

# Philip Neame - Episode 819

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## SPEAKERS

Philip Neame, James Geering

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**J** James Geering 00:00

Welcome to the behind the shield podcast. As always, my name is James Geering. And this week it is my absolute honor to welcome on the show, British military veteran mountaineer and the founder of the Ulysses trust, Phillip, Neame. Now when I was a little boy, my first introduction to war was the Falklands Island conflict, and Phillip lead two para de company in that war. So as you will hear, we discuss a host of topics from his early life and introduction into claiming his journey into the military, Northern Ireland, mental health, mountaineering, the unsung heroes of the Sherpa community, the formation of his own nonprofit, his book, and so much more. Now, before we get to this incredibly powerful and important conversation, as I say, every week, please just take a moment, go to whichever app you listen to this on, subscribe to the show, leave feedback and leave a rating. Every single five star rating truly does elevate this podcast, therefore making it easier for others to find. And this is a free library of well over 800 episodes now. So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men or women's stories, so I can get them to every single person on planet earth who needs to hear them. So that being said, I introduce to you, Phillip Neame enjoy Well, Phillip, I want to start by saying, Thank you so much for taking the time to come on the behind the shield podcast. As we discussed a few weeks ago when we had our chat. I am writing a book, it led me to revisit the Falklands conflict. I found the documentary, and then John was on there. You were on there and now we are sitting down to chat. So I want to firstly thank you for saying yes and coming on the show today. Okay, welcome.

**P** Philip Neame 02:16

Thank you for inviting me along.

**J** James Geering 02:19

So very first question, where on planet earth are we finding you today?

P

Philip Neame 02:24

Well, I live in a little old market town in Wiltshire, England, called mom's Bri. I've lived here for about 23 years now. That before that I was well, I was brought up in a county of Kent. And I was born in in Guernsey in the tunnel islands where my dad was the the Leftenant. Governor.

J

James Geering 02:51

So I don't think we talked about this one we spoke before I grew up in caution. Right down the road from you. Not very far away. Yeah. So we'll choose my home my home county. And then funnily enough with Guernsey, I had a Guernsey firefighter on the show. Probably two years ago now Pete during COVID I don't know if it was reported in the UK, but they had amazing success because they had a very proactive progressive health. I wasn't Minister but whatever their their expert was on the island and they had already prepared for a pandemic. So they locked everything down. They had one kind of flare up where they had to lock down again, but I think they were only sheltering in place for I think he said it was in a handful of weeks and then the rest of the year Guernsey was wide open.

P

Philip Neame 03:41

Yeah. No, I think they dealt with the situation. Pretty well.

J

James Geering 03:47

Yeah. All right. Well, then you mentioned about being born in Guernsey. So let's start at the very beginning of your timeline then. So tell me about your family dynamic, what your parents did, and how many siblings

P

Philip Neame 03:58

okay, my, my, my dad was in the army. He fought in the First World War. And quite a successful time he won the Victoria Cross. And then again, he was a general in the Second World War was spent some it was captured in North Africa by Rommel spent a lot of the war in a prison camp and eventually escaped. And they got back home I think in late, early 1944. So and really the ward passing by so he was sort of parked really for a year or so. And then there's appointed Rector and governor of Guernsey immediately really mean the war ended.

J

James Geering 04:52

So he was actually given a leadership position after actually truly leading in to conflicts.

P

Philip Neame 04:58

Yeah, and I think you know, that the Yeah, recovery of the islands, you know, after years of

occupation by Germany, you know, presented quite a challenge. So, you know, I think it was, it was the job he relished. Yeah. And I was, well, I was a twin as born just in 1946. Out in Guernsey, along with my twin, and I suppose we were in a sense of postwar, after thought, because I had an elder sister and an older brother, who were both pre war children. So that was the sort of family setup if you like.

J

James Geering 05:46

It's very, very rare that I get to speak to someone whose father served in World War One lot of them, you know, World War Two, maybe your grandparents, but what were the things if anything that he told you about that conflict? And then, you know, obviously, he has World War Two experience as well. I mean, now being, you know, the other side of your own personal service in the military. What was some of the things that stuck with you about his service way, way back then.

