued support from Bahrain which enables us to operate in the Gulf region.

Bahrain is longstanding British ally and both countries work closely across diplomatic, economic and security matters. What happens in the Gulf region has a direct impact on the national security of the United Kingdom, our prosperity and the safety of our citizens. It is vital that we work with close allies like Bahrain to tackle regional threats such as that posed by Daesh.

[Press release: New building performance standards to save MOD up to 20%](#)

Infrastructure is a vital defence capability delivering accommodation, training facilities and critical assets such as runways and workshops to enable our armed forces to live, work, train and deploy. Recent DIO projects include building a jetty at Portsmouth Naval Base so the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth can dock, and resurfacing runways at RAF Akrotiri, RAF Gibraltar, and RAF Valley.

The defence estate is large, diverse and widely dispersed across the UK and overseas. In the UK, it covers around 230,000 hectares comprising military training areas, naval bases, barracks, airfields, supply depots, and offices. Construction on these sites is sometimes subject to specific defence requirements but the majority is similar to other sectors, so the new standards have been developed in accordance with comparators from industry and other government departments. They are designed to be used by MOD staff and industry partners responsible for the planning, costing and delivery of the infrastructure assets and projects funded by MOD.

The new standards, Joint Services Publication (JSP) 315, are expected to save up to 20% on construction costs by creating efficient standards, enabling faster and more cost-effective project development and delivery. They also recognise the success and cost savings DIO has achieved in recent years from increasing the use of modular construction and standardisation of designs, as well as utilising 3D digital and interactive technology.

Graham Dalton, DIO's Chief Executive, said:

The new standards mark a step forward in how DIO enables our

military to provide the most effective and efficient solutions and how we work better with the construction industry. The revised standards make it absolutely clear what our requirements are and will contribute to a significant cost and time saving on our infrastructure projects.

The new standards and supporting guidance set a series of reference designs for specific defence infrastructure requirements and benchmark capital and operational costs for the planning and delivery of MOD infrastructure.

The revised JSP 315 can be found [here](#)

[News story: Army officer helps Zambia set up health care education programme](#)

Ten years ago, senior nurse Chris Carter took a risk which would prove to be life changing. Leaving a job that he loved in the NHS for a leap in the dark – a career with the British Army.

It was a choice that not only changed his life, but arguably it also changed the lives of many Zambians critically in need of nursing care.

Because his decision not only led to a new job, it also indirectly opened the door to a new and unexpected adventure when, rich in operational experience, he later answered a call for volunteers to go to Zambia to teach critical care.

A rewarding experience in the making. But he wasn't expecting to end up heading a team which would be collaborating internationally and leading a program which would have a national impact on the future health care set up in a sub Saharan Commonwealth country.



Major Chris Carter gets ready for a lesson in a Zambian hospital

A new job a new life

It all started with that choice he made at the crossroads of his caring career. He said :

At the time it was at the height of the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns, and I was looking for a new opportunity,

I'd always wanted to work internationally, and I'd always had the aspiration to work in a combat zone. Another aspiration was to test myself in a developing country and I knew the Army could offer me all that. I felt, if I don't do this now, I never will.

A decade after taking that decision, Chris, 39, is now a Major in the Queen Alexandra Royal Army Nursing Corps, and all of those aspirations have been answered, and more.

Today he is a critical care nurse and a nurse lecturer working in the Defence School of health-care education, a military unit embedded in Birmingham City University.

There he heads up a team responsible for training the Armed Forces future student nurses.

He has a tour of duty of Afghanistan tucked under his Sam Browne belt, as well as other deployments to the Middle East.

For many that would be more than enough to keep them occupied. But the urge to serve is strong in Major Chris Carter.

Which is why in 2015 he answered an ad in a medical journal for volunteers to set up a critical nursing care program in sub Saharan Africa. And so, his intense relationship with the Commonwealth country of Zambia began.

Looking at the list of skills and life experience that the job called for, it was clear that Chris had just what the doctor ordered.

And as far as he is concerned it's his career in the Army that he has to thank for that. He said:

In the Army, it's not that they give you opportunities as such, they are available, and if you seek them out, and work hard for them, then you can get there.

Nursing in Zambia

Zambia is a stable land locked, low income country with 60 per cent of the population living in rural communities. Yet whilst it is poor, Zambia is training its doctors and anaesthetists, helped by international investment in terms of money and resources.

But it soon became clear that more was needed. Hence the advert. Major Carter said :

The Drs there realised that their project to develop health care was not going to reach its full potential unless investment was also being made in nursing staff,

The doctors were being trained in current practice, applied in the context of a developing country, dealing with diseases totally different to what we see in the UK, but which are common there. But without the nurses who do the majority of the care, the project wouldn't work.

Initially the task facing Chris was to visit Zambia's main hospital and help them to identify what they needed and to develop their framework for developing their nursing staff.

No funding? No project? No problem!

But before he could do that, another little problem lay before him. He said:

What transpired was that, despite what the advert said, in fact there was no project, no funding – nothing.

Undeterred, Chris and a small core of volunteers from the UK kept calm and

carried on. He said:

Given my background, my contacts and my operational experience linked with my role in nursing education I convinced The Tropical Health and Education trust, a UK NGO, to fund me for a two week needs assessment.

Since then Chris has been to Zambia seven times, staying for periods of two to four weeks. He said:

In 2016 we worked with the Zambian Ministry of Health. We went to 16 public hospitals which meant a round trip of 4,980 kms in a Land Cruiser. There isn't a bit of the country, off road or on tarmac that I haven't seen.

