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INSIDE TRACK

Golf brings people together, says Dan Matthews

St Andrews, 18 April 2016

“If you dropped a hat I was ready to go to war with you. I’m a blown-up soldier; I’ve got stories that would turn people’s hair white”. Sgt Dan Matthews joined the 3rd Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment in April 1997 after serving in the reserves while at university in Montreal. He has a degree in education but he signed up after the regular force called to say they had openings. “I wanted to do something that had an impact; somehow, someway”.

A veteran of Bosnia and Afghanistan, Dan was



part of ISAF under NATO in 2003 when he was in an ambush that killed two colleagues. Dan’s right eye was damaged and he was diagnosed with PTSD the following year. Dan helped save the driver of their vehicle but he took his own life three years later. “I got stable, got treatment, but in 2012 I crashed again. I didn’t leave the house for a year”.

A breakthrough came when Major Jay Feyko of Soldier On Canada invited Dan to The Mandarin course to photograph a golf day. “I was seeing what the sport was doing. People

were talking to each other and laughing. It rained so hard I was hydroplaning in a buggy but the guys finished 18 holes. I thought: if this sport can do that to people I need to find out more about it”.

In St Andrews, Dan is part of a group of beginners getting some intensive coaching and playing experience. “It’s huge for me. I have a chance to play a game that brings people together. I don’t feel I’m an outsider. We’re all on the same team. You’re playing golf in Scotland: be happy!”





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IN A CLOUD

Moses Sonera: I feel like I am free again

St Andrews, 19 April 2016

“I’m walking in a cloud. When I play golf I feel like I am free again. St Andrews Legacy helps me and teaches me. It’s amazing. It’s unreal”.

Moses Sonera was 24-years-old when he joined the army in June 1998. He had tried to enlist twice before and then spent a couple of years in college. “My wife told me we were having a second kid. I thought the best way to raise my family and have a respectable life was to enlist in the army. I was thinking about 20 years



and then retire”.

Six years into his army career Moses was in Iraq, working as a combat engineer. On 30 March 2004, a mortar exploded on top of his quarters. “A couple of guys were killed. We survived a lot of stuff but I got hit and I realized I was no superman. The medics tried to save my left leg – it was 18 months to the amputation. I was 30-years-old then, married with three children. My wife always supported me in the army. I changed more than her.

She and the kids, there are four now, they saved my life. At first I couldn’t trust nobody”.

Originally from Camuy in Puerto Rico, Moses is now based in San Antonio.

“I always played contact sports. I thought golf was only for rich people, people with power, but I got respect over here and it helped me get better in my game. My goal is to be a better golfer. When you love the sport you want to get better”.





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GETTING REAL

We're building a brotherhood:
Tony Henry

St Andrews, 20 April 2016

“I was on the first bird to go on the largest air assault mission in history at the time. Sitting in the Blackhawk, your legs just hanging, talk about getting real... it got real then”.

US Virgin Islands native Tony Henry was in Iraq for eight months from September 1990, just getting out of his teens. “My recruiter was a mortarman and I joined the infantry to be a mortarman with airborne as an option”. After a quarter century of service Tony has his Airborne Wings (1988), Air Assault Wings (1989), an Expert Infantryman Badge (1989/90) and

three Combat Infantryman Badges from his deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan (1990/91; 2002/03; 2010/11). Tony has been part of the Presidential Salute Battery and has participated in ceremonies at the White House, the Pentagon and Andrews Air Force Base. Now on his final assignment with The Old Guard, Arlington, Tony is due to retire later this year.

Over the years he has suffered a shattered ankle and had surgeries on his knees, back, elbow and right shoulder. His first golf experience came after a recreational therapist at Fort Belvoir said he needed to find other hobbies

outside the weight room: “It was the Fall of 2013 when I first actually picked up a golf club and got lessons”. The following year, after decompression surgery and with his arm still in a sling, Tony was back on the golf range hitting balls: “I knew I was addicted to it!” he says.