P

Philip Neame 06:14

He didn't really talk a great deal about his experiences in the war. I mean, he was quite a sort of modest self effacing man in many ways. And I think there's, you know, didn't relish talking too much about his his exploits. But I do remember one thing that I do remember was when the BBC was broadcasting a long series about the First World War in it, sort of, kind of in the 60s or 70s, some way back now. And he was, he was quite dismissive of it, because it was all in his view, I think, doom and gloom and horror. You know, I remember him saying at one stage, but you know, they're missing. They're missing a dimension. They're missing the excitement, the comradeship, and, you know, even to some extent, the glory of the events. So that sort of registered with me, but then I remember him watching the episode on the first day of the song, and was clearly upset by it. And, you know, at the end got up, you know, went away to study so much. And, you know, I wish I hadn't seen that. So, it clearly had, you know, the horror had left its mark as well.

J

James Geering 07:48

This is what I hear a lot. I mean, obviously, more so from the World War Two generation, but I mean, World War One, sadly, is underreported. But the book I'm writing is talking about multi generational trauma. And sadly, there's this kind of hero worship of the World War Two generation and the stoicism, but then when you unpack it, and you speak to family, after family, after family, Granddad or grandma was struggling, but they were they were suffering in silence, and you look historically, we've had a term for you know, Pts for a long, long time, 1000 yard stare, you know, Shellshock soldier's heart. So it's always been there. And I think now we're finally realizing how much suffering those veterans must have had when they came from, you know, Flanders Fields back into British culture again, and we're just kind of expected and again, well, not maliciously, but they just were culturally expected to just roll their sleeves up and get back at it.

P

Philip Neame 08:44

And I think they expected to have to do that as well. That's, you know, I think, you know, what's

changed is that, you know, we're all much more prepared to talk about these things now. And to unpack what, what's going on? And that, you know, just didn't happen.

**J** James Geering 09:06

Well, we're notorious for our stiff upper lip and that, you know, stoic element. What have you seen not to delve into mental health too soon, but just culturally, we are known for that quality. But if you talk about vulnerability and the ability to have these important conversations, as you said, the nuance that is combat or first responder service, have you seen our culture cannot be a resistance to that movement that we need to make where we are a little bit more open about our emotions.

**P** Philip Neame 09:38

And I think that by and large, I think people have woken up to the fact that it's probably important to talk about these things. I mean, I think my own view really is that there is a risk that we can Yeah, we can go too much the other way. And that it's a large degree. People probably need sympathy, but they need really, I think encouragement to find their own solutions and their own support network. It's just that actually, you know, those around them need to understand what is going on. And to cut people the slack they need and the space.

**J** James Geering 10:31

Yeah, yeah. I always talk about reasons not excuses. Excuses would be, you know, that that kind of victim mentality that expecting sympathy, which isn't really helping anyone. But yeah, reasons are acknowledging like, Okay, this happened when you were young, this happened in on blue screen, for example. So there are some tangible things that we need to address for you to be able to move forward.

**P** Philip Neame 10:55

Yeah, yeah. And I think in 82, when we got back, you know, we didn't cut people was slack that I think they would be cut these days, and there would be infrastructure to sort of, you know, help. And certainly, I think, you know, two cases in my company where I, you know, I look back and think we didn't didn't do them, right. We didn't, you know, I mean, we didn't get out of a way to do them wrong, obviously, that, you know, we could have done more to help them. Yeah.

**J** James Geering 11:28

So back to your your early life, you grew up in this pretty, pretty prominent, you know, military family by this point. You know, your dad's been a leader in to calm conflicts. Now he's overseeing an entire island in the British Isles. What were you dreaming of becoming when you were in the school boy age?

P

Philip Neame 11:49

Well, probably after I'd left Guernsey I mean, I left Guernsey when I was seven. And I think around about the age of 12, or 13. I had a dream of being a barrister. And actually went to eventually left school and went to university to study law. It wasn't a great success. And I left after two years without a degree. But really, because by then, climbing sort of taken over my life, you know, I had become an absolutely obsessive, passionate about climbing. To the extent that you know, three days a week I was on the Swanage sea cliffs climbing rather than studying law, and it didn't have a very successful outcome in terms of over a legal career. But I think that, you know, my interesting timing was also I think, if you like fanned by my, my dad, who had had a very active sporting career, he won a gold medal in the Olympics for shooting in 1924. He spent much of the years between the wars, serving in India has explored vast areas of the Himalaya hunting for big game. He'd had a climbing trip to the Alps with the fairly well known pre war mountaineer Frank Smyth. So, you know, he, he encouraged my interest in it not overtly or service seriously, but, you know, yeah, he approved my climbing and did not condemn me for spending too much time on the rocks as opposed to studying at all.

