**Group: B**

**Interviewer:** Gavin Randell (GR)

**Date:** 23 Feb 22, 2000 hrs

**Location:** Leeds

GR – The recorder is on.

GR - The first question I like to throw out there for you guys as a bit of an ice breaker really is. Which of you has deployed on operations with the Army Reserve before? I know we’ve got range of experience in the room.

B1 - Well, if you said the Olympics is one, but I don’t think it how is it? Alright. Well, I’ve done that.

GR - Yeah.

B1 - Yeah, that was pretty good.

GR - How about you? Cause you’re a little bit more junior.

B4 – No

B2 - No

B4 - Of anything in two years, so not really done much, but I am keen to. But you know, I’ve joined the Army Reserve to actually do something. I’ve not joined it to, just, just do a Wednesday night and that’s it. So.

GR - How about you guys?

B2 - No after. Once a bit funny because I’m always in and out in and out, so I’ve never. I’ve not actually done my training. I’ve been here quite a while, but not a lot of my training to even be in position to look at deploying or doing anything like that. It’s not something I’m against though.

B3 - I just went skiing. I don’t know if that counts.

GR - It’s good if you can get it.

B3 - Yeah

GR - So I mean kind of leads it to something you’ve already mentioned, really. How important do you think it is that reserves mobilise and deploy as part of their service? You’ve already mentioned a little bit about it.

B4 - I think it depends on the motivations for wanting to join the Army Reserve. And also, I don’t know, it depends on loads of factors. People that are married with children, they might not have the freedom to be able to do that. Umm. Yeah, your full-time job,

B3 – Yeah, your full-time job. It just depends on what you want to get out of it, I suppose. It’s not. I think you come in; everyone comes in for different things though. You might come in to get your licences, and like, so it does vary. Yeah.

GR - How bout you guys? Do you think it’s really particularly important to sort of deploy and to do tasks?

B1 - For us as long as the opportunities are there? And you know about them? ‘Cos sometimes when I first joined, I didn’t really get to know about a lot of stuff, and there was the stuff with Afghan and stuff going on, so people did go on it. But eh, there’s a lot more opportunities to do things now as well, so if you do want to do that, that’s great.

B2 - I think for me. I think what the job role you do is quite important for that question.

GR – What trade you are?

B2 - Yeah, if you if you come in as a reservist, maybe you join the infantry. Like 4 Yorks or something like that. If you didn’t have that idea or desire to deploy. It wouldn’t be a waste of time but wouldn’t be beneficial for joining the Reserves. That’s just my opinion.

GR - No, that’s really good and kind of linked to that. If the Reserves, if Reserves are going to deploy on any particular kinds of things, what kind of operations do you think are suitable for you as individuals, your unit?

B2 – I think that-

B1 - Public support roles really.

B2 – yeah like public support-

B1 - like chef-ing with a driving unit, obviously you’ve got the vehicles. Esps and stuff. Umm.

GR - What do you think about at home or abroad?

B1 - I don’t think we do enough at home. I think we should, when we’ve had all that flooding and that. It’s usually the regular army, but if people can give their time to help, then they should be able to do it. But I don’t think we got called up for any of it, I don’t think.

B2 – I think, during the start of lockdown there’s a couple of our guys that went to drive waggons. Err, Supplies and things like that and do testing. Eh, so that was quite good, but recently with the flooding, as you say. And maybe that’s because maybe it wasn’t as bad as previous.

GR – Hmmm. And so, you mentioned, doing things at home. What do you think makes it, sort of, easy or difficult, more easy or difficult for people to deploy on? You know, something around where they live?

B1 - Yeah, well. If it’s something local and you’re available, then you can help. If it’s something further away, then obviously it depends on your job or your circumstances.

B4 - See, to me it would appeal more if it was abroad and not UK because I wouldn’t be trying to leave my full-time job just to go down South and do something. Not saying that [laugh] staying here is boring.

GR - Do you worry you’re your employer wouldn’t take that seriously?