In St Andrews, Tony has enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to learn and improve. “It enforces that muscle memory, it starts becoming like a habit. I wish I could stay longer. Our group is really good. We all are here for a common goal: to get better at golf and to build a brotherhood”.





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TEAM TIPS

Praise for LET pro Whitney Hillier from Eric Scott

St Andrews, 21 April 2016

“I joined the army five days after graduating high school. My grandfather was in World War II, I got his middle name”.

Eric Scott was deployed to Iraq in 2003, six years into what would be almost eighteen years of service. He suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury from an explosion while on patrol, also sustaining shoulder and knee injuries, and in another incident one of his good friends was killed after taking his place: “the guilt for that is brutal”. Eric has been diagnosed with PTSD and he has a powerful definition of who

suffers from the condition: “anyone who’s seen something a human being shouldn’t see”.

A friend introduced Eric to golf after the army. “I hadn’t left the house for six months. My whole adult life was in the military; my entire identity was ripped out. Now, I’m playing golf in Scotland. This beginners’ course will make you fall in love with golf and make you aspire to get to the level to play the Old Course.

“Being here with a great bunch of guys who get it, where you don’t have to explain yourself,

helps you gel. Automatically I trust these guys”.

One of the highlights of the trip was meeting up with Ladies European Tour player Whitney Hillier. The Australian lives near St Andrews and was happy to spend time with the veterans, even playing a complete round with them over the Straththyrum Course. “Whitney is an amazing young woman. She took time out from her preparations for a pro tournament and played 18 holes with us. Watching her swing and listening to her was great and she gave us lots of tips and pointers”.





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KEEP IT NEW

Fresh challenges the driving force for Bill Keating

St Andrews, 22 April 2016

“I played one round of golf before I got hurt. I haven’t really enjoyed anything I did before. I took up hand cycling and rowing, doing them in an adaptive way; so, things that were new I’ve picked up and stayed with.

“I’ve always wanted to get a bit better at golf and I did a lot of practice before coming here but this is the first time I’ve had any coaching. I’m a very infantry guy – I wanted to kill the ball every time - but now I’m trying to make solid contact, just smoothly make contact with the ball rather than murder it!”



Bill Keating is one of the many military veterans who got hurt back in the States after returning from combat, in his case it was a train accident that left him a double amputee.

A graduate of Texas A&M, Bill was deployed to Iraq in 2007-08. He was close to joining the Green Berets when he had his misfortune. “Your sense of what is okay risk-wise changes dramatically. We left the wire every day, or every other day”.

This St Andrews Legacy event has focussed on

game improvement: “We got a lot of chances to learn and make adjustments”.

Seeing professional golfer Whitney Hiller hit the ball so well made a big impact: “Her ability to make the ball go left and right, it’s not the same golf I play!”

A day at the Kittocks Course at Fairmont St Andrews allowed the group to see how far they had come in a week. “We got to go out and implement the stuff we learned on the course. I had some good ball strikes. It was a lot of fun”.





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SPECIAL FEELING

Michael Lammey: St Andrews Legacy trip like a dream

St Andrews, 23 April 2016

Michael Lammey has undergone 55 surgeries in the ten years since he was scalded by superheated steam that escaped from a leaking boiler aboard the USS Frank Cable AS40. At a temperature of over 700F, the steam was hot enough to blow out the boiler fire. "I always wanted to see the ocean and travel...and the navy's the safest branch in the military" he says with characteristically wry humour.

Medically retired in 2010 at the age of 27, Michael now runs a company called Safety Happens, specializing in giving advice on best practice and avoiding complacency. He talks



to photographs of his injuries taken by his wife whom he met during a tour to Guam.

He took up golf 18 months ago, "because that's what retired people do. I bought a driver and couldn't hit anything. It was a lot harder than I thought. I had no idea how in-depth the game could be".

