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## TODAY'S WARRIOR

### Jake Bell: Adapt the tactic to the situation at hand

Machrihanish, 22 May 2018

Jake Bell calls the military “very much of a family business”. With a lineage that goes back to the first and second world wars, including participation at Juno Beach, it is a tradition that continues today with Jake’s sons now serving. “I knew from five years old I was going to be a soldier,” he says.

Jake joined the North Shore Regiment in 1979 and the regular army two years later; he was deployed to Cyprus as a platoon commander at age 20. Along with training posts in Canada, Jake has been stationed throughout Europe and in Africa.



Perhaps the most challenging period was during the 1990s when he was deployed on several occasions to Yugoslavia: “Never since the Balkans have I been shocked by what one person can do to another...A lot of mental issues came from the UN rules of engagement... you could only position yourself between an aggressor and the victim...that flies in the face of what your mother told you. You feel morally compelled to act. A crisis in your conscience can be a pretty devastating thing”.

Jake has also served as an unarmed UN military observer in Eritrea, “a mind-expanding

experience...a classic Chapter Six UN mission,” and in the Congo, “more of a Three Block Operation,” when peacekeeping, humanitarian aid delivery and combat missions may all be required. “We train officers to think and adapt the tactic to the situation at hand in a very fluid and complex environment”.

At Machrihanish Jake played golf with a shepherd – “it’s the first time I’ve ever heard anyone say that! Here, golf is part of their way of life. It’s the feeling that you have, the connection. When walking into the clubhouse at Machrihanish, you feel at home”.





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## JUST A BLAST

I think I must have  
hit the lottery:  
Don Juan Graham

Machrihanish, 23 May 2018

Don Juan Graham grew up in Rockingham, North Carolina, "right outside Pinehurst," where his brothers caddied. Don himself made do with a two-hole course built in the back yard. Over fifty years later, the brothers get together for the annual Graham Cup, which was won last year by Don. He couldn't defend it because of his trip to Scotland – "they should just put an asterisk on it this year!" he says.

Like his brothers, Don joined the military out of high school, spending much of his time attached to the 82nd Airborne Division and the

450th Civil Affairs Battalion. He saw two tours of duty in Afghanistan and one in Iraq: "I've been shot at and under rocket attacks; the first time it is somewhat exciting..." He later joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps and went to college before being recruited by the Federal Government and stationed in Washington DC.

Don had been a competitive tennis player until he broke his foot in a parachute jump. "I was intimidated about going to a golf course. I had a jacked up score; all those rules...but I knew how to watch the ball and keep the knees bent".

Thanks to the Salute Military Golf Association, Don plays "up and down the east coast". The SMGA also arranged golf lessons and donated Ping clubs.

Machrihanish once again showcased golf at its best. "Oh man, I was just marvelling at the sights over there – the ocean to your left, just mesmerising you – and the members, just to hear those guys bantering back and forth, a bunch of guys enjoying life. It was just a blast. It was beautiful. I think I must have hit the lottery: I'm playing golf seven days in Scotland!"





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## GREAT SUPPORT

### Our thanks to Belle Robertson and the University ladies

Machrihanish and St Andrews, 23 May 2018

St Andrews Legacy was honoured to meet Sup with Scottish golfing legend Belle Robertson, MBE, at Machrihanish. Belle has participated in nine Curtis Cups, six Vagliano Trophies, has won the British and Scottish Amateur and Strokeplay titles multiple times, and is now an honorary member of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club.

Belle lives in nearby Southend and is associated with the Dunaverty club, which looks out over the famous Mull of Kintyre. When she was asked if she would like to join in with the two-day visit to Machrihanish, Belle was happy to



agree and she played rounds with the veterans over both days, showing her great skills.

Belle was generous in her assessment of the veterans' golf. "They play with such determination and fun, there was never an aggressive tone. There was frustration at not hitting the ball well – a warm frustration – and they are so friendly together. At times there is an awkwardness about the way they moved. Golf is very lucky; you can play golf with quite a few problems".

Belle was also very aware that some injuries

are not visible. "There are scars that have been left. To lose so many of your pals, that would be awfully hard to live with. You could in one day lose ten or twenty of your close fellows".

On arriving back in St Andrews, there was a wonderful moment when the University of St Andrews Ladies Golf Club presented St Andrews Legacy with a cheque for over £1800 on the Swilcan Bridge. The club first participated in a St Andrews Legacy event two years ago and their continuing support and remarkable generosity is a fantastic boost and a tribute to this new generation of golfers coming to the game.