B4 - Yeah, almost. Yeah. I’d be like, right okay gonna go, I don’t know. Can you go to Kenya or something for three months, like, oh Yeah, I’m definitely going to do that because it’s somewhere outside of the UK somewhere I’ve not been before. And like you say, your employer might view it as, you know. More Serious or more important. Umm, so yeah for me, I mean, obviously. I suppose being in the UK obviously you could get to go home at the weekends. But yeah, I don’t know.

B2 - But the thing that comes with it comes with the nature of being a reservist, doesn’t it? If it’s that little bit easier if it’s in the UK. This two hour drive down South is that little bit easier. More times than not, it would suit a Reservist. Obviously like you say, you sooner go abroad and that does suit some people as well. Depends on that work-life balance of a full time. Because not not every employer is is keen on the reserve and will give you that time off.

GR – hmm. Do you think it’s important what the operation is like? So, if I put a couple of types of operations out there, so war fighting, peacekeeping, humanitarian, security missions, military aid to the civilian authorities, so like in the UK? Training support, that kind of thing. Do you think those different types of mission make a difference?

B2 - To us as Reservists or to employers?

GR - Yeah. To you. Yeah.

B2 - Yeah, I know. For me myself, I would sooner go on, like, humanitarian operations.

GR – hmm

B2 - It’s me as a person as well helping and being that part of the team that helps that makes a difference.

GR - so it’s the helping people that really flicks your switch?

B2 - Yeah. I mean regards to employer. My employer that I’m with now much would sooner, and I’ve been quite beneficial and helped me. On a more, what’s the word I’m looking for? Helpful and will allow me to go do more with Reserves ‘cos as a company, that’s what they do as well. They do a lot for charity as it’s a family-owned business.

GR - That’s really good. What do you think? Different types of operations?

B4 - For me I [laughs]. Probably humanitarian, peacekeeping or war fighting, like you say. Not saying again that they are more serious, but they’re the ones that would stand out to me. Training. Yeah, could do it. But. Not that the other things aren’t worthwhile, but I wanna feel like I’m actually, you know, contributing and actually doing something that’s either helping someone or making a difference, not just, you know. Oh, I’m just gonna teach you this or this, you know? Umm, yeah.

GR - How about you?

B3 – I think, like, for Reservists, it’s like deployment, it’s one extreme to the other because when we’re here, we’re not really doing much things that are like about deployment and things like that. So, then you go to do deployment training and then it’s like you’ve gone from this like, habitat here.

[All laughing] [murmured agreement]

B3 - Feeling like this is what we do, and then you go into like deployment training, and it’s just thrown into something like completely new, right?

GR - That’s really interesting

B3 - You know, benefits like exciting for some people, but others it might be like. Yeah. No, that’s not a thing for me.

GR - It’s almost like being in the reserve is 2 jobs, you’ve got your barracks job and then you your job on operations.

B3 – Yeah, yeah. It’s like being a reg like it’s, completely different to what a Reservist is. Sometimes it’s like... [trails off]

GR – No, that’s actually really interesting. Thank you. Thank you. And, how important do you think it is whether you have a choice over whether to be mobilised? So, you will hopefully understand that when you enlist, you sign up to rules which say: If the government says you’re mobilised, you get mobilised, but there is a policy that says we’ll try and give people a choice to avoid people being put out. How important do you think that choice is?

B3 - I think it’s really important. Because people circumstances change with it, like you might join up and then suddenly family changes and then it’s like you still want to be here, but you can’t exactly go and go on operations and things like that because he might be like a carer for someone. Or, you know, you can do it on Wednesday night or weekend, but you couldn’t go and get deployed. Like just things change from from you join up, your life changes. It’s not. It’s not just as easy as: Let me join up. Yeah, can do it. And then, things change.

B1 – I agree with that actually. I’d like to do something, though. I agree with what you said before, coz it’s just something that you can say. Well, I’ve done a tour. At least you’ve done one thing in your career if you don’t do anything else.