J

James Geering 13:57

Well, I want to get to your journey into climbing but just before we do a tangent, because this is a very difficult conversation, it was hard for me to understand when I first moved from the UK to America, my mic and optics changed a little bit when I saw how just immerse we are at the moment with this gun ownership problem. And I say problem, because it's not about removing all the guns, but we we have an issue where, you know, everyone has a gun, you know, all the bad guys, some of the good guys, you know, so they're just guns everywhere. So, robberies and arguments and road rage incidents, so often end up with someone being fatally shot, and I saw it as a paramedic here for years and years and years. But the narrative is, well, we'll never solve it. Well, I always point to the UK, that during World War Two, there were lots and lots of guns in our country because we were trying to protect it. And then we transition to where we are today. Is it? You know, is it perfect? Are there times where we need a gun? Yes. I mean, you know, some of the terrorist attacks in London are a perfect example. But I'm more just curious how that transition happened with your dad being into conflicts and with you being military. What are you aware of how the British specifically were able to go from, you know, a nation full of weapons to the environment that I grew up in, I had a gun. I grew up in a farm, but that wasn't carrying a pistol around my my high school either.

P

Philip Neame 15:22

Well, I didn't matter, we always had guns in the house. When I was young. You know, he had target rifles stashed away, you know, shotgun. Again, he was getting shot in that sense as well. So we just grew up with, with guns around that they were always, you know, locked away in a in a cabinet. I wouldn't say it was particularly secure cabinet. But, you know, nowadays, I think, you know, that weaponry, he would have to have it locked away in a in a safe, if it was just a locked away in a cabinet, which all on display. But, you know, we were, I suppose we were brought up to? Well, it is a bit strange, in many ways. He was quite cavalier about letting us rifles to, you know, shoot vermin and things like that, in the fields around any kind of series, teaching us the sort of safety and the danger areas and everything else, we just were expected

to apply common sense. And we did. So actually, you know, how did we transition to I think it was just accepted that, you know, once peace was restored, you know, guns would be controlled as they had been before. And he certainly didn't, he expected the, you know, to go through the processes of getting his guns licensed and keeping them safe, and they weren't in use and so on. And just saw that as a very common sense approach to, you know, potentially dangerous weapons. And I think that was really the way you know, I was brought up and the way I looked at weapons as well.

**J** James Geering 17:24

I had a rather unique experience with a friend of mine who's just retired out of the London Transport police's armed unit, and I went to, to their, their weapons cache and in the centre of London, and they had obviously, all the weapons that the police use, which wasn't, it was funny, it would have been so much more, I would have been so much more in or had I not lived in America for a long time where I can go to a sports store and see an array of weapons that a three year old can hold and play with. But um, but they were also all the ones that they'd confiscated or been turned in, and they were tommy guns and gatling guns and that mean, they're still there. They're still out there. You know, and I think that's the thing. It's, it's obviously the, the X accessibility is part of it. But like you said, it's also the mindset and the discipline. And I think I would argue still, the mental health element of our problem here in America is the hugely under discussed part of the violence that we have with these weapons.

**P** Philip Neame 18:19

Yeah, I mean, I think looking in at American I mean, again, I mean, I find it that extraordinary, you know, kind of Combat Assault Rifles and so on being freely available is just absolutely strange. Really strange, but I suppose you know, I mean, that kind of thing. Well, it goes back to the founding fathers and the right to bear arms is almost a religion in in, in America, and I think that's the difference here is never assume the status of a religion, although, you know, proof that you're a free person, because we had freedom anyway. It's

**J** James Geering 19:02

yeah, absolutely. As funny but again, coming from from the UK, you know, the, the freedom element, the democracy element, it is like, I'm sure it's the same if you come here from Sweden or Finland, it's like, well, yeah, we do as well, you know, and there are some very oppressed nations that would kill for this kind of freedom in the US. But, you know, I think when the British have had enough with the people that are in charge, they just rise up anyway. So you know, there is definitely a lot more freedom

**P** Philip Neame 19:27

the mob takes over. Yes,

**J** James Geering 19:32

James Cooney 19:12

well, then I know climbing is you know, is something near and dear since you were very young all the way to today. So when you were a young man, you know, what was that journey? What were you playing sports wise and how did you find yourself into the climbing mountaineering side?