After a week of practice, play and coaching, Mike and the other veterans got the chance to play Kingarock, a hickory-only course about 10 miles south of St Andrews. "It was the best ending you can have; after learning new

techniques, to take a step back in time and see how much the game has developed. The St Andrews Legacy trip has been like a dream. I can't believe some of things we've been able to do. You feel special, special lucky".

Anna Herbelin of the University of St Andrews Ladies Golf Club organized the event. Anna said: "It truly was a memorable experience and the ladies have all been saying how inspirational the veterans were". Barbara Grounds, honorary secretary of the St Rule Club in St Andrews, also participated with colleagues. "[We] were moved by the whole experience" she said.





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STRONG SUPPORT

Lessons learned in a fantastic week

St Andrews, 24 April 2016

My first duty is to thank PGA professional Joe Mendez of Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, for all he did during the first of three St Andrews Legacy events this summer. He expertly coached six veterans who were newcomers to the game, encouraging them to improve and demonstrating in his own person the benefits of the golfing life.

Our newsletter has two new logos added to those of our friends at Beacon Hall, Toronto, and Del Rio, Modesto. The Challenged Athletes Foundation, San Diego, is a new partner and I look forward to deepening that relationship. I am also delighted to announce that Solo Rider, based in Dallas, has donated four units to St Andrews Legacy. Wow! I am convinced that these devices offer the best way for people with physical restrictions to continue to play golf. With opportunities in Kentucky and Indiana in the US and developments in the pipeline for the UK and Australia we are aiming at continued and steady growth.

The veterans were welcomed to St Andrews Links, The Kittingtons at Fairmont St Andrews, and to Kingarrock Hickory Course, Hill Of



Tarvit. This last event was organized by the University of St Andrews Ladies Golf Club and also featured representatives from the St Rule Club. I am very grateful to Anna Herbelin at the University for all her hard work on our behalf.

R&A professional Jim Farmer took the guys into the Royal and Ancient Golf Clubhouse for a tour. Jim was about to have his portrait painted in oils and the result will be hung in the club: a fitting tribute. I'd also like to thank Shona Malcolm of the PGA in Scotland for spending a morning with our group – it means so much for them to be accepted into the golfing community like this. Whitney Hillier was amazing – playing a round with the veterans on the Straththyrum Course and taking time out to help them all through the week when she was in the midst of preparing to embark on a season with the Ladies European Tour. Thanks Whitney. Finally, thanks to John Grant, Janet Finlay, Paul Kirkcaldy and their colleagues at St Andrews Links Trust - everyone involved was brilliant.

Graham Proctor
Founder St Andrews Legacy



Joe Mendez (left)



Shona Malcolm (centre)



Whitney Hillier



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FIRST IN LINE

I'm getting back to my old self, says Keith Howard

Crail, 9 June 2016

“I am the first Canadian since the Korean War to go into combat”. In 2001, Keith Howard had been deployed to the USS Enterprise (“a dirty old beast of a carrier”) with the focus on Iraq, but in September “the towers went down and we were first into Afghanistan. Everything was done from the air and sea initially”.

By then, Keith was a fifteen-year army veteran. “Both my grandfathers were in the Second World War. You see how the rest of the family and the community respected that. You look at people like that with wide

open eyes, especially as a kid”. From a first deployment in the Arctic Circle, Keith’s career took him throughout the Americas and the Caribbean as well as to the Middle East. An expert in communications and signals intelligence, Keith studied languages and was a counter-narcotics specialist.

Last year, Keith enrolled in the Soldier On golf programme. “When we all got together you could tell who really needed help; all the ones, like it was a struggle to be there. I was so nervous, my anxiety was too high - but it only took a day or so and there I was back

again. It broke down the wall. From an 8 by 8 room, I felt I was back out in the world again. I started having a smile on my face, contacting my family, having a routine – getting back to my old self”.