GR - hmm

B1 - So, yeah, but like I mean, I’m lucky coz my children are grown up, well my son’s grown up, and my husband’s been in the Army, so he understands all that as well, so. But for me it’s it wouldn’t be a problem. I think it probably be work, but I won’t be bothered about work to be quite frank. [laughs] I’d go, I’d go and do it just to say that I’ve done it because the opportunities are there and I think that’s a good thing why I joined the the, what were we? Territorial Army. Then we changed to Army Reserves. Obviously, we’ve changed the name.

GR - Yeah, 2014.

B1 - Yeah, so. Umm. It’s just, but then it should say it’s your circumstances, and you fit it in if you can. I mean, I’ve been wanting to do, fit in around, other commitments within in the unit at the moment, so probably I might look to it next year, but probably might be too old by then. [laughs] But, yeah, we’ll see.

B2- Yeah, to be fair I couldn’t agree more if, it’s important to have that choice. If you weren’t bothered for having that choice. You argue that just join regulars. If you could commit and it wasn’t an issue and that, you knew your lifestyle wasn’t going to change. You know, many people have said to me, ehh, you know, the army is a single person’s life. Specially regulars ‘cos could just not disagree. It varies. You’ know, but you know the majority will. It’s easier if you if you are your own person, you have anyone else to rely on. And no one else is relying on you for income or anything like that, so.

GR - So, how do you feel about the aspect of choice? And how important it is.

B4 - Umm, umm. I agree. I agree with everything that’s been said, but also to some extent, for instance. I’m sure we’re all aware of what’s going on in Eastern Europe at the moment. If I got mobilised and said right, you need to go, I’d be like, yeah, absolutely. But then if you said that to me six months ago when my dad was dying in hospital, I couldn’t think of anything worse. Umm, so like what you said before, it is down to really individual circumstances. Yeah.

GR - I mean, that sounds really interesting that you mentioned the sort of current issues in Ukraine. How serious do you think things would have to be before you thought, my choice is less important than this situation? Just as an example.

B1 - You mean to be taken out of our hands? Kind of thing.

GR - Exactly. Yeah. At what point would you say: Yeah, I reckon that’s more important than me having a choice in this?

[pause]

[All together – laughter/murmuring]

B1 - Hard to say really. I were just about to say if something changes drastically. And we got called up. That’ll be it. So you won’t really have a choice, would you? Because you signed to say you will, you would say so.

GR - Let’s go. Let’s go down in increments. So, let’s say, the United Kingdom Territory itself is at risk. Would that be serious enough?

B4 - Oh year, definitely.

B3 – Yeah.

GR - OK, so how about? The United Kingdoms, interests and people overseas. I think of an example, maybe, maybe some other British soldiers have been killed in another country by someone, and then the only response left is military action, like against that. Would that be serious enough?

B1 – Yeah [together]

B4 - yeah, yeah. [together]

B3 – yeah

GR - How about? If the United Kingdom’s, NATO, or other allies require assistance, so obviously the United Kingdom is legally bound to support them, but what about where you’re?

B4 - For me it depends on how severe like the threat to life is. I mean, I don’t have any personal ties to Ukraine and stuff like that, but obviously. I’m not saying it depends on what Russia does and how many people you know. If they start absolutely shelling outside of the two districts that they’re claiming that they are their own and they start, you know, killing loads of civilians and then start moving through Ukraine towards the rest of Europe. Then I would say, right okay. Yeah, I’ll volunteer. Is there an opportunity for me to go? I don’t know if that is helpful.

GR - Yes

B1 – [laughs]

GR - How about you, you guys, how do you feel about? Choice and how serious it might have to be?

B2 - Yeah, like you mention with NATO. I, I’d like to think that if we if the shoe was on the other foot, you know, and then someone else had all the opportunities to help come out the United Kingdom I like to think that they’d do the same, so again, yeah, that would be, for me to, okay, for me to put my name in the hat.