On this epic trip he asked at each hospital, 'What critical care can you realistically provide in your hospital? What are the challenges you face, and how are your nurses being employed? And that was the first time that they had had that snapshot of what was going on.

Gathering all that information, Chris and the team then wrote a report for the Ministry of Health. In it they recommended what they could do as a project team to help build the country's capacity in nursing capability.

From this, what the Zambians identified as essential was a graduate nursing programme.



Zambian nurses in training

Major Carter said:

What tends to happen is that a lot of money is spent on educating Drs, and while nurses might get the odd short course, which is valuable, what is needed is a structured framework which can contribute to the long-term career development of an individual.

Get that right and it means you have a reliable capability, you prevent people from getting demotivated because they don't feel valued, and for places like Zambia, it stops the haemorrhaging of talented nurses who go to work in neighbouring countries who can pay more.

Armed with this information Chris went into battle attracting funding from DFID, the EU and from Birmingham university, who also provide him with all the professional back office functions and governance needed to keep such a project running.

Zambian priorities

From nothing, Chris has built up the team which has grown from just four enthusiasts into a truly international collaboration. Working closely with the Lusaka College of Nursing, the Zambian union of nursing organisations, the Ministry of Health and the General nursing council, Chris makes sure that whatever his team delivers, it is in accordance with the Zambian's own

priorities, but with his guidance, in the context of the UN's sustainable development goals such as providing universal access to health care and building a framework for quality, lifelong learning. He said:

We are helping them to build up a critical mass of trained nurses, helping to develop a graduate cadre and in turn future leaders, future researchers, future educators. We're building a framework for life.

And this must all be done in an atmosphere of cultural sensitivity, another skill which Chris picked up from his time in Afghanistan. He said:

We have to be aware that our way of doing something may not be the best way for them. It is all about helping them to find their own solutions.

Take the basic practicalities as an example of what he means by that. In a country which has 73 regional dialects, how are you going to provide a universal training package?

When the majority of the population live in remote villages, how would someone get health care if they had a ruptured appendix, or if they had broken their leg, or had an obstructed child birth, at night – how would you get them to a hospital which is two hours away, at night along a road which has no lighting.

It's easy to see that sensible solutions to health care provision must be seen in this harsh context.

Such has been the success of the project, 900 health care workers have been trained since 2015, that the Army is keen to explore the benefits for the UK Armed Forces. Last year Chris took six students from the Defence School of Health, one from the navy, the rest Army, to Zambia as part of their training.

Benefits for training UK Armed Forces nurses

Not only do they get to see the treatment of diseases such as TB and malaria, which while rare in the UK, in their careers they will have to know about, but perhaps more importantly the pressures of practicing in a resource limited environment. Major Carter said:

We watched a Dr performing a procedure and I talk the students through it. I tell them to watch how he and the nurses were working – only opening equipment when they needed it, so they don't waste anything – because it's too precious.

I challenge them... imagine you are on board a ship, or in the field.

You're not going to have an infinite supply of gloves, oxygen, swabs... when you've got 10 patients on a ward, and there's only three of you, there's no agency you can call, no extra staff, it's just you.

Thinking differently

Chris uses the experience to get the students thinking in a different way. A way which might just make a difference when on the battlefield. He said:

I get them to think about what they would do in that situation. Which is your sickest patient at the moment? Why do you think that?

I get them to think through some of the clinical decisions they would never face in the NHS. 'You've only got 10 ventilators, but you've got 11 patients who need it – what are you going to do?'

Keeping calm and carrying on

It's hard to imagine how someone as busy as Chris has managed to cope with it all. He says that lots of coffee helps, and he also points out the importance of protecting whatever little spare time you have, and using it wisely. He said:

I'm a swimmer, I like to get in the pool and just go up and down and get things into perspective.

It's important to look at your successes. I've said this to people in Zambia when they get dispirited, and say 'It never changes here' I say, 'look how far you've come in such a short time.'

This is another strength that he attributes to his time in the Army. He said:

What the Army gives you is the ability to be realistic in what you can do. Focus on the basics and do them well. That gives you a reality check. In our project it's been about knowing what the Zambians want, how they want it delivered and on their timescales. My Army career has given me that grounding.

So, the decision he took a decade ago, to change the nature of his uniform from scrubs to camouflage pattern turned out to be the right one. Not just for Major Chris Carter, but for the people of Zambia too.

News story: UK medic helps to save Life during Pacific Partnership 2018

Pacific Partnership is an annual exercise involving 22 partner nations around the globe in 18 host countries. It aims to assist local communities in planning for humanitarian crisis' whilst also teaching medical and engineering skills. 4 UK medics are involved, representing each of the 3 services.

On the 23 March 2018, whilst deployed in Yap in The Federated States of Micronesia, Corporal Darren Phillips worked alongside Japanese Military Medics to save the life of a local man who had severely injured himself. The military medics were attending Yap Memorial Hospital conducting a community health engagement when the patient arrived, having had an accident while cleaning around his home. The knife the patient used to clear out overgrown branches broke and struck his wrist causing near fatal blood loss.



L-R Corporal Phillips, POMA Nicholl, Flt Lt Lowry and Lt Cdr Middleton. Crown Copyright.

Corporal Phillips provided immediate trauma care and in response said:

We are constantly trained to respond to trauma situations, we saw a patient needing immediate attention, and we acted quickly and efficiently. This is what we do. It is a great experience to be

part of a multinational team working together to help people from all over Yap.

On the day in question we provided medical care to over 100 patients at the hospital, and we are looking forward to continuing with the rest of the exercise.

The defence medical services twitter account is following the exercise closely.

For more stories and photos please follow [@defence_medical](https://twitter.com/defence_medical).