P

Philip Neame 19:46

Well, my I suppose I did all the sort of normal sports. You know, initially at school, you know, football rugby, with a cricket then, you know, later on in my school career, I took up rowing. And I was quite a small boy that the ages of 13-14. So I was the COX and COX the first day since my secondary school for two, three years, I think. And really got into that as well. I think if I'm honest that perhaps I was never a really a kind of a team player in the sense of, you know, the rugby team or the football team or whatever. And, you know, so I Coxed the first day, but of course, I was the ninth person, as the Cox. And so, you know, kind of always sort of as part of the eighth, but not the eighth. And I think that I think that suited me quite well, actually. You know, I felt quite at ease, being the one Cox as opposed to one of eight and was awesome. And I enjoyed the, the freedom, if you like, and the responsibility that went with being a Cox, you know, you could, you know, you could win or lose a race just on the decisions you took, and I enjoyed that degree of, of responsive responsibility, pressure and so on. In fact, I thrived on it, I think. And, you know, sort of made a point of almost emphasizing my sort of individuality and so on. So I sort of took off on that. And then I was really introduced well, so I'd heard about climate have been sort of my dad had talked about the climates he knew he, he'd gone to Tibet between the wars with Frederick Frederick Spencer Chapman, who was another famous pre war mountaineer, and eventually wrote this book. The jungle is mutual serving, working behind the lines in Malaya. I met Spencer Chapman. So I had, you know, some Hero figures sort of waved across in front of me if you like. And I think that was part of the inspiration as well. But I got into it, really through Army Cadets at school. And we went off to a summer camp in sky when I was I think 16 was introduced to rock climbing there. And you know, just really got off on it really enjoyed it. And so I had two trips with the cadet force over two years, first to sky and into Wales. It was a little, I went to school in Cheltenham, and there was a small outcrop called Cliff Hill, just outside Cheltenham. And so I started to bicycle out to that weekend with a mate of mine at school. And we said about, you know, kind of teaching ourselves how to do things as much as anything else. I do remember. And this was the sort of relationship and the importance I suppose of my dad. I do remember, at one stage, my house master saying, I don't think you should be going out to these outcrops. It's limestone. It's loose, and it's dangerous. He was a bit of a climber himself in his chat. And so he forbade us to go out without supervision. And I wrote to my dad, explaining that I thought this was a thoroughly pathetic decision. And would he please write to my house master and say that you permit me to go off on my own without supervision, which he did. And, you know, it didn't. DMI endear me to my housemaster particularly, that he backed down and you know, we carried on doing our own unsupervised trips out to Cliff Hill and other places like winters leading Chepstow and so on. So I've kept going until I left school and then, you know, went to university and joined the the mountaineering club at that Southampton University, which was a at that stage, it's a very active and quite pushy, club, some very good climbers in it. And so I had, you know, these sort of hero town figures as I saw them as it's still a relative novice and immediately aspired to, you know, get better and start doing some of the hard routes myself. And it just led into that, and, and I suppose my other kind of of the encouragement I got, I suppose was I met a team of a group of people out in the Alps one year. I think my first season out now, who works all from Liverpool. I've never been delivered before in my life. But these guys struck me as pretty cool.