GR – Ok. And in terms of the choice then of course, how, how might you speak about mobilisation to your families and your employers? How do you, how would you explain it to them?

B1 – I’d say to my employer “I’m getting called up”.

GR - I don’t you. So, you say to your employer you don’t have a choice, essentially, regardless.

B1 – Well they know I’m in the Army, so they’d probably get a letter anywhere. But I’ll just say it. Jay, I’m getting called-up in a couple of weeks. He’d probably have a look of shock on his face. And then he might lose two people because another my colleague, I work with a colleague as well. I said you could lose two of us at the minute. [laughs]

GR - But you wouldn’t say I volunteered to deploy on this thing. You’d say I’ve been, you know, they called me up.

B1 – I’d just say, they’ve asked me to go you. And you’re gonna have to let me go.

B4 - Yeah, 100%. Yeah.

GR - So you wouldn’t. Expose the choice if you like your employers?

B3 – I think I probably would

B2 - Yeah, I probably would as well, yeah.

GR - Yeah, you’d be honest with them.

B3 – Yeah definitely.

B2 – Yeah. That’s ‘cos they’ve shown me trust.

GR - Yeah. You want to repay that?

B2 - Yeah, they’d probably pushing me out the door.

B3 - And it’s probably in their best interest, so I’d have thought they would.

B2 - Yeah.

GR - Sure. What about families as well? How would you speak to them about it in the same? Same terms?

B1 - Bit more gentle, I think. [laughs] Tell grandkids oh nana’s going away for a couple of months or a couple of years. [laughs] Yes. I won’t say owt to the kids. I’d probably tell my son and my husband.

B3 – I’d tell them I had a choice.

B1 - Yeah, I probably would. Because they’re your family. Work’s work and work’s what you got to pay your bills and that but, you family are important as long as they know what’s happening, but without going into graphic detail, just say I might be away for six months, or I might be away for a year.

B3 - It goes back to the point of when you joined up as well as-

B1 – yes-

B3 - you when you were joining up, that you could potentially get called up. So yeah, it’s one of them things.

B2 – Initially they might not be on board.

B3 – I’d be like, see you later. [laughs] I’m off.

GR - Yeah, you hope they recognise it’s important to you?

B2 – Yeah

B3 - Yeah

GR - …So they would support you. That’s really, really. Good to hear. Thank you. So, if you if you were to get deployed or mobilised? How do you think you would be used? Do you think you’d be, like the whole unit would go, do you think it would be small teams? You know how? How ready, how prepared do you feel to deploy at different sizes of of units?

B3 - I think it’d be in teams of readiness like, there’s people are at different stages of training and more people like qualified to go. Some people have, you know, been to places so they have more experienced. I think it just goes on that, yeah, it’s probably small teams. I reckon it would yeah [trails off]

GR - Yes, so rather than rather than a whole reserve unit-

B3 – Yeah Yeah

GR - you think you know maybe a section, or something of reservists-

B3 – yeah, more qualified people…yeah yeah

GR - attached to a regular unit?

B1 – they probably might perhaps request what they want from us-

GR - special skills-

B1 - and then they will get those people first and then anybody else who still wants to still go. You’d be like second reserved or something like that.

GR - Yeah. Do you sort of feel prepared and trained for that? For going as, a small team, we mentioned that it’s two, almost, separate jobs in one.

B3 – Yeah, absolutely. Definitely already you know.

B2 - If you’ve deployed before or been mobilised, you are definitely more ready.

B3 – you’re more aware, aren’t you?

GR - hmm

B2 - You know what you need, you know what’s expected from you.

B2 - But if you ask me now what I need to mobilise, I can guarantee I’d be out of date for a medical, hearing tests, dental records. You know all these things that. I’m umm.

B1 - So it’s your certificate of efficiency. If you’ve got green light?

B2 – yeah

B1 - Then you can be mobilised, but then depending on what they want you to do will probably have other training because you might be doing some. You might. I might not, chef. You might not drive.