First stop in the second St Andrews Legacy event of 2016 was Crail. “I will go back and brag this place up,” said Keith. “I’m blown away. It’s a 50-50 thing – the golf is a close second to seeing all the guys and hanging out with them. It’ll be a bond that we’ll have for the rest of our lives. We’ll have friends for life”.





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GLOBAL MISSION

No regrets after 35 years service from Tim Aldridge

St Andrews, 10 June 2016

“I spent 35 years in the military, including ten years of away time. I’ve been all over the planet”.

Tim Aldridge walked into a recruitment centre in Vancouver in December 1979, returning to civilian life only 14 months ago having been deployed to Germany, Syria, Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Nepal and Singapore. “I have no regrets” he says.

Tim’s generation of Canadians has seen a huge change in the role of the military;



“Canada is a key figure within NATO now. We shifted from peacekeeping to combat operations. Now we are rebuilding our peacekeeping role. Afghanistan has changed the eyes and ears of Canadians. There is more respect for what we do. We’ve come a long way, but unfortunately at the expense of the lives of men and women”.

Golf has helped Tim to cope with spinal injuries and has given him a calm space: “It takes you away from everything else. I don’t think about the white noise around me”.

Tim played his round at The Kittocks course (“a true test of golf, a spectacular venue”) with LET pro Whitney Hillier, joining the veterans for the second time this year. “Whitney provided us with mentorship and guidance, and she was a lot of fun to be around. She shared her experience with us and said how proud she was to be part of the process”.

For Tim, there will soon be the pride of seeing his oldest son following in his footsteps when he enrolls at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario.





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NEWLY LANDED

Joe Tremblay looks back on a life under the ocean waves

St Andrews, The Duke's Course, 11 June 2016

Joe Tremblay began his Canadian navy career in 1982, signing on as a mechanical engineer, but in 1986 he discovered his real calling: "I found my passion in diving".

He spent almost the entire year of 1987 learning to be a search and rescue technician. "I was doing something that not everybody could do. When you are underwater, you are breathing and walking like you are on the moon, or skydiving without a parachute".

The tasks he took on included body and equipment recovery, explosive ordnance



disposal work, ship repair, cleaning jetties and clearing port entry. Such work is mission oriented but always involves entering into another world. "The fish are more transparent, more fluorescent in the centre. The deeper you go, you lose your reds and oranges and blues and everything goes black and white. Past 165 feet you need lights in order to see what's below. We use sonar to get to our destination".

Joe has gone to 310 feet in training and 225 feet in operation. "What we do incorporates a lot of decompression steps". In dealing with the SwissAir disaster of 1998, Joe dived to 185 feet.

"The bottom time was 20 minutes. We were picking up body parts for ten minutes and then airframe parts for ten minutes and putting them in different baskets. It was gruesome. As time went on the smell of the bodies would come right into your mask".

Joe will leave the military in October after 34 years and eight months. Golf now provides a physical outlet – and a future activity. "We've been talking to the Americans, we're thinking of playing at Congressional. This is by far the most amazing trip I have ever done. The goosebumps going down your body... it's overwhelming".





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BEING STRONG

The biggest healing is from fellowship:
John Faulkenberry

Machrihanish, 12 June 2016

John Faulkenberry is third generation Texas military. "When I was eight years old I saw a documentary about the US Airborne Rangers and decided I wanted to do that. I was already living that way. I already committed to this lifestyle. I went to Georgia for basic training while my friends went off to Cancun".

John joined the 3rd Ranger Regiment in peacetime and transitioned into a combat role, culminating in deployment to Kuwait in 2002 and Iraq in 2003-2004 and 2005-2006. "You have an opportunity to prove yourself. After the twin towers we started shooting better, running harder.



The mentality changes across the board; you're training for a reason. The first firefight, it's pretty intense. Everything happens in slow motion when the bullets are flying. Life slows down. You get to see all this play out. You did train hard enough".

