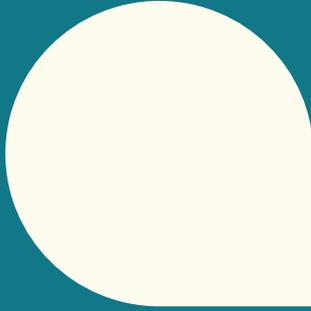
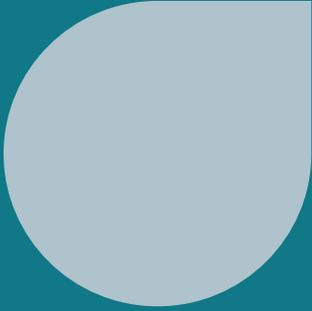
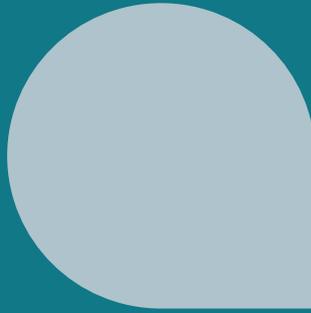
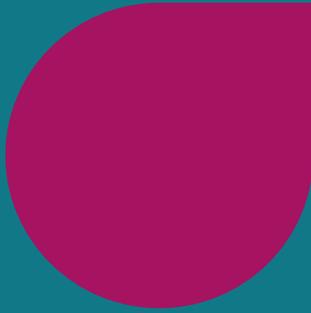
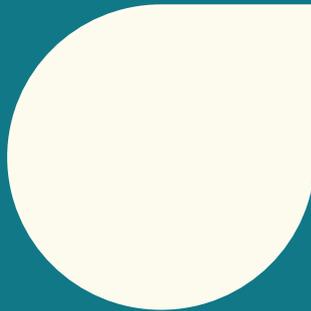
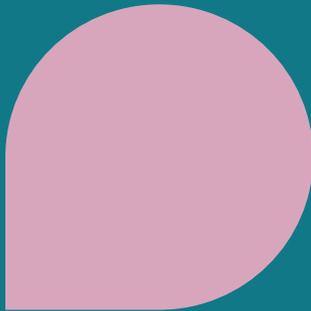
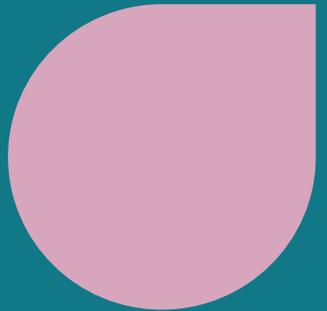
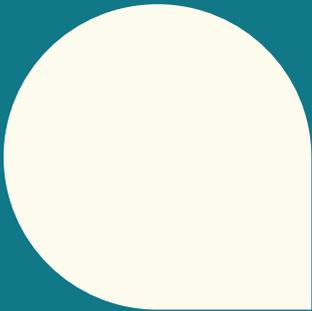


WATERLOO
UNCOVERED
IMPACT
REPORT



2023





I AM VERY PROUD TO BE PATRON OF WATERLOO UNCOVERED AND THIS YEAR THEY HAVE EXTENDED THEIR OPERATIONS TO INCLUDE SOME VETERANS FROM THE MIDLANDS AND HAVE CONTINUED THEIR INSPIRING WORK IN BELGIUM. THE ONLINE PROGRAMME HAS REACHED A FURTHER GROUP OF VETERANS.

THE CHARITY CONTINUES TO BE SUPPORTED BY A NUMBER OF GENEROUS DONORS. THE PROGRAMMES HAVE HELPED HUNDREDS OF VETERANS AND I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THIS WORK WILL CONTINUE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND MY THANKS TO MARK EVANS, WHO FOUNDED THE CHARITY, FOR HIS LEADERSHIP OVER THE LAST 8 YEARS AND WISH HIM WELL FOR THE FUTURE.

OUR PATRON, THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

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CONTRIBUTORS

Hattie Ford

Vicki Haverkate

Kate Scott

Audrey Charvet

Euan Loarridge

Tony Pollard

Stuart Eve

William Woodhouse

Amy Todd

Caitlin Campbell

PHOTOGRAPHY

Chris van Houts

Dean Euesden

Hattie Ford

ORCA Archaeology

FOREWORD

2023 has been another bumper year for Waterloo Uncovered. From adding landmarks back to the Waterloo map to supporting an international group of veterans and students, we've made our mark this year.

This past year saw the delivery of four exciting veteran support programmes, targeting new groups of veterans in the Midlands and beyond. To fund these programmes, we organised community fundraising ventures including an epic Waterloo to Waterloo Cycle and a Rock Relay Run on the Rock of Gibraltar, as well as hosting events including screening a moving documentary about our work developed with Anglia Ruskin's Stories in Transition project.

When they weren't running our programmes or raising funds to support veterans, our team could be found spreading the word about our exciting discoveries and veteran support work around the world, meeting with our partners in Belgium, Germany and beyond, and attending



MEMBERS OF THE WATERLOO UNCOVERED TEAM

“
AFTER EIGHT YEARS, WE’RE NOT RESTING ON OUR LAURELS. WE’RE TAKING EVERYTHING WE’VE LEARNT AND ARE CONSTANTLY IMPROVING OUR PROGRAMMES TO DELIVER THE BEST VETERAN SUPPORT WE CAN.
 ”

events such as the Chelsea History Festival, Stansted Jamboree and Armed Forces Day celebrations at Sky Studios and Bloomberg.

In between these programmes and events, the team found the time to retreat to the countryside for a planning and strategy session, refining our aims and goals and making plans for Waterloo Uncovered’s exciting future.