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## STRONG BOND

My house is  
always open:  
Hudson Soso

Fairmont St Andrews, 24 May 2018

Hudson Soso has been undergoing prostate cancer treatment, a fact he shared with the other St Andrews Legacy participants. "They gave me knuckles and said: *you've got this beat*. We were eight strangers but we will leave with a strong bond of friendship, the friendship that you build. Let's keep the bond. My house is always open".

Creating this kind of support network is at the heart of the St Andrews Legacy experience. "No one is here to criticise you, everyone is here to help each other out. Some have been in situations I've never been in. It brings tears to



my eyes... the comrades I have lost... I've seen the bodies as they come back. I experienced the same pain, the loss of friends".

Hudson joined the Canadian military in 1981, spending 36 years as a business administrator. Now in reserve and based in Ottawa, he mentors junior ranks: "I'm learning from them as well".

He started golfing in Germany. "I never knew it would be a remedy later in life. I injured my back in a fall, shattering the fourth and fifth lumbar vertebrae... now I'm playing forty

rounds a year. Golf is the most enjoyable and frustrating game I know!"

The sights of Scotland have been therapeutic in themselves. "It's a gorgeous, gorgeous country. People welcome you to their country, which is outstanding. I can enjoy myself here".

At the Kittocks course Hudson relished the serene atmosphere and extraordinary views over St Andrews Bay. "It was so peaceful, so calm. You see the layout of the course and the sea. I was saying to myself, how fortunate I am to be here and playing with my comrades".





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## LAND AND SEA

### Marc Fontaine revels in the elements at Crail

Crail Balcomie Links, 25 May 2018

**M**arc Fontaine joined the Canadian military in December 1980, signing up as an air weapon systems technician, specializing in arming the CF-18 Hornet. He had been a navy cadet at age 12 – “I had my heart set on the military” – and he joined after finishing high school. A reservist since 2010, Marc has to cope with a back injury that occurred when he was reconfiguring the aircraft after a three-day exercise in Cold War Germany: “We slept in underground bunkers and spent countless hours in a poopy suit, in top high.”

A spell at the Soldier On Golf Camp has

enthused Marc to start playing the game more seriously. “It’s something I can do that doesn’t really hurt my back. They showed me how to swing the club better and it’s not so hard on me. I learned as a teenager. My dad was left-handed and I learned to swing his clubs, even though I’m right-handed. Up to about two years ago I played three or four times a year but now it is 20-30 games a season. It is a good way to shed some stress, to empty my mind. When you leave the military it’s like leaving a big family behind and finding yourself on your own. Part of this trip is to interact with other people and the other part is a great opportunity to be in

Scotland. I’ll never forget the guys I met on this trip. I’ll never forget”.

Day four of the event was spent at Crail Golfing Society’s Balcomie Links, swept by a vigorous easterly wind. “It was a beautiful day... a majestic scene. We met Pam Smith, the club captain, and I enjoyed hearing secretary David Roy speak about how the club came to be and the history of the land. I really loved Balcomie. I’d never really played in that kind of wind. There was no place where you can hide from the wind – that was an interesting challenge – and I saw the ocean in all its grandeur”.





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## LARGE REWARD

### Memories and interaction boost Bruno Chevrefils

The Duke's St Andrews, 26 May 2018

Bruno Chevrefils looked up the French phrase to translate it into English: “qui vaut la peine: it's rewarding”. He was looking back on his day at The Duke's, which was in “awesome condition,” and the overall experience he had enjoyed in Scotland. “When I'm walking here I'm thinking about my dad, my family; just being healthy”.

Bruno joined up in 1996 as a 23-year-old, firstly attached to the 4th Engineer Support Regiment at Gagetown and latterly as a fire fighter based all over Canada: at Chilliwack, Edmonton, Shearwater Halifax, and finally



Saint-Jean. However, his fondest memories are from his time aboard HMCS Montréal – “it was the highlight of my career to be three years on that ship. I went all around the world”. He recalled a range of activities on the frigate, from helping Lebanese refugees in the Mediterranean to fronting 45-foot high Atlantic waves in wintertime.

Bruno's route into golf was a little unorthodox, starting at a night range after the bars closed but he soon gravitated to the full game thanks to his late father: “we used to play quite a bit of golf, me and him”. The

sport now helps Bruno with his back injuries. “My physiotherapist told me it's good and bad – walking is good but there is some torsion. As long as I have the right swing I'm not going to injure myself”.