In 2007, John was in Afghanistan. "I was shot in a big ambush in Korengal Valley, along the Pakistan border. It started out as a village assessment and then we started taking fire. I was shot multiple times by a PKM. We fought an overwhelming enemy force and won". John's right leg was damaged badly enough for him to stay at Walter Reed for 11 months: "I had a ton

of surgeries". He finished his road to recovery in Texas but had to go through an amputation in March 2010.

He got into golf through therapy. "You go through all the pain, gaining core strengthening and balance - a bit like the golf swing - it transfers directly onto the golf course. We translate our hard work into fun". Now attached to the Military Warriors Support Foundation, John is a highly successful fundraiser leading a mentorship programme that provides outdoor activities. "Everybody's normal is different, but the biggest healing is from fellowship".





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RELAX, REFLECT

Tonce Cutler:
“Machrihanish...
those guys are real”

Machrihanish, 13 June 2016

“I was transitioning back to the real world, to director of operations for a security company; I was engrossed in that. Coming here allowed me to relax and let my hair down, allowed me to take a deep breath and reflect and do one of the things I love to do – play golf”.

Tonce Cutler has just retired from the Washington DC police department and he is also a veteran of the National Guard, joining in 1982 and serving in Desert Storm, Iraq, and twice in Afghanistan. He has been injured in his deployments and plays golf through the Fort Belvoir Wounded Warrior golf programme.



“Golf gave me an outlet to focus on other things than my rehab. I was introduced to golf by my father years ago and I was a single digit handicap, but I had to start from scratch, learning about equilibrium because of hip and balance issues”.

The second day of the St Andrews Legacy trip to Machrihanish once again saw the club members play with the veterans and welcome them onto one of the best courses in Scotland. “My guys at Machrihanish, those guys were very helpful. The companionship, the way they took us in, the camaraderie, it’s more of a family atmosphere,

more like friendship. Those guys are real”. Machrihanish member Ian McGougan, himself a former marine who served in Northern Iraq, has played in the event every year. “No way I’m missing this,” he says. “We love our golf club and we love to share it”.

Tonce is enthusiastic about his St Andrews Legacy experience. “I checked off several parts of my bucket list. It’s unbelievable. You can’t do much more than pay us for being here! The mesh we’ve had between the two groups has been great. Soldiers are going to be soldiers; when it all comes down to it, we love each other”.





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LIKE FAMILY

How good it was to
be alive with friends:
Russell Brevick

St Andrews, 14-15 June 2016

Russell Brevick joined the US Air Force in 1998 and was soon sent to officer training school. He was commissioned in 2000 and promoted to second lieutenant in 2001. "I was a management analyst in wartime mission planning. My job was basically moving troops".

Posted to Fort Bragg, Russell was part of the general staff and he became a military training instructor – "I was an example, a mentor for future leaders". In this, he was following in the steps of his grandfather, who had performed optical missions for General Doolittle's Raid on Japan in 1942, the US response to Pearl



Harbour, as well as for the Battle of Midway and later battles in Africa.

Russell has had to overcome a few personal battles of his own in recent years but is now involved in veterans' causes and activities.

"I didn't really start golfing until 2013. I never in my life had a golf vacation with friends. The biggest thing is making me belong here. It felt like family. I was able to just be me, and enjoy it. The timing was perfect. I now feel I have life-long friends, like battle buddies. I was holding back tears every other hole. I learned more

about golf than in all the years I played – it's not just about scoring, it's how do you enjoy the day. We laughed a lot".

Finishing his round on the Old Course to the sound of pipes and drums also made an impact. "I wasn't thinking about the game of golf at that time. I was thinking about how good it was to be alive with friends. I felt honoured just to be there. I felt completed. I didn't shake hands; I hugged people.

"My heart is full. I've learned what golf can do".