And they said they were starting their own club. They've got a hut in north Wales. And, you know, what, I like to join the Club. So, you know, I enthusiastically said, Yes, I would. And, and again, it was it was a it was it was, it was quietly competitive. You know, we were all striving to improve and, you know, you were just checking across to see what someone had done the weekend before and knew, Okay, well, I can do better than that, and so on. It was that sort of atmosphere, but it was also actually, because I left university I didn't join the army. And, well, I didn't I joined the RAF regiment initially. But this, this group of Liverpoolians, were brilliant, just keeping your feet on the ground. And I'll tell you a little story which was you know, this man and myself had gone out to Anglesey did some pretty good routes on the Anglesey, sea cliffs. I mean, definitely, you know, you dropped the names and people who don't have. So we got back late Monday evening, it's been a drizzly day, not the sort of day that you'd be doing seriously hard roofs. But we did a couple of you know, seriously hard recently put up routes on Anglesey and, and got back into the hacks are fairly late at night. What you've done today and then labs you know and service are very nonchalantly said I read Ward and when to go rich, you know, I knew would impress and someone from the back of that hat piped up and said yes, we had a bit of a poor day as well. So it was a fantastic environment, just make sure you never got kind of too big for your boots and just, you know, seriously grounded, great atmosphere.

J James Geering 27:20

So when you look through a 2023 lens, where are they any elements of the equipment, the safety procedures back then that you look at now and go, Oh, my God, we missed that or has that innovation from back then carried through to today, and it's still the same thing?

P Philip Neame 27:42

Well, I think equipment has improved, amazingly, I mean, it's, you know, manufactured that sort of artificial chalk stones and so on. So referred to as chocks to help provide protection and you know, slotting them into cracks. And you can just buy racks of these off the shelf these days, when I started, you know, traps, where you went down to the scrap yard, and you drilled out the threads from old discarded nuts. And, you know, that was the chockstone fairly basic. So the protection is available that's available, has improved, you know, dramatically, the tools for climbing ice have dramatically improved. So that's improved safety, it's also, you know, improved technique and so on. So the standards have just rocketed ahead from you know, what was a hard route in my day, you know, and so, liberally referred to as extreme and you know, most of them, some of the ones etoos. You know, well, people are now putting up sort of eights and E nines and you know, that the standard business has has rocketed ahead, and I'm nowhere near that, you know, these days. It's left me miles behind. But I mean, essentially, you know, the principles have stayed the same. You know, whatever the quality of your safety equipment and so on, there's still a risk and, you know, the part of the challenge or the pleasure of climbing is managing that risk. You know, overcoming the fear factor controlling that managing the risk and getting a route done. That's the principles and that sense of stayed the same.

J James Geering 29:47

I think one of the most misunderstood things and annex hon Alex Honnold is a perfect example the free solo you know, the subject of the documentary free solo is when I talk to these higher



level climbers and base jumpers. And you know, there's Oh, they're adrenaline junkies, they take these massive risks, when actually listen to these men and women, they are the most rehearsed, conditioned calculated athletes out there. But it seems like the, you know, when sadly, we lose people, usually it's complacency that, you know, finds its way and seeps in. And that is the underlying issue from a lot of these. And it's the same with the fire service, you know, we were brand new firefighters were wide eyed, we're looking at everything now, you know, you're 15 years into your career, that's 15 years of sleep deprivation, you've seen this fire 1000 times, you know, so how did you personally manage that complacency? How did you keep yourself being diligent even though, you know, as we talk, now, you're an extremely experienced climber.

P

Philip Neame 30:51

I think, probably, because I always had a healthy dose of fear and caution, lurking around in background. And so I kind of think that, that always discouraged me from getting complacent. I mean, I had mates who, you know, happily plop off, you know, every other weekend, and, you know, but you know, just real confident enough in their gear and so on, you know, they take a 20 foot drop or something like that, and, you know, just shrug and, you know, try again, I was never one of those, you know, even though I thought I might get away with it. I, I was, I would go to the ends of the world, as it were to avoid falling off.

J

James Geering 31:40

Sounds like a device to me.

P

Philip Neame 31:45

And I think that I mean, the only it didn't, it does depend on on the circumstances. I mean, I think, in the Himalaya, again, I mean, I kept my feet on the ground, and was pretty cautious. But, you know, in the Himalayas, you know, people talk about summit fever, you know, because he's, you know, dreamt of climbing this mountain for two or three years, you spent maybe four or five weeks on the mountain trying to climb it. And there you are, you know, kind of just one final push in that summits, as you've, you know, you've pushed too hard. And that's, again, where a lot of you know, when a lot of times where things have gone wrong. And I do remember my first Himalayan peak, which actually was a first ascent. And, you know, I remember, as we were descending thinking, push this just a bit too far, I was getting pretty worried. And I was very grateful that I had a really strong, reliable mate with me who, you know, if I'm honest, I think, you know, made sure I got down safely. So, you know, sometimes it depends on a little bit of luck, and who you're with, and so on.