B3 – Yeah

B1 - You might be doing something completely different.

B2 -yeah, well that’s it isn’t it. You’re a soldier before your trade, aren’t you?

GR - Do you feel the certificate of efficiency? Is worth the paper it’s written on? Do you think it, might, do you actually learn and train on things that might be useful?

B1 - Well, the training keeps changing all time. Like the phys side of things have sort of changed that as well as the new physical thing coming in-

GR– yeah.

B1 - which is starting April. We’ve already been training for it. But from the 1st of April it’ll that’s what we’ll be doing. It hasn’t changed that much, but it is, it is slightly different. Ummm. Obviously, your weapons, got weapon handling test. I can’t think of owt else. Fitness, I mean that’s the number one you’ve got to be fit. So that’s where the certificate of efficiency comes into it.

B4 - I think the other stuff like MATTs though, like surely if you was out of date, you just do that in pre-deployment training.

B1 – Yeah.

GR – So, so, you think…The things that you can do very quickly, you can do almost anytime, but actually Certificate of Efficiency might be useful for the things that take longer to do. So, fitness you can’t, become fit overnight. So yes,

B1 - But as long as you’ve got a level of fitness that you can improve on it. So, anyone who’s new and SUT they won’t, you won’t even give him a second look for that. Not that, but not good. But you’ve only just come in, so you won’t, you won’t be up to working at that level. And obviously with the training, changing, with your certificates of efficiency you’ve already got that level so you can build on it and improve on it.

GR – hmm.

B1 - And obviously like you said if you've missed things off, they’ll do that in pre-deployment training which you can catch up on, which some of it’s not. Not difficult. I don’t think, depending on the person obviously.

GR - Does it matter to you that you deploy with people from within this Squadron? People that you know and, you know, you may be friends with?

B1 - I think it be nice to, but sometimes it don’t always work like that. But then you might. It’s funny though, and if you do actually make friends when you meet somebody, other people, and once you start working together, you start to build a bond.

B2 – yeah

B1 - It’s weird in it if you do.

B2 – Yeah

B1 - Because you know you’re going to be those people say for six month it’s amazing.

B2 - Yeah. When you’re in the thick of it. Yeah.

B1 – Yeah, I think…

B3 – You’re all there for the same thing.

B1 - I wanna say that you’re all in the same boat. And you’re supporting each other.

B2 – An example of that is, I’m still chatting to anyone from the bravo, my bravo four years ago. In my section was a chap from Glasgow, one from Manchester and one from Ipswich, and we meet up every year. And that’s just, that’s just cause we spent two weeks together and tape measuring.

B1 – [laughs]

B2 – there’s that bond

B1 – that sounded a bit punchy

B2 - Yeah. You spend three days in the field and when you working together and… I’ve got friends who are non-military, but the bond I have with them is different.

B1 – It’s different in’t it…Don’t you find it’s more personal, bit more personnel-

B2 – Yeah-

B1 - You see a bit more of people you wouldn’t normally see with strangers, but then you end up being good friends. Don’t you?

B2 - Yeah.

GR - So you feel that you could easily make a new team based on who you ended up being around?

B2 – Well I think there’d be a great benefit to being mobilised with people that you already knew.

B1 – Yeah, yeah

B2 – Yeah definitely.

GR - What do you think those benefits are?

B1 - Well, you know them for a start, so you know.

B3 – so you’ve already got the teamwork.

B1 - But, you know, the annoying little habits and all that sort of stuff.

B2 – You know their strengths, weaknesses…

B3 - Yeah. You already work as a team here, so…

B2 - so it would be a thought you might spark, other soldiers or reservists. You know, if your unit, it’s got way of doing something or. You could encourage and pass that on to others…great teamwork.

GR - Yeah. It’s really useful thank you. So, we talked a little bit about the teamwork aspect of it. How often do you think it’s reasonable for you to be deployed? I suppose, how much of your time could the Army ask for? Reasonably, as far as you’re concerned.