Bruno has benefitted too from his encounter with the other veterans. “Meeting the guys, it's incredible. The stories... I'm sure we are going to stay in touch and hopefully we'll play golf again in their part of the country or my part of the country. I've talked to them pretty much all night and it's good for them – just to listen to them. I have a lot of respect”.





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## FINDING CALM

Mark Bowman:  
You communicate,  
you talk...

New Course, St Andrews, 27 May 2018

Mark Bowman wears his Purple Heart with an oak leaf cluster. "I had seen the most and the worst of any combat, or I would have imagined combat was like. I lost many of my friends and some of my peers. Eight IEDs hit me a different times, various different types, whether buried or suicide bombs in vehicles: rockets impacted our vehicle. . . the fourth or fifth IED rendered me unconscious. . . it was pretty severe concussion with large potential for some brain damage. . . I got hit again, I had my bell rung, with some concussive results".

Mark credits his wife Jennifer for helping him



through a long and dangerous military career. "She's a huge support pillar. . . she has been incredible. She has been the epitome of what any soldier could ever expect. She guides me – she keeps me on the fairway". A golfing metaphor is not surprising because it is through playing the sport that Mark has found another source of calm. "I focus on the ball, stance, and club. I zone everything else out, like music for some people. It's a very peaceful thing, the golf swing, and I always strive to find that".

Mark knows that golf also helps to bring veterans together to share their experiences and their

present lives. "You communicate, you talk. You were in the same dirt, tasting the same stuff. . . how do you deal with your nightmares, your bad days?"

Mark's first round at St Andrews Links was on the New Course and he spent the early morning preparing himself. "I knew I would start feeling that anxiety and I pushed out eight miles to calm my nerves. I ran through the Old Course and along the beach. I felt calm again but I had to run that out of me. I felt focussed and I felt good, that I belonged there. Mentally I played my best round. The course treated us really well".





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## GREAT SHOT

### Tony Henry: I couldn't ask for no better

Old Course, St Andrews, 28 May 2018

Tony Henry has a neat line to dismiss a tricky putt: "this ain't pressure – I was on the first bird into I-raq, that's pressure!"

A graduate of the St Andrews Legacy beginner's course of April 2016, which was centred on the Balgove and Strathyrum courses, Tony made a return visit to the Home of Golf two years later. "Before, I was more tense because I didn't know much about the game. This time round it was easier to transition and implement it out on the bigger courses. It was less stressful. I've been through the elementary stages and now I'm in the college stages of the game!"



Joining up as a mortarman with airborne options, Tony had a highly successful career in the US infantry, ending on assignment with The Old Guard at Arlington. His physical and moral presence created a strong centre of gravity for the other participants. "I was a representative of the organization and I should take on that mentoring role, to make the guys feel at home, to make the best that the week has to offer. Leave everything else behind you and grasp everything here now.

"The anticipation heading up to the Old Course was just awe-inspiring... the Old Course, the epitome of all golf courses, all golfers dream

of playing it – pros and amateurs. To me, a wounded warrior, to play golf as a rehabilitative sport and hit a 200 yard plus drive at the first, how great a feeling that was... getting on the green in two on number 1 and on 18 – I couldn't ask for no better. That's the way to open and to close. That was the culmination of St Andrews Legacy – I fulfilled that mission statement. That's what I wanted to do – to make everyone proud, to make myself proud that they believed in me enough. Regardless of bad days, you can look forward to better days - there're those good shots out there. It's like living one day at a time, one shot at a time".







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## A NEW LIFE

### I'm feeding the memory bank: Michael Lammey

Old Course, St Andrews, 28 May 2018

“This is an amazing experience - to be in the moment, actually participating – that’s very special”.

Michael Lammey attended the St Andrews Legacy beginner’s course in April 2016 and, like Tony Henry, he returned to the Links a better player, ready for the Old Course and armed with custom-fitted clubs and good shoes – “I used to take two weeks off after playing, now I have no sores”.

Michael has undergone dozens of operations following a accident at sea when a boiler



exploded and scalded him with steam at 700F.

“I’m building a positive memory bank. You have these different memories. I’ve been trying to build up these positive memories. Feeding the memory bank – that means a lot to me...this regenerates the process. I really wanted to play well, to represent the organization”.

Two of Michael’s highlights on the Old Course were making par at the eleventh and smashing a drive into the middle of the fairway on the Road Hole: “I am really proud of that drive on the seventeenth – I hit good shots but always at the

end of the game! This week, just to know it’s possible, to be able to hit really nice shots, that’s beneficial. I’m more of a recreational golfer. I can’t see myself keeping score or entering competitions. For myself it’s about mind control. The more frustrated you are, the worse you play. That’s like life. You have to calm down. Alright, man, let it go - it’s beautiful out here. The different levels you go through mentally, it gives you more self-control... I go through cycles: depressions, anger, sadness, happiness. Then you get memories like this. I’ve adapted to this new life. I have to build up that new sense of normalcy”.