In this Impact Report, you’ll find more information about our programmes, our fantastic veteran and serving personnel participants, and the wide variety of events and activities we have delivered in 2023 - as well as what you can look forward to in the years to come!

2023 IN NUMBERS

In our eighth year of supporting veterans through archaeology and military history, we delivered four programmes that supported dozens of veterans from across the world, and uncovered hundreds of new finds on the Waterloo battlefield.

WE RAN

4

PROGRAMMES

AND SUPPORTED

69

BENEFICIARIES

FROM

10

COUNTRIES

OUR COMMUNITY RAISED

90,000

TO SUPPORT VETERANS

WE COLLABORATED WITH

5

LEADING EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

WE OFFERED VETERANS

2,500

ACCREDITED HOURS OF STUDY

WE UNCOVERED OVER

300

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

OUR OLDEST FIND WAS

7,000

YEARS OLD

WE ADDED

2

LANDMARKS TO THE WATERLOO MAP

2023 HIGHLIGHTS



WU at the Coronation

The King's Coronation saw our Patron the Duke of Wellington carry the Queen's crown, co-founder Charles Foinette march in the parade and trustee Greville Bibby provide commentary for the BBC, while co-founder Mark Evans and volunteer Ben Mead were given front row seats to the event.



Return to Excavation

This year, we returned to Hougoumont Farm! July's excavations added two key features to the battlefield: a small chapel in what would have once been dense woodland, and a quarry where the clay used to make the bricks of the chateau was mined.



Gibraltar Rock Relay Run

On Trafalgar Day, the Gibraltar Rock Run returned with twice as many runners! The gruelling 12-hour relay run up and over the Rock of Gibraltar raised almost £2,000 for veterans as well as local mental health charity the Clubhouse.



Chelsea History Festival

This year, we were joined at the Chelsea History Festival by the fantastic reenactors of the Coldstream Guards 1815 Living History Group, as well as a group of veterans from our Finds Programme! Thank you to everyone who came to visit our stall and see our finds.



Waterloo to Waterloo Cycle

Following a highly successful London to Paris sponsored cycle last year, 2023 saw the team go even further: all the way from Waterloo Station, London to Waterloo, Belgium! In total, the epic three-day cycle raised over £50,000 for veterans and serving personnel.



Finds in the Midlands

This year, our team headed up to the Midlands to target underserved veterans in the area with our new and improved Finds Programme, which combined in-person finds handling workshops in Loughborough and Worcester with online sessions.



Documentary Screening

In December, we hosted the screening of our very own documentary at the stunning Garden Cinema in London! 'Leave No One Behind', created by veteran Nicola Bassett and film-maker Katie Davies, is a powerful exploration of our work with veterans.



Brand New Online Shop

To celebrate Waterloo Week (and our eighth anniversary!) we launched a brand new online shop with a range of clothing and gifts. Check out our website to get your hands on your very own Waterloo Uncovered hoodies, water bottles, t-shirts and more!

PROGRAMMES

This year, we ran four veteran support programmes, teaching veterans a variety of key archaeological skills through in-person and online workshops led by experts in their fields, all while delivering wellbeing support using the Five Ways to Wellbeing.

In 2023, we offered four programmes that were able to support a wide range of veterans, no matter their location or ability level: our hybrid Finds Programme, online Battlefields Uncovered I Programme and flexible continuation Battlefields II, and our in-person Excavation Programme.

While we returned to our old haunt of Hougoumont during excavation, we explored new ground with our Finds Programme, hosted this year in the Midlands for the first time due to our inclusion in the Veterans' Places, Pathways and People (VPPP) Midlands portfolio.

Our two-part Battlefields Uncovered course continued to improve veterans' knowledge of



VETERANS AND SERVING PERSONNEL ON EXCAVATION



A FINDS PROGRAMME SESSION IN LOUGHBOROUGH

military history as well as their educational and vocational opportunities, supporting veterans as they undertake activities including online lectures, essay writing and museum placements. Both parts of this programme provided academic credits from a leading European university that can be used in the pursuit of further education.

Across these four programmes, our veteran participants saw an average increase in wellbeing of 19.28% and an average decrease in loneliness of 12% (see pp.22-23).

Read on to find out more about each of our programmes and the veterans they have supported.

FINDS

Our Finds Programme provided an opportunity to get hands on with history. This year, veterans at the Loughborough Wellbeing Centre and STEPWAY Worcester (two of our VPPP partners in the Midlands region) were given the chance to explore artefacts from the battlefield.

This was a big year for the Finds Programme as, for the first time, we moved out of the archaeological stores and brought the collection to veterans in their local communities. The highlights of our seven-week programme were six in-person sessions held in Worcester and Loughborough, which engaged a total of 16 veterans from the Midlands region.

These in-person sessions took participants through the entire lifecycle of archaeological finds: from the recovery, recording and identification of objects by archaeologists; to the analysis, interpretation and presentation by museums and academics. These sessions culminated in a special pop-up exhibition,

“
I HAVE RE-LEARNED HOW
TO BE INQUISITIVE. ITS
HARD TO SAY WHAT COULD
HAVE BEEN DONE BETTER
WITH THIS PROGRAMME.
”

curated by the veterans, which incorporated some unique items from their own personal collections.



VETERANS AND THE WU TEAM AT STEPWAY WORCESTER

Alongside these in-person sessions, six veterans took part in a series of biweekly online hangouts which provided more in-depth activities designed to build their confidence and archaeological knowledge. Participants developed their skills by sharing their research into local heritage sites, personal objects and mindful heritage walks. These online hangouts also featured several guest experts, who hosted workshops on advanced topics such as deposition, close observation and landscape change. Finally, as part of this more intense programme, three veterans joined our team in sharing the results of our excavations with the public at the Chelsea History Festival.