B3- that’s a bit of a difficult one

B2 – yeah difficult yeah.

B3 – it depends…it depends.

B2 - So many factors that. Everyone has different holiday allowances, and you don’t want to use all your holiday allowances, for this job because you want on holiday with you family. You want to do things as well. So, it’s a bit difficult one to answer.

GR - Sure.

B2 - I mean, the trouble is you could leave your full-time employment if the reserves could keep you busy. If the reserves could, you know, manipulate it so you do training and your mobilise could match your civvy job, salary wise.

B3 – hmm

B2 - I actually have no qualms even just being a full time Reservist.

GR - So actually it’s that long term guarantee, the certainty of employment, that is-

B2 - yes. My civvy job is my priority comes first before this.

B3 – ‘cos it pays yer bills.

B2 – Yeas it pays my bills. It naturally pays better.

GR - So I guess it. If you, if you think about it in terms of a six-month tour with maybe three months pre-deployment training and then three months afterwards which would be post tour leave. But of course, once you’re released, you can go back to your civilian job if you wanted. If you were to do that once every three years, would that be too much?

B4 - I don’t think so.

B2 – I don’t think that I that I think that that would actually be ideal to be honest, specially for my situation. I think it just keeps that readiness there as well in that …

B4 - and then you gain more experience.

B3 – you know what to expect…

B2 – Yeah you gain more experience.

B1 – Or you could do it alternate years. Couldn’t you, you could do deployment for one year. Come back for a year. Come back down to normal. Then do it again.

B2 – Yeah

B1 – Or maybe two years, probably.

GR - That’s really good that you mentioned that, so, what it seems like you’re saying that if you need to be ready to be used, you need to be used. Is that fair, fair to say?

B1 – Yeah.

B4 – Yeah.

GR - Leading on from that I suppose if the Army could guarantee to use you. Let’s say for 12 months every 36-48 months. Then, that would be reasonable because it was predictable?

B3 – Yeah,

B4 - yeah, okay.

GR – Yeah OK.

B2 - If you knew that if you knew two-year thing, starting a new job.

B4 – You can let them know

B2 - You can say it to them, you know, in two years my Reserve unit will mobilise, and I’ll be away for six, call it nine months and in three months I can choose to come back. Yeah, so that just makes things a bit easier.

GR - So yeah, a combination of frequency and predictability then is obviously not every day, but every year, as it were, but but something that is predictable. Takes the edge off it being more frequent.

B4 – I think also like, having knowledge about to speak to your employer about it and what they how they are going to react coz I mean I wouldn’t have a clue what to say like I feel like there’s a lack of knowledge if I was going to deploy, I wouldn’t know what to say to them. How do I know my job is definitely going to be kept open so having that information available so. You know? If deployment does come up, then you like right, actually I know I need to do this, this and this. I need to speak to him about this. I need to do this.

GR - No, great. Well, I suppose linked to that. How much notice in advance do you think is reasonable or important? [pause] 30 days?

B3 – is this for the nine months?

GR - Well for, yeah, for, let’s say, yeah the the nine months to a year if you were given a months’ notice that this was happening.

B3 – yeah, yeah, I’d say…

B4 – No…

B1 - No, a bit longer, I think.

B4 - I would say that minimum three months. ‘Cos you gotta plan your life got. You’ve got work, then you got personal. Do you know what I mean? So.

B1 – ‘Cos things can change in the three months can’t it.

GR - hmm.

B4 - yeah,

B1 - But it just gives the employer time cause depending on what job. Mine’s a catering job it’s not special but they can get somebody in to do it. But if if you’re leaving a specialist job or they need to get somebody into the same calibre as you, what will that otherwise, would it cause and effect on on the job?

B3 – Yeah.

B2 – I think a month is enough. Personally.

GR – Ok, so a month would be kind of alright for you?

B2 - Yeah. If you were to leave, if you leave your job, you give them a month’s notice. It gives them another month they have to find someone else to do it.