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## MORALE BUILDER

### Destination Scotland after 40 years of golfing

Crail Balcomie Links, 15 June 2018

“They’re happy when they play sports. We were the morale builders”. For Anastasios Athanasopoulos, better known as Apollo, sport has been at the heart of his military experience, both as a practitioner and in particular as a Physical Education instructor.

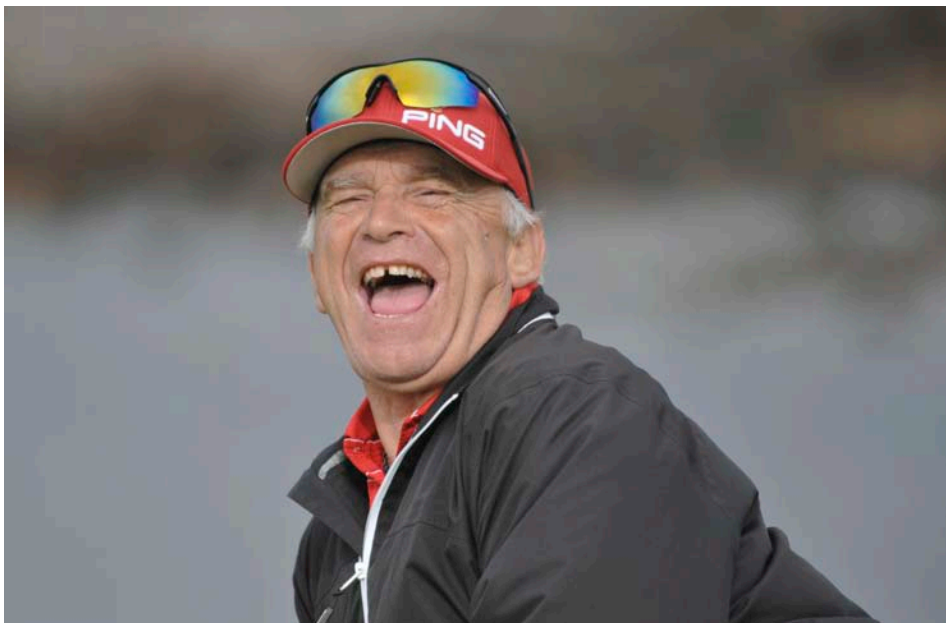
Apollo re-mustered from the 12e Régiment blindé du Canada to PE in 1971, two years after enlisting. He made the switch in the aftermath of the “October crisis” of the previous autumn, when British Trade Commissioner James Cross was kidnapped and held for two months by the Front de

libération du Québec. “Quebec was basically under siege,” he remembers. His original decision to join the military had been taken against the wishes of his father, who had emigrated from Greece with his family when Apollo was seven years old. “He thought it was the same as the Greek army, but I told him: this is voluntary and it teaches me a trade. I didn’t have much when I was young. We were eight kids, now down to five”.

Apollo spent a lot of his early career “on the Francophone side of the house,” and it was at Saint-Jean that he first played a bit of golf, a change

from his usual gymnastics and football. “I took to it slowly. I didn’t play regular golf until the west coast, in 1977. There was a course on the base at Comox; it was easy to play and cheap”.

Now 40 years into his golfing career, Apollo has finally made it to the Scottish heartland of the game starting at Crail Balcomie Links. “It is a beautiful course. I loved it. I had my first birdie of the trip on the sixteenth. To start on this course, that’s really good. It gets everybody in the mood. . . I had two operations last year which threw my swing out of whack, but I’m getting it back again”.





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## A NEW CALM

### I'm doing good right now, says Nicolas Hudon

The Duke's, St Andrews, 16 June 2018

Nicolas Hudon retired from the Royal 22e Régiment in 2013 after 24 years of service, forced to leave due to shoulder and back injuries. "I miss the friendship and sometimes the job too... it took two years to get over it".

Nicolas spent three years stationed in Lahr, Germany, and he is a veteran of three UN missions, having been deployed to Croatia (1992), Bosnia (1995) and Haiti in 1997, during the civil war. "Peacekeeping is not an easy thing to do. You are in the middle of the war and you cannot do all the things you want".