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COMING BACK

It's magical for the mind:
Kevin O'Neil

Crail, 10 July 2016

“It was the best game in the last eight years”. Kevin O’Neil of the Royal 22nd Regiment (the Van Doos) had just shot a four-over par score at Balcomie Links, Crail, in a round including five birdies.

A single-digit handicapper by age 18, when he played at Deux Montagnes in his native Ottawa, Kevin’s enthusiasm for golf had waned after his experiences throughout two deployments to Afghanistan between 2007-2009. A driver/gunner on VBLs (“a tank with wheels”), Kevin went through enemy fire, mortar shelling (one of which

hit a spot he left only five seconds before) and survived an IED explosion that killed two engineer colleagues. Kevin has had four surgeries on his knees and still finds it hard to experience unexpected loud noises.

“My 13-year-old son knows when I’m away, stressed or scared. For example, when I heard a bomb noise during a Super Bowl ad. He’s the reason I went to get help. Now I’m getting close to him”.

Getting back into playing golf is another step on the road to recovery for Kevin. “Last

year I felt I was ready and I applied for the Soldier On golf camp in Toronto; the best thing I’ve done since a long time ago. After 2009 I lost my love of golf. I just wanted to lie down and rest. I’m proud I’m still able to do these kinds of shots. This is something I would not have done myself.

“I don’t feel my pain. For me it’s a dream come true. I’m enjoying the moment with guys I’ve just met. We’re having fun. We talk about what we’ve lived in the past, things that happen. Just to see a guy laugh, having fun, it’s magical for the mind”.





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NEW TERMS

Jim Myler looks to include golf in his future life

Fairmont St Andrews, 11 July 2016

“I’m leaving not on my terms. I’m leaving because I’m broken”. Jim Myler is about to exit the Canadian army with 27 years’ service to his name. After four hip surgeries and two hernias, the Newfoundland native is being medically released.

Jim joined the artillery straight out of high school. The youngest of ten children, he soon learned that army life could take him almost anywhere. His first posting was to icy Manitoba and his first tour of duty was to Cyprus: “I was young, a blue beret. I felt bullet-proof”. Looking back on that period, Jim says: “Canada’s

relations with other countries were pretty stable. The military provided forces for peacekeeping – that’s the role we took on until 9-11. 9-11 changes all that”.

Jim had to face up to a very different challenge in Afghanistan, where he served a total of two years in theatre between 2003 and 2011, firstly in Kabul and then Kandahar. In 2006 he took part in Operation Medusa. The first firefight he witnessed lasted seven hours, then “it was two firefights every single day”.

After this period, the Canadians, Americans

and British started sharing technology more effectively, including live feeds of what was flying in the area. Jim has been teaching some of these lessons for the past five years: “I’ve travelled, met a lot of people and worked with lots of different nations”.

Jim has been playing the odd round of golf since 2004 but it was not until 2012 that he played a full summer. Even then, the following three years were taken up with complications from his hip surgery. “For 19 months I was on a cane. Golf is good for my brain. I love playing the sport and I love watching it”.





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HERE... ALIVE

You gotta roll
with the punches:
Chris Leverkuhn

The Duke's St Andrews, 12 July 2016

“9-11 happened while I was in school, in class. I turned to my buddy and said: I'm going to war”. Chris Leverkuhn had joined the army reserve in peacetime but quickly accepted his new role. “You gotta roll with the punches. It came with the terms, it was part of the agreement”.

Chris was part of the 209th Quartermaster Co, joining as a petroleum supply specialist (unfortunately, just before the sign-on bonus quadrupled!). He was in Iraq by spring of 2003, helping to set up the first few bag farms for supplying diesel and gasoline.



On January 2, 2004, Chris was in a 5000 gallon fuel truck hit by a cell phone operated IED followed by an RPG attack. The vehicle jack-knifed and Chris was thrown 30 feet. “My co-driver didn't end up making it. The God toss got me clear of the fuel and the flames. I had damage to both my legs. The left one was fractured in three different places but generally okay. It was saveable. The right leg, they could have saved it but it meant crutches or a walker for life. Guys who went ahead and had their legs removed were doing much better. It was a choice for me. For them to save my leg, they'd have had to cripple the rest of me”.