ROGER BACON

FINDS PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

Basing our Finds Programme in the Midlands offered the perfect opportunity for Roger, who attends the Veterans' Wellbeing Hub at the Loughborough Wellbeing Centre, to explore his interest in history.

Roger, who served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers for seven years, working as a combat signaller, engineer and driver in Germany and Northern Ireland, first joined the Loughborough Wellbeing Centre's Veterans Wellbeing Hub to socialise with and get to know other veterans.

Roger's goal for the Finds Programme was to get to know his fellow veterans better and 'keep his mind working' by engaging with his interest in history. Over the course of two months, Roger got the opportunity to handle finds from the Waterloo battlefield and take part in a variety of skill-building activities including identification, cleaning and interpretation. In one session, which focused on archaeological illustration,



ROYAL ENGINEERS VETERAN ROGER BACON

“
I'M 72 YEARS OLD, AND
NOTHING HAS EVER
SPARKED MY INTEREST LIKE
THIS PROGRAMME HAS.
”

Roger brought in his father's 1930s-40s metal hand drill to draw and show off to the team.

Roger also accompanied Waterloo Uncovered to the Chelsea History Festival and had a great time chatting to the public about our finds and touring the National Army Museum.

Overall, Roger felt that the Finds Programme improved his wellbeing, and helped him achieve his goals of learning more about military history and building relationships with his fellow veterans. He has enjoyed his time on the Finds Programmes so much that Roger has applied for his first passport in decades with the goal of visiting the Waterloo Battlefield!



BATTLEFIELDS I

Battlefields Uncovered is a two-part course, the first of which provides an introduction to conflict archaeology and military history, allowing veterans to explore what battlefield sites can teach us about the impact of war - and even about ourselves.

Now in its sixth year, Battlefields Uncovered has established itself as a stalwart among Waterloo Uncovered programmes. This undergraduate-level course exploring battlefield archaeology is accredited by the University of Utrecht and saw veterans from the UK joined by international counterparts, military family members and university students. Participants were as diverse as ever, with veterans from as far afield as the USA, South Africa and Australia and students joining from China and Italy.

Participants delved into weekly content covering everything from typical archaeological methods and techniques to more complex theory, with case studies from many different time periods and parts of the world- not just Waterloo!



PARTICIPANTS BAKED ROMAN BREAD ON THE COURSE

“ I WAS NEVER A FAN OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING THING. I AM NOW. I FEEL I HAVE MADE FRIENDS WITH SOME FANTASTIC LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE. ”

New for 2023 were fascinating presentations relating to the First World War from the University of Padua in Italy and from Monument Archaeology in Belgium. All of our lectures and exercises were explored through friendly, weekly group seminars where everyone could share their thoughts. One of our long-time volunteers, Euan, joined the programme as a teacher this year, and designed an excellent workshop on toy soldiers exploring what the little lead men can tell us about attitudes to war and much more.

In total 22 veterans, serving personnel and military family members, along with eight students celebrated completing the course with a festive online graduation just before Christmas.

VAL ASHPOOL

BATTLEFIELDS UNCOVERED I PARTICIPANT

Val, a WRAF veteran based in the Scottish Highlands, joined the Battlefields Uncovered Programme to build on her love of archaeology and history, having gained a degree in archaeology in 2019.

Valerie joined the Women's Royal Air Force in 1975 as a 'Snowdrop' - a member of the RAF police - working in the Special Investigation Branch and Counterintelligence. She was one of the only women serving in this role at the time. In 1977 Val married a sailor and was forced to leave the Armed Forces.

Since leaving the WRAF, Val has been an active member of the Royal British Legion Scotland, supporting a number of veterans, something she feels extremely honoured and privileged to have been able to do. However, she never thought of herself as a veteran - in fact, when she first saw an advertisement for Battlefields Uncovered on social media, she dismissed it until her husband suggested she apply. Speaking with programme lead Vicki during the course was the first time Val



VAL WITH A RARE IRON AGE BEAD FROM SWARTIGILL

I CANNOT SAY THERE HAS BEEN ONE WEEK THAT I HAVEN'T FOUND INTERESTING, ENLIGHTENING AND INFORMATIVE. I HAVE LEARNED FROM EACH AND EVERY TUTORIAL AND TUTOR.

acknowledged out loud that she was a veteran.

Val has moved around the country for many years because of her husband's work, but was finally able to settle down in Caithness, Scotland when he retired. This gave her the chance to fulfill a lifelong dream of studying to be an archaeologist. She graduated from the University of the Highlands and Islands in 2019 and was involved in the excavation of Swartigill, an incredible Iron Age site in Caithness. Taking part in Battlefields allowed Val to expand her archaeological knowledge to include conflict archaeology and military history.

NEIL KERR

BATTLEFIELDS UNCOVERED II PARTICIPANT

Neil served as a medic and dental assistant in the Armed Forces from 1986 to 1989. Having taken part in and greatly enjoyed Battlefields I, he saw the second part of the course as a natural next step.

Neil has always been interested in history, but had not written an academic essay since leaving school. The death of his mother at the start of the course was very upsetting, but the supportive environment and help of his mentor gave him something new to focus on during his grief. Neil particularly valued the community aspect of the course which draws together veterans, serving personnel, family members and students, creating a space for conversation and connection across generations.

Neil chose to write his essay on the Battle of the



NEIL WITH HIS SERVICE DOG SHEBA

“ I’M REALLY GRATEFUL TO THE WU TEAM, PARTICULARLY MY SECOND READER EUAN WHO WAS VERY PATIENT DURING THE REDRAFTING PROCESS AND WHO HELPED ME TO DEVELOP MY TOPIC WITHOUT TAKING OVER.