Golf has become increasingly important to Nick, allowing him to experience the kind of serenity he also feels when riding his motorcycle. "I started playing golf maybe ten years ago, four times a summer; now I'm playing more. It helps with patience; golf calms me down and I don't lose my temper. Last year I applied for the National Golf Camp and I was so thankful – when I heard I was going to St Andrews I thought: *are you kidding!* I'm doing good right now".

Even a drenching rain at The Duke's couldn't blunt Nick's enthusiasm for being in Scotland. "The

Duke's is an awesome course, with all the bunkers. I loved that course, even if it was raining... a little bit! That was a beautiful course and I enjoyed it".

Meeting the other members of the group has also helped Nicolas. "You learn a different mentality and that's very good. They've been through almost the same things you've been through. This trip has kept my head above water".

On his return to Canada, there is the prospect of more enjoyment for Nicolas on the golf course: "My girlfriend wants to try it," he revealed.





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## SEE IT ALL

### Dick Searl: I don't get angry any more

Machrihanish, 17 June 2018

“Golf is therapy. It takes me frustrations out. I don't get angry any more. That's down to two things: golf and dying”. Dick Searl underwent a heart procedure a year ago, during which he “died” twice on the operating table. “I can feel the wires if I don't make a good swing!” he says. “Golf is something I look forward to—I have the days marked out on the calendar”.

Conscripted into the Australian infantry via a lottery in 1970, Dick was sent from Adelaide to Vietnam at the age of 19, leaving his trade as a cinema projectionist to “walk around the scrub all day,

patrolling”. The entire experience had long-lasting and damaging consequences and it was only this year that he was able to return to Vietnam with his brother-in-law. “It was very painful to start off with. I was still fighting a war until I went back to Vietnam. Nobody told me to stop it. I had dozens and dozens of jobs. I couldn't settle down. It took me 30 years to take my medals out the drawer. When you get called a child-murdering bastard... The outlet for my anger used to be football. I played over 350 games for Athelstone”.

The trip to Scotland marks another step forward for

Dick, being the second time he has left Australia since 1970. “There was excitement at playing golf and apprehension—who is going to be here, am I going to fit in with them? In 20 minutes I was hitting it off. We've bonded really, really well. Like a family”.

The five-hour road trip to Machrihanish was a chance to see some of the finest scenery in Scotland. “I didn't think it was that far. My country is bloody big! I was interested in looking around. It was good. I could be dead tomorrow. I want to make sure I see everything I can now”.





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## GREAT GUYS

I haven't laughed this hard for years, says Ryan Vincent

Machrihanish, 18 June 2018

Although he comes from a family with a long and distinguished military record, including a father and grandfather who were fighter pilots and a grandmother who was an air traffic controller, Ryan Vincent did not at first think about joining up. It was thanks to his brother in law giving a good report of being in Bosnia with Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry that he changed his mind. "I thought: you can join, go overseas, fight for your country, jump out of planes..."

In the end he signed up for the 3rd Battalion and was with them from 1995 until 2004 when he



re-mustered as a fire fighter. By then, he'd done two tours in Bosnia and had been to Afghanistan. "Discipline was hard for me, structure was hard for me. After eight months basic training and then battle school, they teach you to be respectful and that helped shape the person I am today. It is a great battalion – tour after tour, training after training. You felt you were away 200 days a year but that's not a stable family life".

Still serving, Ryan has degenerative arthritis in both shoulders, requiring injections of synthetic cartilage. Golf was recommended to him as a replacement

for contact football and baseball. He had an especially good second day at Machrihanish. "I caught fire. I played really well. It was a redemption for me to come back and play the way I did". The St Andrews Legacy group has also inspired him. "Having representation from three different continents... I haven't laughed this hard for years". It was a special day, too, for Machrihanish member Davie Campbell, who notched a hole in one at the par three fourth. He enjoyed the whole experience of being with the veterans: "We don't know what they've been through. It really opens your eyes. I'm looking forward to next year. They're great guys".





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## IT WAS JOYFUL

I couldn't wipe the smile off my face, says Luke Lorraine

Kingarrock Hickory Course, 19 June 2018

‘Thought it was fantastic. To be able to go back in time and relive the moments they had in the past, I couldn't wipe the smile off my face. And to see the girls' faces... it was joyful’. Luke Lorraine is talking about the experience of playing Kingarrock Hickory Golf Course. The day was organized by representatives of the University of St Andrews Ladies Golf Club, who teamed up with the veterans (and a few fathers) to enjoy an afternoon's play in the style of Joyce Wethered and Bobby Jones.