B1 - Then you’re giving them that. You’re giving them an extra extra time for them to get somewhere to sort something out.

B2 – I guess as much notice as possible. Really.

B1 - Yeah.

B3 – Yeah. But I think minimum probably

GR - I guess linked to that notice being, you know, if you know that next year is your turn, actually you can prepare the parts of your life-

B1 – Yeah-

GR - that you might get something at short notice and then the next year it’s not your turn. So actually, you can say with some degree of certainty maybe it’s not going to, you know, I’m not going to get called at short notice. That’s really interesting actually. It links in with a lot of the Army. Doctrine and plans that are out there. You can read on the Internet to do with the Army Reserve. Just to go back to something you mentioned. You mentioned you did Op Olympics.

B1 - yes.

GR - How much notice did you get for that?

B1 - I think it was short because it the Army wasn’t going to be called in. It was when it went to a private company and for some reason, they can’t get enough people. I think it was like a month, two months or something like that and I was down there for best three months of my life. I must admit it was it was brilliant. I recommend it. Well, it depends. If we get the Olympics again for. It was the best three month of my life. I’ve got to admit. I always talk about it now. [laugh] Cheesy smile on my face coz it was great. I think ‘cause it was out of the norm and it was a good vibe and a good atmosphere. Then it was just really good and we got involved in lots of stuff. So we went like to the Olympic Park and when they were doing the opening ceremony, the had like a rehearsal. So we went and did the rehearsal. And then when I actually watched it back, I could see the bits that we didn’t see it when we were there, but when it all put together or it sort of made sense then and it was like I went, I was there. [laughs] Yeah, it was good. I mean not, I know that’s not like going to war in the sense, but I think the principles are same. It's going to planning

GR – well you can only do the job you get told to do…

B1 - Well, that was definitely one I was definitely gonna do.

B2 – Just out of curiosity, did you go with anyone you from here? With anyone that you knew?

B1 – Who did I go with? Yeah. Private/Lance Corporal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_... I think we had some photo in the doorway there. Yeah, it was good-

B2 – Was it-

B1 - Still kept in touch with the girl or was a Corporal at the time. And we keep in touch on Facebook now and again. I mean that what, was it 2012, that war? So that’s quite a while back, I still keep looking at my little medal and all. Yes, I got a little medal. I’m dead proud of that though. I did love it was a completely different atmosphere. I probably won’t talk about that if I went towards somewhere then. Doing some grotty job. Obviously, I hated it, I hated it, but I didn’t hate that. I did like it.

GR - How do you guys feel about, you know, hearing stories about what other people have got up to?

B2 - Yeah, it makes you want to do it.

B3 - Yeah

B2 – Makes you definitely want to put your name in. To what I said earlier, I wouldn’t even know where to start to put my name forward.

B1 - Well, they weren’t that. They actually, the unit, asked people if they wanted to do it and you just put your name forward and then the next thing we got photographs taken for the passes, the passes that we had on.

GR - They were huge, weren’t they? This big-

B1 - Yeah. Yeah. And I’ve got loads of little trophies and stuff. I did see the Queen and all the way. The big I were doing was at Pudding Lane. It was where all the vehicles coming. So we did all the things, there was a vehicle thing at the back. And I was on guard one day. You know she’s in that, I can’t remember what the car is, the big purple one that she has, that she sits in. And I was shocked, because I didn’t expect to see in, and I thought bloody hell! Queen’s just come past me! [laughs] I was quite excited to see few famous faces but yeah, but it was a good experience. It was Good.

B2 – It sounds good.

B1 - Because like you say, the Olympics, it’s one of them. A country bids for it and they’re like bid for it, like two or three years in advance. So, you have already got countries that are doing it for the next eight years. So, when Britain got to do it again, which is with their third time I though, I’ve got to do it in my lifetime. It was in my lifetime. I was quite excited. And I’ve got grandkids. So, when they’re older, can say, look, this is what your nana did.

B2 - Show them a picture.