Alamo owing to a lifelong interest in the conflict as well as family connections to the battle, with two Kerrs dying from an outbreak of cholera at the Alamo.

One of his favourite moments on the course was a visit to the site of the Battle of Maldon in Essex, where he produced a video for Waterloo Uncovered. It was a freezing cold day, but Neil enjoyed the move from research in books and articles to exploring a real site.

After completing the course, Neil applied for a scholarship from the Disabled Veterans Fund and he is now in his second year of a fully funded open degree with the Open University. So far he has studied courses in criminology, history and creative writing.

BATTLEFIELDS II

After graduating from our online military history course, Battlefields Uncovered, a group of veterans are offered the chance to continue their studies in the second part of the course - taking on an academic essay or a museum placement.

Throughout the winter months of early 2023 a small but dedicated group of veterans worked on the second part of the Battlefields Uncovered programme. This offered them the opportunity to develop their historical and archaeological skill set further and to continue to share their experiences with the group.

Three veterans wrote undergraduate-level essays by formulating a question, conducting research and structuring a well-referenced argument. They were supported by the Battlefields Uncovered team and experts in their topic.

As an alternative to essay writing, veterans on this programme can also opt to follow an internship with a heritage organisation in the local area, such as the Royal Military Police Museum in



VETERANS TAKE ON A VARIETY OF MUSEUM PLACEMENTS

“
WATERLOO UNCOVERED HAS HELPED ME RECOVER MY SELF-WORTH AND WELLBEING AND GIVEN ME SOMETHING THAT CAN LAST AS LONG AS I WANT IT TO IN MY MUSEUM PLACEMENT.
 ”

Fareham. All participants meet regularly online to share their experiences and support each other.

In December 2023, students from Oxford University collated a selection of veterans' essays and internship reflections from 2022 and 2023 into our first Battlefields Uncovered Compendium. This has already inspired a group of veterans three times as large as last year to take up the challenge in 2024 and get stuck into essays or internships. We hope to be able to share the compendium and the progress of the 2024 group with you soon.

EXCAVATION

This year's Excavation Programme took an international group of veterans to Hougoumont Farm to excavate two exciting features on the battlefield. There, they learnt hands-on archaeological skills and uncovered some fascinating finds.

This year's excavation supported veterans and serving personnel from across the world, including Belgium, Germany, the UK, Australia and the Netherlands. We also welcomed our first Ukrainian veterans, Vasyl and Oleksii, as well as Oleksii's young family, who joined us in the hotel and on site to learn more about our veteran support programme.

The invasion of Ukraine has so far left tens of thousands of veterans and serving personnel suffering from the physical and mental injuries of war. Considering what support comes next for veterans and serving personnel is just as important during conflict as after in. By inviting Ukrainian veterans to join our excavation through

“
IN THE FUTURE, WE WILL HAVE A HUGE CHALLENGE BRINGING OUR SERVICEMEN BACK TO ORDINARY LIFE. PROJECTS LIKE THIS SHOW EXACTLY HOW THIS CAN WORK; HOW WE CAN HELP THE PEOPLE WHO HELP US NOW. IT'S OUR CIVIC DUTY TO CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO PROTECT US.
 ”



UKRAINIAN VETERANS VASYL AND OLEKSII ON SITE

Brussels-based charity Promote Ukraine, we were able to begin sharing the valuable lessons we have learnt about veteran recovery from recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with our friends in Ukraine.

Oleksii and Vasyl, alongside veterans and serving personnel from a variety of countries, received two weeks of wellbeing support, archaeological tutoring and hands-on excavation practice with our team of archaeological supervisors, as well as trying their hand at metal detecting, finds processing and photography, and mindful drawing.





STEVE GALLAGHER

EXCAVATION PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

Steve was a chef in the Army Catering Corps and the Royal Logistics Corps, serving for six years and seeing active service in Bosnia and Germany. His time on this year's excavation was transformative.

After six years in the army, Steve has struggled with his mental health, addiction and chronic pain for almost 25 years without reaching out for help. Steve found Waterloo Uncovered at the perfect time, being offered a spot on our excavation programme while suffering from PTSD and suicidal thoughts. In July, he travelled to Belgium alongside fellow East Sussex veteran Clem and a range of international veterans.

On site, Steve tried his hand at a variety of archaeological activities, but found his interest lay in dealing with our finds: together with archaeologist Audrey and photographer Felicity, Steve was integral to cleaning, identifying and processing many of our 300 finds from Hougoumont Farm. On our open days, in which we invited VIPs and members of the press to



STEVE SHOWING OFF OUR FINDS TO VISITORS

visit our excavation site, Steve manned the finds table, showing off some of our most exciting artefacts from over the years to visitors.

Since taking part in the Excavation Programme, Steve's interest in the Napoleonic era has only grown. He has taken part in our Battlefields Uncovered programme to further his military history knowledge, drawing on his experience as a chef to bake Roman bread and explore Napoleonic recipes. In 2024, Steve will embark on a museum placement in his local community as part of the Battlefields Uncovered II course. He also remains in touch with his fellow veterans, as well as Bindu, who attended the dig on behalf of our sponsor Annington and with whom Steve formed a close friendship.

“
IT'S BEEN AN ABSOLUTELY
AMAZING EXPERIENCE. I'VE
FOUND MY FIRST MUSKET BALL
- FRENCH - AND IT DIDN'T
HIT THE ENGLISH EITHER, SO
THAT'S GOOD!
”

OLEKSII KAISTRO

EXCAVATION PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

Oleksii joined us at Waterloo alongside his wife, three-year-old son and fellow veteran and translator Vasyl as the first Ukrainian to take part in our programmes.