Now living in San Antonio and working as a program manager for Operation Comfort, Indiana native Chris is straightforward about his present situation: “I'm here. I'm alive”.

Chris took up golf seriously last year and has benefitted from an 8-week long Ping-sponsored course that gives veterans instruction and access to top quality golf equipment. However, he has learned an important lesson in Scotland. “In the States you start off with the driver. Here, you have to play smart and utilize what you have in the bag. You're forced to figure it out. My golf game's gotten better with each day”.





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A LITTLE SPECIAL

Jody Thompson gets thanks of the pros at The Open

The Open, Royal Troon, 13 July 2016

“I never had the experience of getting up close and personal with the pros before. For them to thank me for my service, it kind of made me feel a little special”.

Jody Thompson spent twenty years in the US Army as a cavalry scout engaged in forward reconnaissance. A rocket-propelled grenade exploded three feet from him in Afghanistan, blowing him off a cliff edge and leading to serious neck and back injuries. “I required specialist treatment. There was only a 50-50 chance of success. My mother and father spent



their life savings. For months I was afraid to jump or run – I was afraid I was going to go back to how I was”.

Coming to Scotland brought more challenges for the Texan. “Getting on the airplane to get over here was the scariest thing I’ve done. That was a healing process for me all by itself. That was a bridge for me to cross, just being here”.

Jody took up golf after being medically discharged from the army. “I started feeling like I wanted to give up. Leaving the military is

like losing family. Losses at war are like losing a brother, a sister, or a child. This is a sport for someone with PTSD – out in nature, getting time with a small group of veterans. We all share the same struggle and pains in some form or fashion”.

Having day-long access to the practice ground at The Open was fun for Jody, where he met Gary Player (left) and Phil Mickelson (right) among many others. “I was laughing at the little inch-sized divots the pros take. If we were on the range it would be all hacked up!”





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LIKE HEAVEN

Steven Sarault: Golf is my healthy addiction

The Open, Royal Troon, 13 July 2016

Steven Sarault had a very big smile on his face after visiting The Open at Royal Troon.

“It was such an honour to be there. The whole day was amazing. I have over 45 autographs on my pin flag. It’s them coming up to us and saying: *thank you for doing what you do*. What does it mean to me? It’s all part of my recovery. For that day, everything had gone away...all the hardships. Honestly, it was like heaven being on that driving range. It was all about the team, the group, all about us”.



Steven did 20 years in the Canadian military, coming out in 2008. He served two operational tours in Afghanistan and two peacekeeping tours in Cyprus and Bosnia. “My knees and back are pretty shot. I’m proud of myself for walking so much this week”.

Steven started golfing at age 16 but had stopped playing in his thirties. “My passion for golf started coming back with the help of Soldier On. When I go on a golf course, I’m at peace, not thinking about the problems I’ve gone through.

Golf is my new addiction, my healthy addiction”. In St Andrews Steven got each day off to a similar start. “I experienced some serenity. Every morning I went to the Swilcan Bridge and soaked it all in”.

At Royal Troon, two of his favourite experiences were meeting world no.1 Jason Day (right) and when Mark O’Meara came to talk to the group (left). “Mark spent at least twenty minutes with us and put everyone at their ease with his demeanour - and *he* was so humbled and honoured to meet *us!*”





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LIFE IS BETTER

Everyone wants to be part of the best:
Hubert Gonzales

St Andrews, 14 July 2016

“My uncles were in the military and I joined because I wanted to be like them. I grew up in the Philippines and there is a lot of history there – with the US, Japan and World War II. It motivated me to want to be a soldier, to want to do something good with my life”.