For Luke, this trip to Scotland from Australia has been a milestone on a difficult journey back to



fitness and good health. He has been suffering from serious digestive issues, possibly in reaction to the ration packs issued during his two tours of Afghanistan, and has seen his weight fluctuate by an amazing 100kg over the past five years. He had been in rehab every week for eight weeks prior to the trip. He suffers from frozen shoulders, has three degenerative discs in his lumbar region and an injured left foot. Luke took the brave decision to live drug-free in October. ‘I push through it. My flexibility has saved me. Guys around me got blown up. I was shot at with all sorts of ammunition. The Taliban fired a rocket near my head – my ears were

shot. I have tinnitus and I'm nearly deaf in my right ear. My injuries were little bits and pieces over time. I hid my injuries. I didn't want to go home. I didn't tell anybody. I lost a mate on my first trip, on the second trip I went to six funerals in three weeks. It was just carnage’.

Luke got back into golf thanks to a call from a former St Andrews Legacy participant, Nick O'Brien. ‘It really hurt me, that first game, but it was awesome to get back out there... this is hugely beneficial. It has taught me so much...patience is one. I just have to analyze things a bit more’.





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## I LIKE THAT!

### Luc Mongrain: Golf is the best medicine

St Andrews, New Course, 20 June 2018

Luc Mongrain joined the Canadian military in 1984 as a communications and signals expert and there was an early deployment to Yugoslavia. "You'd drive through a country road... a few days later something had changed: there's a mass grave... The Balkans and Bosnia, it caught up with me a few years later".

A posting to the Central African Republic to observe elections was better. "To experience the different culture is great but it makes you realize what you have and what you don't



have. They have a whole different perspective on life. They're happy with what they have".

For Luc, who served for nineteen years, the St Andrews Legacy experience has reminded him of being in the military. "I miss it. I do, I do," he says. "It's occasions like this I miss it the most; the camaraderie. You can say anything and you're not going to be judged. Everybody brought something different to the table".

Luc started playing golf again after over a decade of inaction. "After all my injuries I was

looking for an outlet. I dug out my old clubs and went to a driving range and I thought: *I like that!* It was a blessing. It really, really helps me". A graduate of the 2017 Soldier On National Golf Camp, Luc has known since February that he would be coming to St Andrews. "It's been a boost – big time. I have been on a high since I found out and I haven't come down. I take time to realize what has really happened. A few times I was on the course and I thought: am I really doing this? Golf is the best medicine. To me, this is like the ultimate, this is it".





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## EYE- OPENER

Take your shot, try  
and enjoy it...says  
Martin Topps

St Andrews, Old Course, 21 June 2018

**M**artin Topps joined the Welsh Guards in 1992 and retired two years ago as Regimental Sergeant Major. "I thought I would do six years and I ended up doing 24; and I would do it all again if I had the chance".

There were two tours to Afghanistan. "The first tour I was out on the ground. It was a very, very busy six months. Some of what the young people have experienced is unreal. We are getting better at dealing with trauma; the key is getting people to talk. The normal infantry lads, they've seen a lot and done a lot... There is a generation of soldiers out there who have a lot to deal with and



who need help. I need to share more things with my wife". The second tour saw Martin based at Camp Bastion with supply chain responsibilities, sending ammunition, food and water to the front line. He also had to meet helicopters with any Welsh casualties. "Quite a few casualties came in".

Martin became a serious golfer in 2009, after the first tour, when he had five weeks off in the autumn. He joined the Anglesey Golf Club on a winter deal and he is currently the club captain. "When you've been in the military, you're a competitive person. In this game, when you're

on that course, in charge of the club, you have to control yourself – not get angry. It's a game a lot of military people could associate with. Take your shot, try and enjoy it. What will be, will be".

Of the St Andrews Legacy trip, Martin commented: "It's been very laid back, it's been fantastic. To sit and listen to what the other guys have been through, talking on the bus to Machrihanish, for me it's been eye-opening actually". Martin had an outstanding final day on the Old Course, getting a birdie four at the fifth and bagging plenty of pars including on the final two holes: "I'm absolutely thrilled to bits".







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## DONE THAT

Derek MacDonald:  
I've had a rough  
time of it

St Andrews, Old Course, 21 June 2018

Anyone wondering how special Britain's special forces are should start with Derek MacDonald. After being blasted by a Chinese made rocket in Afghanistan in 2007, Derek is thought to have survived on only one litre of blood. He was declared dead and placed in a body bag. His arm was struck by two bullets as he was being helicoptered out of the zone, and somehow he came back to life. He spent eight months in a coma, his heart stopping a further four times; he had to relearn language and recover his memories and learn to walk again over a two-year spell. His right jaw was shattered and reconstructed; his right shoulder and legs have titanium joints and implants. The MacDonalds of Glencoe are not easily broken.