Oleksii is a 37-year-old veteran from Dnipro in Eastern Ukraine. After joining the Ukrainian army in 2016, Oleksii served as a member of a military intelligence unit, on active duty in the Donbas region for two and a half years.

In 2019, Oleksii was forced to leave the military after developing thyroid cancer, which he attributes to his time spent in the Luhansk region, working in abandoned industrial facilities with a high level of background radiation. Following the most recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, Oleksii attempted to re-enlist alongside his younger brother to defend their country. While Oleksii's brother was accepted and is currently fighting on the front line, Oleksii was turned away owing to his ill health.

“
IT'S A SUPPORT FOR ME. THEY ARE FOREIGN PEOPLE BUT THIS IS LIKE AN ARMY BROTHERHOOD. MILITARY SERVICEMEN ARE ONE BIG FAMILY.
 ”



UKRAINIAN VETERANS VASYL AND OLEKSII ON SITE

Following the invasion, Oleksii's wife and young son sought refuge in Belgium, living with a host family. Oleksii arrived a year later, moving to Brussels just two months before our excavation began. During the excavation, Oleksii's family stayed in the hotel with the team, taking part in group activities and visiting Oleksii on site. He was also joined by fellow Ukrainian veteran and vice president of the charity Promote Ukraine, Vasyl Kushmuns, who served as Oleksii's translator. Vasyl, Oleksii and his family were welcome additions to the team this year.



WELLBEING SUPPORT

Each of our programmes offer wellbeing support, delivered by a team of wellbeing professionals and our staff, all of whom are trained Mental Health First Aiders. The wellbeing support on offer for each programme is tailored to the participants and their needs.

Excavation Programme

In addition to supervision and support by our dedicated on site wellbeing team, our Excavation Programme is planned with several aspects that are designed to improve mental wellbeing:

- ◆ Physical activity, designed for a range of abilities
- ◆ Spending time outdoors
- ◆ Camaraderie with fellow veterans and serving personnel
- ◆ Working in an international environment
- ◆ Learning new skills and increasing knowledge
- ◆ Cathartic, focused and detail orientated work

Many of these elements provide a sense of familiarity to those who have served in the military. But, by taking place in a safe environment, they enable a slow, comfortable transition into recovery and civilian life - like stepping slowly down a ladder instead of jumping in at the deep end.

Finds Programme

This programme drew on existing support networks: by bringing our programmes to veterans on their home turf, we allowed them to learn alongside their own established groups, with support from familiar case workers as well as our own staff.

Battlefields Uncovered

On both parts of our Battlefields Uncovered programme, veterans received regular online wellbeing workshops focusing on key practices including mindfulness, overcoming negative thinking and self empowerment, delivered by new wellbeing volunteer Chantal Duijvesteijn.

“
PEOPLE COME HERE WITHDRAWN AND AFFECTED BY THEIR MILITARY EXPERIENCE. AFTER JUST TWO WEEKS, THEY LEAVE HAPPIER AND MORE FULFILLED, WITH NEW SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE. IT'S A MAGICAL EXPERIENCE.
 ”



CONNECT



LEARN



BE ACTIVE



TAKE NOTICE



GIVE BACK

All of our programmes utilise the **Five Ways to Wellbeing**. The Five Ways are an evidence-based approach which suggests we can all take steps to improve our wellbeing. By choosing to build these steps into your life and daily routine, you can potentially feel happier and more positive.



This year, we gained Cobseo's **Veterans Mental Health Awareness Standard**, showing our commitment to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and serving personnel!

Veterans across our programmes saw their loneliness decrease by an average of

12.00%

as measured by the **Office for National Statistics Tackling Loneliness Scale 4.**

Veterans across our programmes saw their wellbeing improve by an average of

19.28%

as measured by the **Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale.**



In 2023 we were delighted to receive Fighting with Pride's **Pride in Veterans Standard**, showing our commitment to being inclusive and welcoming to LGBT+ veterans, serving personnel and their families.

ARCHAEOLOGY

In July 2023, a small team of veterans and archaeologists arrived at Hougoumont to explore the former woodland to the south of the farm, building on historical research and geophysical survey results.

The site of this year’s excavation was the scene of the first fighting of the battle; where French troops advanced through the wood while engaging in a firefight with allied troops deployed in front of the farm complex. Our focus was on two geophysical anomalies recorded by PhD student Duncan Williams during his extensive geophysical survey of the battlefield, which showed potential for further investigation.

One of these anomalies, thought to be a small shrine or chapel as indicated on the Ferraris map of 1777, was investigated in an exercise known as ground-truthing during a short reconnaissance and evaluation in April 2023. The other nearby anomaly was too large to be subject to much investigation before our full-scale excavation but was initially theorised to represent a mass grave pit - perhaps even one that had been cleared of human bones



BELGIAN ARCHAEOLOGISTS EXCAVATING IN THE QUARRY

“
IT WAS REALLY EXCITING THIS YEAR TO BE ABLE TO PUT FEATURES THAT HAD AN INFLUENCE ON THE BATTLE BACK IN TO THE LANDSCAPE AFTER THEY’VE BEEN LOST FOR ALMOST 200 YEARS.
 ”

for use as fertilizer in the 1820s or in the sugar beet industry in the 1830s.

Exploring the Quarry Trench

Initial investigations of this large pit, however, did not reveal any evidence of human burial in this area. Instead, the anomaly was speculated to be a quarry pit used to extract clay for brick production – most likely the production of the very bricks the farmhouse was built from in the two brick kilns excavated by Waterloo Uncovered in 2016. Subsequent excavation sought to determine the status of this feature at the time of the battle. Was it still visible as a hollow or depression, and if it was, could it have played a role in the battle, offering cover to attackers or defenders of Hougoumont?