B1 – Yeah

B4 - In my old unit they’d just send out emails to us. Saying that, there’s like one in September last year, there’s a week to go to Mexico to be part of some parade or something. And then there is also like a three- month deployment for, like the COVID effort and stuff like that. But yeah, there’s no way I was leaving my full-time job to do that, but yeah, we just get emails. So, you could just kind of pick and choose.

GR - So part of the problem if I sort of read somewhere between you two guys is actually finding out about the opportunities, feels like you guys have, in the past, have had at least known the opportunities there, but maybe you guys don’t know…

B3 - See the email

GR - …even how you would even find out.

B2 - but that could be due to where we may be in our training.

GR - I see. So maybe your unit doesn’t give it to you because you might not be able to go.

B2 – They know we’re not eligible for it.

B4 - But you still be good to know about it.

B2 - Yeah.

GR - So know about it, and then it’s, you know, is the carrot dangling? Here’s what you could have won. Yeah.

B2 -Yeah. I’m off to Germany for the next… [trails off]

GR – No, that’s really, really good. Let me just have a quick look back through my notes to see if there are any questions that I wanted to pick up on… [pause]

…So, we spoke earlier on about the things that impact on your decision to, or might impact on your decision to go on an operation and that sort of thing. What do you think is most important in the forefront of your mind? If I were to say? We need you to deploy. What’s all the first thing that you would think about?

B4 - Length of time? I probably be more inclined to take something that was three months than nine months.

GR - Yeah. How about you guys?

B2 - Probably location where is.

GR – Yeah

B4 - yeah.

B2 – That’s the factor

B1 - Probably a bit of both. Length of time wherever it is and then getting prepared for it.

B4 - Preparation how much time have I got to sort everything out?

B3 - Yeah, probably job wise, and seeing how-

GR - the actual job that it was going to be?

B3 - yeah. Just seeing what it’s going to be. What it is, what you’ll be doing yeah.

GR - So interesting that you’ve all said, and it might be my phrasing of the question. You’ve all mentioned things that are important that are basically about the job. You know, being in green. What about our family and employer considerations? If the opportunity came up, would you first think about the job and then think how am I going to make this work with everything else I’ve got going on?

B3 - Yep

B2 - For me at least, the information that would just spoke about, location, to understand it, then I could address that, you know to my partner. Go from there. If I just said, “I’m going away,” “where you going?” “I don’t know” [chuckles].

B3 - Yeah. You gotta find out all the details.

B2 – I’ll text you while I ‘m on the way back! You know what I mean?

B3 - Tales.

B1 - You just want like a brief description of where we going. How long is it for? And this is what you’d be doing. Roughly.

B3 - This is when I go, this is when I come back.

B2 -Yeah, if it were Humanitarian for me. I know my partner would definitely be on board.

GR - So what is about the humanitarian side of things? Cause you mentioned it as well, that was. Something that was really worthwhile. What? What is it about that that makes it more attractive?

B4 – I just think it’s more rewarding and fulfilling. You know. You’re actually assisting people in a practical way.

GR - Yeah.

B2 - yeah. Probably more. Think it’s down to me as a person, if I’m always running to help people. If I’ve got an opportunity to be in a position working. to help the situation.

B3 - I think that anything that you gonna do is probably gonna help people. You’re going to get that sense of achievement either way, so you don’t really make a difference what you doing. It’s just gonna get out. Going to feel rewarded.

GR - So you think, you feel like, being in the army is in itself-

B3 – Yeah, definitely

GR - quite worthwhile thing to do, and then you know, you have faith that the jobs you get asked to do

B3 – Yeah, because you wouldn’t join up otherwise.

GR - are good ones.

B3 -Would you, you’d?

GR - That’s very interesting. How about you?

B1 - Agree with everything they’ve said to be fair. Not much to add to that.

GR - Good. Listen, we’ve covered off all of the stuff that I really wanted to talk about, which is which is really good and thank you very much for your participation.

38:32