Golf has played a crucial role in Derek's remarkable story. A therapist at Headley Court took him on to a football field and encouraged him to hit a ball with an iron. That he could do it showed he must have played the game before. In fact, there were pictures of him with golfing trophies as a boy but he couldn't recollect winning



them. When he first saw his golf kit in the garage, he wondered why there was only one glove in the bag.

"The golf experience moved me from being in a very lonely dark place into a happier place, more calming. We're used to the high stress... The actual coming through motion, for me having the titanium shoulder, makes it feel normal – I feel it functioning properly... I've had a rough time of it and done things other people couldn't do. How to put that to bed? Go out on the golf course and hit that little white thing!"

Derek is unquestionably one of the most deserving people to ever peg it up on the Old Course but he found himself shaking on both the first tee and the final hole. "I'm playing on a course all the legends have been on. After the loop, the whole course opens up and it's breathtaking. I'm doing something other people can only dream about". One highlight was driving the par four ninth. "I couldn't believe it. I looked back from the food cart behind the green and thought: *I've done that!*"





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## VERY CLOSE

Ryan Rivera...that  
one good shot,  
you get motivated

St Andrews, 12 July 2018

Ryan Rivera signed up on the fourth of July 1994 at the age of seventeen, fully enlisting the following year. After flying through his ASVAB tests he could have chosen to do anything. He chose to join the Marines.

After an initial spell in the infantry Ryan was sent on embassy duty in Warsaw and then Port-au-Prince. "I went out of mud puddles to sleeping in mansions... diplomats know how to live!"

Ryan was after something else. "I wanted to be as close to the action as possible – something a little



more dangerous". The action came very close indeed. In August 2003 Ryan was shot in the neck during a firefight in Iraq. The bullet is still encased in his neck muscles, only two millimetres from his spine. "I was completely paralysed. I went through a pretty aggressive re-hab lasting 36 months. Slowly I was able to regain some of my motor functions. The doctors told me walking would be difficult and I would not be able to run. They provided me with my motivation to get better".

Ryan retired in 2006 and started golfing in 2014, after attending a clinic at Fort Belvoir. "I'm used

to physical contact but golf is technique – not how much effort you put into it. All the small things – there is so much going on. I found it an enjoyable challenge. I'm still right side paralysed but I'm utilising those muscles in a way that's good for me".

Having a small group around him and getting personal instruction from Fort Sam Houston's PGA pro Joe Mendez has helped Ryan push on in his golfing development. "This is the first time I've played eighteen holes and when you get that one good shot, you get motivated. I'm extremely excited to get back on the course".





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## SLOW DOWN

I've been running  
through life...  
Brian Ash

St Andrews, 13 July 2018

It takes Brian Ash a long time to mention his injuries: a cracked L5, a shattered ankle received in a firefight in Afghanistan. He first talks about his pride in becoming a Marine. "Some people take on the task of defending their country," he says.

An outstanding recruit, Brian became a squad leader at age nineteen; "the next youngest guy was 26, the oldest was 34". He was involved in the aftermath of Operation Red Wings, made famous in Marcus Luttrell's book *Lone Survivor* and the subsequent movie. Luttrell's three Navy



SEAL colleagues were killed after being attacked by pro-Taliban nationals, and then sixteen Americans died when an RPG-7 hit their Chinook rescue helicopter. Brian was a member of the Quick Reaction Force sent in to recover the bodies and to find Luttrell, who was taken in by a local villager. "Our job was to take fire and to take attention away from them...we were out there for 27 days. We ran out of food, ran out of water... We succeeded in taking control of the situation". Brian duck taped his injured ankle for all 27 days and would eventually need over three years of surgery.

After leaving the Marines, Brian joined the army reserves, serving six years as a drill sergeant, but he found civilian life progressively more difficult. Between 2007 and 2013 he had seven or eight jobs. He takes daily medications.

"I've been running through life. It's time for me to start walking. With golf, you walk; you take your time. You slow down...When I'm out there my PTSD doesn't stand a chance. Events in my life had to happen. I've lost more friends than when I was in. I'm doing it for them".