Several battle-related finds within the pit, including musket balls, pistol balls (indicating close-range

fighting), a French gun flint (with a lead sleeve bearing the date 1811), and buckles indicate the pit was still partially open in 1815. Further excavation confirmed that the quarry pit was backfilled in various phases after brick earth extraction ceased, with natural silting also playing a part.

Investigating the Chapel Trench

Small chapels and shrines, some of them dedicated to individual saints, are a common sight in Belgium and are usually found at the side of roads or the entrances to farms and estates. These can vary in size from simple niches holding a statue of the Virgin Mary to small chapels housing statues and space to pray. While the Ferraris map of 1777 depicts a chapel (represented by a small rectangle and cross) within the woodland south of Hougoumont, it is notably absent on both the Craan map of 1816 and Siborne's carefully surveyed map from around 1840. Excavation sought to discover whether the chapel – likely standing in 1777 but gone by 1816 – was still extant at the time of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

To investigate the potential site of the chapel, topsoil was carefully removed by machine, and the exposed area was then excavated by hand, removing unstratified bricks and chalky stones

from the topsoil. Within a week, the team began to reveal elements of the structure, including a curved accumulation of bricks, some of which give a strong impression of in-situ wall remains, likely representing the apse-like end wall of the building. The positioning of this feature is in keeping with an east-west orientation for the building, with the curved wall facing east as would be expected of a chapel or church. Discolouration of the inside facing bricks is indicative of burning at a high temperature, likely relating to the destruction of the building. The feature had also undergone thorough demolition and post-demolition disturbance with bricks likely to have been removed for reuse elsewhere.

Excavation did not progress to the point of confirming the presence or absence of further foundations or robbed-out foundations, and more work will be required in 2024 to clarify the full nature of the remains. Although some battle-related artefacts in the form of musket balls were recovered from the immediate vicinity of building remains, these have not yet shed light on the state of the building at the time of the battle. Analysis of these artefacts might provide evidence for impact such as the presence of brick dust, as would be expected if they had hit a wall, but this was not obvious at the point of recovery.

Based on current evidence, including the absence of the chapel on post-battle mapping, it looks as though the building was demolished or destroyed by fire before 1815, possibly in the late 18th century. However, it would likely have still been present as a ruin at the time of the battle, and so it is possible that it played a small part in providing cover – or an obstacle to the advancing French – during the fight for the wood.

By uncovering the existence of a large, open quarry pit and the ruins of a chapel within the dense woods of Hougoumont, the team have added two lost landmarks back to the Waterloo landscape, changing our understanding of how the French approach on Hougoumont would have played out.



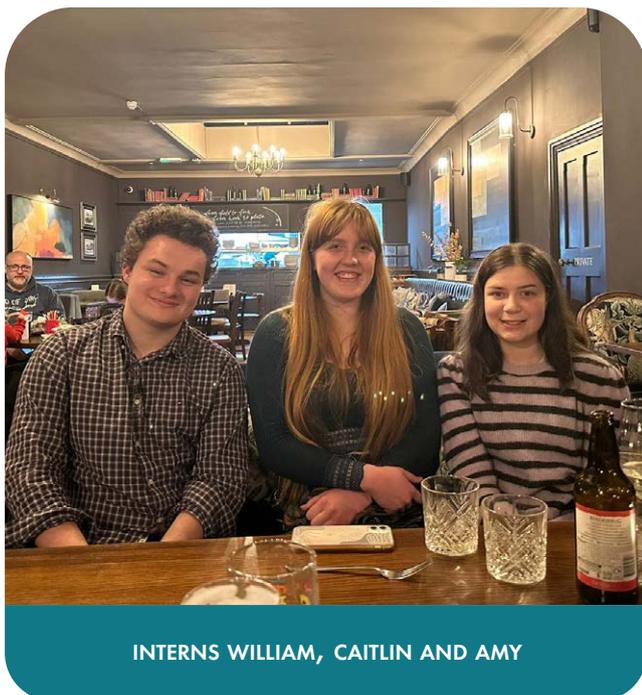
THE APSE OF THE CHAPEL IN THE SOUTH WOODS

EDUCATION

Along with archaeological exploration and veteran support, one of Waterloo Uncovered’s key aims is education. This includes educating the public about our discoveries, as well as providing educational opportunities for veterans, and collaborating with leading universities.

Oxford Internship

In 2024, we collaborated with the University of Oxford to offer three students a week-long internship at the Waterloo Uncovered office. William, Caitlin and Amy spent the week learning about our Battlefields Uncovered II programme, and exploring the work of our past participants. The three students edited and compiled the veterans’ essays into a Battlefields compendium, alongside case studies of some of the amazing veterans who completed the programme. Stay tuned to find out how you can read the compendium!



INTERNS WILLIAM, CAITLIN AND AMY

Students

This year, we welcomed postgraduate students from the University of Glasgow and undergraduate students from University College Roosevelt in the Netherlands to the excavation, as well as students and serving personnel from Helmut Schmidt Military University in Germany. Having a range of international students on site contributes to the diversity of our group, and gives veterans and students from different backgrounds plenty of opportunities to learn from each other’s lived experience.

Academic Credits

One of the outcomes of our Battlefields Uncovered programme is that veteran participants receive academic credits through the University of Utrecht. These credits are not just a recognition of veterans’ hard work on the programme, but can also be used in the pursuit of higher education by the many veterans that are inspired by their time with us to return to university. Those who continue on to the second part of the Battlefields Uncovered programme receive even more credits in recognition of their advanced learning. Veterans and serving personnel on our Excavation Programme are awarded credits to recognise the archaeological skills they have developed over the course of the two-week programme.