For Hubert Gonzales, this meant only one choice: the Marines. “An uncle was in the Marine Corps and I like the discipline and the tradition, they have a really good reputation about that. Most of the time they get sent out to war. Everyone wants to be



part of the best”.

In March 2011, just short of six years into his military career, Hubert was a squad leader in Afghanistan conducting a foot patrol when he stepped on an IED. The device was designed to let off 20lbs of explosives but only 2lbs went off. “I injured my left leg – the heel, bone and ankle”.

The damage was severe and Hubert lived with the difficult consequences for another four years, but in January 2015 he agreed to an amputation. “I wanted to have a better

life. I was so depressed. I looked down on myself and felt useless”.

One of the outcomes of his decision has been the ability to play golf and Hubert has been relishing the chance to play the game in Scotland. “Five days of golf have helped me gain more confidence and I have learned a lot. I never really get to play golf near the coast or on such well-maintained courses. Most are either hard, mud, tall grass, or their greens are literally sand. In the US, if we play golf every day we’d be broke!”





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TAKE IT ALL IN

Cameron Crosby: Golf is a sport for everyone

St Andrews, 15 July 2016

“Regardless of all the pain, I wanted to walk the whole course and walk over the Swilcan Bridge. When I heard the pipes at the end, everything hit me once again: you’re in Scotland, this is the Old Course; this is what it’s all about. It’s how it is in life, going with it and hoping for the best – and take as much advice as possible along the way”.

Cameron Crosby joined the army in June 2013, following his father and grandfathers, who had been in the navy and air force. “I definitely wanted to serve my country and preserve that heritage of the Crosby name”.



Only sixteen months into his career, Cameron was on guard duty at his base in South Korea when he was stabbed in the back of the neck by a fellow American soldier. Cameron suffered left paresis. “It was six months until I was able to stand and my left half had a lot of atrophy”.

Cameron took up golf after his injury. “At first, 9 holes was all I could do. I’d get so tired and fatigued. It was six months until I played a full 18. It is good therapy both mentally and physically. For example, I use my left hand and it helps to strengthen my grip. My grandfather played and my father played. I think: why did it

take so long for me to play it. Golf is a sport for the young, the old, the sick...everyone”.

Originally from Los Angeles, Cameron is now living in San Antonio. He is about to start a college course in education and intends to get a qualification that will allow him to teach veterans’ kids with autism or some other type of physical injury. “I’m very blessed to call San Antonio home. Me and my wife married in San Antonio and we are about to have our first baby in San Antonio. I want to be the best husband and father I can be and be a role model for my wife and child”.





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A GREAT WEEK

Enzo Rizzi: It makes me feel special

St Andrews, 16 July 2016

Enzo Rizzi has been playing golf for only a year, and he is hooked.

“Previously my main activity was working out. I was in the gym five days a week. I went golfing once with my son and his friends and I had to make a decision. I couldn’t go to the gym and play golf, so now I try to golf five times a week. Golf has brought me closer to my boys”.

For a new golfaholic, this week was an amazing experience. Playing golf at top class courses, meeting eleven Open champions



and the top three ranked players in the world at Royal Troon, and sharing it all with seven other veterans from his native Canada and the United States.

“I loved this week. It was a great bunch of guys here and I enjoyed being a father figure to the younger guys. I enjoyed learning about the history of golf – it’s not only about the golf course, it’s also about the people who live in St Andrews”.

Enzo sees the benefits of golf from the point of view of an athlete as well as a veteran. “One

thing I really enjoy about golf is how peaceful it is. Other than that, just being outside – a lot of people don’t realize the health benefits. I also like the people you meet. I used to play a lot of hockey – you didn’t want to socialize with your opponents after the match!”

Enzo has big ambitions for his game. “I want to be a scratch golfer. Every sport I’ve played I’ve always been intense about it. I love sport”.

Looking back on the week, Enzo says: “It amazes me that people care so much; it makes me feel special”.