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## COMING BACK

### Scott Ostrom: I've struggled for a long time to be at peace

Crail Criaghead Links, 15 July 2018

“I wanted to have a family. I wanted to have brothers wherever I went. I was a Recon Marine, that’s what I did. I did clandestine ops and watched people from afar. I got exactly what I wanted. I got a family. I got to run around other people’s neighbourhoods and cause havoc... I wanted to be a hero; in my mind it was being a martyr”.

Scott Ostrom joined the Marines in March 2003 and within three years he had completed two tours of Iraq lasting thirteen months total. “I was surprised how many fights we got into and how often it happened. Every single



day we were outside, we were getting shot at. There are hours and hours and sometimes days of boredom punctuated by the most excitement you’ve ever had – which is exactly what I wanted”.

Scott was honourably discharged in 2007. “I felt guilty about what I did and what I couldn’t do. John Wayne didn’t go to the VA. I felt the most important thing in my life had already happened”.

Together with photojournalist Craig F Walker, Scott confronted the aftermath of leaving

the military in a sequence of photographs and captions called “Welcome Home” that was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 2012. “I documented that time in my life. The failed relationships, the mental anguish... I’ve struggled for a long time to be at peace”.

Scott played some golf growing up but it was an invitation to a Semper Fi Fund event in 2017 that got him back out on the links. “I took to it. I really enjoyed it. I thought it was something I couldn’t master. It seems like a challenge. A lot of sports come naturally. It is something I could really put a lot of time into”.





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## NEW FOCUS

Golf has become a family thing says Alan Gaston

Carnoustie, 17 July 2018

“At The Open I see the pros doing the same thing Joe is teaching us. It’s like basic training. This is something that I want to do; you really need to put your heart into it. My wife and son, who is six, also want to play. Golf has become a family thing”.

Twenty-one years after joining the US Army Alan Gaston can look back on multiple deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Kuwait. Family has always provided crucial support. As a young man, his grandmother helped him transition from his first posting in Iraq. “I would think: *hey it’s so quiet at home; do*

*you feel something’s not right?* Sitting with my back to the wall with that heightened sense of awareness. You don’t know how to turn it off”. His deployment to Afghanistan in 2007 came after marriage, and a 2012 NATO mission to Kosovo came after becoming a father. There was extra responsibility, too, in having six soldiers to watch over. “The first half of my career I was always fighting a timeline. After NATO I embraced it wholeheartedly. It was not just the uniform, the allure, the lifestyle... there wasn’t a struggle about having to choose”.

Alan was injured in June 2016, losing the sight

in his right eye. His grandmother passed just three days before surgery to try and save the eye. “That had a snowball effect, it was a very hard time. Sometimes you hear comments like: we’re worth more dead than alive. Getting into golf has helped me focus my energy somewhere else, on something more productive...it can have the aesthetic of taking you out of the day to day, and sometimes that’s all you need”.

Alan’s day at The Open included meeting his grandmother’s favourite player. “When Tiger was playing on a Sunday, you didn’t call her home – she wouldn’t answer the phone!”





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## IT'S MY PEACE

Golf has taken  
me up so much,  
says James Shead

Carnoustie, 17 July 2018

“I am a college student right now because I’ve been able to redirect my energy and focus through golf. I can be alone and not have those horrible thoughts in my head...the only time. It has taken me up so much. I have a light at the end of this tunnel. It’s the best possible thing that could have ever happened to me”.

James Shead joined up as an 18-year old infantryman in 1993 and retired two years ago having spent much of his subsequent career as a medic. He has been deployed in places ranging from Somalia to the Balkans and Korea. His back was fractured in 2008 after being hit by an IED in Mosul.

In 2010 he started working in US Army Medical Command. “That’s when my PTSD really began to take hold of me. My whole military life was non-stop. Then I had a desk job. I sat in front of two computers. I was like a freight train that travelled at 100mph slowing down to 10, but with all that baggage. I didn’t know how to deal with it”.



James went to the Warrior Transition Unit at Fort Sam Houston from 2014, and it was there that he was offered golf as a physical therapy. “I was done. I was physically and mentally exhausted. There was not a happy bone left in my body. I was a very angry person. I was just mad and mean”.

Of the St Andrews Legacy trip, James says: “It helps give validity to me thinking how golf can do this to me. I come here and I meet these guys and they say: “I’m the exact same way”. I have some really good friends who have some really bad struggles - I’m trying to get them into golf. I have no problems going out five days a week by myself. It’s my peace. I’ve been able to stop taking two of my medications since I started the game”.

James recalled meeting Tiger Woods at Carnoustie. “It was neat to see the look on Tiger’s face change. When he came over and found out who we were, it was a totally different face. We can have that effect on him”.