LISA HAARMANN

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ROOSEVELT STUDENT

Lisa Haarmann, a German student in her third year of studying Antiquity at University College Roosevelt in the Netherlands, joined our 2023 excavation at Hougoumont Farm.

After returning from July's excavation, Lisa penned an article about her experience with WU for our website, an excerpt of which you can read below!

Through the Eyes of a Student

We arrive late Friday evening, the only two UCR students that will participate this year. Usually more are allowed to join, more veterans, more scholars; but this year the project has been scaled back to focus support on veterans, the main beneficiaries of Waterloo Uncovered. This charity is unique, because it changes lives – not on some high, abstract level, but for real and within only two weeks. That's what they told us before we arrived in Nivelles, a small town near Waterloo in Belgium, and that's what we will get to witness over the next two weeks.

The welcome is warm, whether people have known each other since their university days, since 2015 (when the charity started) or for only five minutes – the comradeship, which is the centre of this project, is immediately there. We will all live together in the same hotel, and that's where we meet everyone for the first time, too. On the terrace of the hotel, over a glass of beer, we shake hands and exchange names, and just like that the conversations bubble up around us. As students, we're the youngest there, and at first we merely listen to the stories being exchanged,



LISA LEARNING FROM ARCHAEOLOGIST PHIL HARDING

but soon, questions are asked and the jokes start. I quickly realise that no topic is off limits, no jokes taboo. I ask someone about the group dynamic and he simply says – 'earn their respect and they'll trust you' – that's how simple it is.

This evening dictates the coming two weeks. Quickly we realise that it does not matter where you come from or what you've experienced; we're all here to work together towards the same goal; as long as you do your bit, you are part of the team.

Read more about Lisa's experience at: waterloouncovered.com/student-experience

FUNDRAISING

As always, we are extremely grateful to the supporters and donors whose generosity makes our work possible. In 2023 people got involved in many ways to raise money and awareness for Waterloo Uncovered. Our donors' genuine enthusiasm for our work and their willingness to give up their time is truly incredible, and we can't thank them enough!

Community Fundraising

In July, a group of 50 keen cyclists took on the epic **Waterloo to Waterloo Cycle** from London to Belgium. The team covered around 222 miles before crossing the finish line on the Waterloo Battlefield and raised over £50,000 for Waterloo Uncovered! We were also supported by two black cab drivers, Dean and Danny, from the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, without whom we would not have survived. We can't thank the entire team enough for such an incredible effort.

Elsewhere, the Chairman of our Board of Trustees, Brigadier Greville Bibby, took part in the **Charity City Run** in a Santa suit, raising over £5,000 for Waterloo Uncovered!

In October, a group of 20 runners took on the gruelling **Gibraltar Rock Relay Run**: a 12 hour relay run up and down the 1,398 ft high Rock of Gibraltar to raise money for WU's life-changing veteran support programmes. The team raised nearly £2,000 for WU as well as supporting local charity the Gibraltar Clubhouse which provides work-based programmes for individuals suffering from mental illness.

The Big Give

In the run-up to the holidays we took part in

the **Big Give Christmas Challenge**, which, combined with the funding from our match sponsor, raised over £10,000 towards our 2024 Excavation Programme. Thank you to everyone who donated to this campaign; it was a great way to close out the year.

For the first time this year, WU took part in the **Kind2Mind Campaign**. This campaign, run by the Big Give, seeks to support charities who are improving mental health as part of their work. Together with champion funds from The Big Give Trust we raised over £5,000 to support the running of our programmes.

Excavation Activities

For the first time ever, we brought the experience of visiting our annual excavation on the Waterloo Battlefield into the digital age. Our **virtual excavation tours** were a huge hit: we were able to showcase the incredible experience of excavation and share a bit of the magic with our supporters all over the world. We will definitely be doing these again in 2024, so stay tuned!

Thanks to the Belgian Air Force, we were able to offer a once-in-a-lifetime experience to some very lucky donors and auction winners. Guests were treated to a **helicopter flight** over the Waterloo Battlefield, followed by a delicious

lunch at the Brasserie de Waterloo and a private battlefield tour with renowned archaeologist Professor Tony Pollard. The group finished off the day with a visit to our 2023 excavation sites at Hougoumont Farm.

Corporate Support

We are extremely grateful for the generous long-term support we received from our headline sponsor, Annington. This year, one of the Annington team joined us for the summer excavation and got stuck in with the digging! Bindu was an incredible addition to our team and we are really looking forward to continuing our relationship with Annington in the future.

In addition, we finally realised our dreams of being presented with a jumbo cheque during our excavation (see p.37)! Thank you to the **Serco Foundation** for supporting our 2023 work

and for this incredible moment.

Events

Friend of the charity and passionate historian Dan Dodman very generously hosted several **Waterloo-themed London walking tours** to help raise funds and awareness for WU. Guests and WU team alike learned some of the more unusual links between the capital city and the Napoleonic era.

Earlier in the year, His Excellency, The Ambassador of Belgium to the United Kingdom, opened up his home to a group of very lucky WU donors, who were treated to a **dinner at his residence** prepared by his excellent chef. Guests were also treated to a talk by both Dan and Peter Snow, who spoke about their passion for Waterloo and all things historical.

Funding Sources

In 2023 we raised over **£650,000** to fund our charitable operations, with funding coming from a variety of generous sources including businesses, individuals, grant-making bodies and our wonderful community.

Thank you to everyone who supported us over the last 12 months - we wouldn't be able to continue our life-changing work without you.

GRANTS

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

CORPORATE GIVING





COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout the year, we work with a variety of outlets to spread the word about what we do, leading up to our summer excavation, where we invite the world's press and media to learn more about our work on the Waterloo Battlefield.

Press and Media

This year, our Press Day welcomed our first Ukrainian news outlets in response to the addition of Ukrainian veterans to the team. **Radio Free Europe Ukraine** and Ukrainian TV station **Inter TV** joined the dig to interview members of the WU team alongside veterans Vasyl and Oleksii. The Ukrainian journalists were joined by British and Belgian press including **The Times**, **The Telegraph**, **The Daily Express**, **The Daily Mail** and **The Brussels Times**.

Television & Film

We started and ended the year working with television producers: while our episode of the Canadian scientific show **Mysteries from Above** aired in the spring, our archaeologists attended the **Digging for Britain** tent in the autumn to show the presenter of the BBC show, Professor Alice Roberts, some of our finds for an episode that will air in early 2024.

The team from **History Hit** also joined us this summer to film a new episode on Hougoumont Farm - keep a look out for that in the coming year!

This year, we also premiered a documentary on our work, '**Leave No One Behind**', created by veteran Nicola Bassett and the team from the Stories in Transition Project at Anglia Ruskin University.



WU ARCHAEOLOGISTS ON DIGGING FOR BRITAIN

The Telegraph

THE TIMES

**RadioFreeEurope
RadioLiberty**

**DAILY
EXPRESS**

The Brussels Times

LOOKING FORWARD

Having worked hard to deliver a successful range of activities in 2023, we're not slowing down in 2024! From programmes to events, find out more about what we have in store for the next 12 months...

This year, we will return to the Midlands for a new iteration of our Finds Programme, which will support veterans in Nottinghamshire and Stoke-on-Trent. We will also be referring UK veterans on to the University of Utrecht's Atlantic Wall Programme, which will explore the Netherlands' Atlantic Wall bunkers using digital heritage techniques.

Later in the year, we will be heading back to the Waterloo battlefield to excavate at Mont-Saint-Jean farm. Elsewhere, our Battlefields Uncovered II programme will see the largest number of veterans ever continue their studies after completing the Battlefields Uncovered I programme, taking on exciting placements at museums, including the Black Watch Museum and Butser Ancient Farm.

Our events schedule is shaping up to include a screening of our documentary 'Leave No One Behind' in Brussels and repeats of our successful Waterloo to Waterloo Cycle and Gibraltar Rock Relay Run community fundraising events.

In early 2024, we will also welcome a new CEO, Abigail Boyle, after the departure of former CEO and co-founder Mark Evans who moved on to pursue other opportunities last year. The whole WU team, not to mention the hundreds of veterans we have supported over eight years, are enormously grateful for Mark's vision, passion and hard work.

We are, however, reassured to know the role

is being taken on by someone as capable as Abbie. With extensive experience as a diplomat representing the UK internationally, a tenure supporting veterans into employment as Director of Operations at The Poppy Factory and as a former Naval Reservist, Abbie brings a wealth of skills and experience that will enable her to lead the charity forward as we continue to develop in 2024.

We're looking forward to working with Abbie as we continue delivering our life-changing veteran support programmes in our ninth year.



OUR NEWEST TEAM MEMBERS, FUNDRAISING ASSISTANT ELYZABETH (LEFT) AND CEO ABIGAIL BOYLE (RIGHT)



SUPPORTING US

As a small charity, we rely on the generosity of individuals, organisations and funding bodies to continue our life-changing work. There are plenty of ways to support us, from donations to sponsorship.

Donate

A donation of any size will help us support even more veterans and serving personnel, funding their travel, food, accommodation and more.

[WATERLOOUNCOVERED.COM/DONATE](https://waterloouncovered.com/donate)

Attend an Event

Throughout the year, we run and attend a variety of events to engage the public in our work and raise vital funds. These include shooting days, fundraising galas, exhibitions and history festivals. You can find out more about our upcoming events and book tickets on our website.

[WATERLOOUNCOVERED.COM/EVENTS](https://waterloouncovered.com/events)

Fundraise for Us

We're always on the lookout for members of our community that want to raise funds for us! From sponsored runs and cycles to car boot sales and pub quizzes, there are ways for everyone to get involved - check out the resources on our website to find out more.

[WATERLOOUNCOVERED.COM/FUNDRAISE-FOR-US](https://waterloouncovered.com/fundraise-for-us)

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[WWW.WATERLOOUNCOVERED.COM/NEWSLETTER](https://www.waterloouncovered.com/newsletter)



IF YOU CAN SUPPORT WATERLOO UNCOVERED IN ANY WAY, PLEASE DO SO. THEIR WORK SUPPORTS INJURED VETERANS LIKE ME AND HAS BEEN LIFE-CHANGING.





EXPLORE OUR ONLINE SHOP:
WATERLOOUNCOVERED.COM/SHOP

THANK YOU

We'd like to say a huge thank you to the organisations that supported us in 2023.

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Army Benevolent Fund	Helmut Schmidt University	The Big Give Trust
BFBS Big Salute	History Hit	The Coldstream Guards 1815 Military & Living History Society
Bloomberg	Koninklijke Landmacht - The Royal Netherlands Army	The Edward Gostling Foundation
Brewdog Waterloo	Landmarc Support Services	The Family Daniel Jaeggi
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Ferme de Mont-Saint-Jean	Recovery on the Battlefield	The National Heritage Lottery Fund
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 The Tompkins Foundation
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TAXI CHARITY VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTING THE CYCLE

THANK YOU

We'd like to say a huge thank you to the individuals that supported us in 2023.

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