J

James Geering 33:02

So I've had NIMS die on the show, I know that he's rescued climbers, you know, during a lot of his climbs, there was another guest, I'm blanking on the name, but they're a member of the military, same thing, they actually went, walk someone all the way down, and then went all the way back up, met his team and carried on. But then I just saw, and again, I have no real

education on the backstory, but just sort of very recently, there was a female climber going for a record and was, you know, pictured stepping over someone who was injured to finish her climb. I have no idea of the context of, you know, right, wrong or indifferent. But what is, you know, I don't know if you know, that story, specifically. But you know, what is as a climber, you know, when, what is that line between, you know, saving a life and continuing because I know, it's not black and white, it's very, very, you know, specific to that particular moment.

P

Philip Neame 33:56

Yeah, and I think, you know, recently well, over the last 20 years, especially, you know, I think, online has become much more, because, you know, especially around visiting of massive sense of, of queues of people trying to climb Everest. You know, I think I understand the mentality and the sense that people who've, you know, been, you know, career climbers, if you'd like, who've been at it for years and years and years, have dreamt for years of say, climbing Everest or another big Himalayan peak, or really, whatever it is. And they find themselves surrounded by these people who, you know, in my opinion, you know, are not climbers, they're just trophy seekers. And, you know, coming to grief or needing help. And, you know, I think it's a very understandable mentality, which says, Why should I give up my dream to help this person who should never have been here in the first place? And I think that is the mentality. I mean, I think it's a very sad state of affairs that, you know, that we got to that state. And I don't hold much sympathy for people who, you know, my view, take the wrong decision and abandon someone you know, for the sake of their own trophy, who like, but I do understand it. And, you know, I think that both parties in a sense, have to take responsibility. Yeah,

J

James Geering 35:36

yeah, I think for for people to understand that concept. NIMS took a picture that went viral, and it was this, like, traffic jam going towards Everest?

P

Philip Neame 35:47

Yeah. And I mean, yeah, I mean, I think you were referring to earlier it was it was, it was a case where, you know, going for his own record for the 1000. And, you know, abandoning his first attempt, I forget which one it was on, to help carry some people down, and then going back up to finish the job. I mean, that is the way it should be done. I think, if it means that, you know, you don't get your record, or you, you know, you know, succeed in that particular endeavor, then, so be it. I mean, my experience was, you know, on Everest in 76, where we were the only expedition on the mountain, but our first summit pier got benighted on the way down, and, you know, suffered serious frostbite, and so on, one of the guys might have got himself down under his own steam, but he wouldn't have abandoned his mate. And I think, you know, those of us following up to have a go at ourselves, abandoned our attempts to help them down the mountain. And I mean, I won't say that they didn't carry a large degree of regret that and I was I was helping these chats down was pretty clear in my mind that myself and my mate, we're gonna go back up, and there was insufficient oxygen out there that we could go up then and do the job. But, you know, eight hours later, helping one of these guys down the leg to face yeah, I was, I was knackered just made the dream. Obviously, one has regrets about that, you know,

an opportunity misses a job not done. A dream not totally fulfilled. But, you know, that's climbing. And, you know, it should continue in that vein, rather than abandoning people does do, you know, claiming success

**J** James Geering 37:50

that mirrors how I've talked about walking away from a fight, you know, someone who's actually trying to physically fight you is, you know, when you rise above it, if you have the opportunity to which most of them you can, it's very rare that you're cornered and being attacked by a mob. But I tell my son, this, I'm like, just know that seconds after you walk away from a fight, you're gonna want to turn around and say, I changed my mind and go back in again. Because sometimes the right decision is you suffer with it, you know, you are being the bigger man. And so like you said, whether you've given up a dream, to do the right thing, whether you've done the right thing, but walking away from a fight doesn't mean that you're not carrying that anger with you as you walk away.

**P** Philip Neame 38:29

Yeah. But you know, and then, you know, if you take that wrong decision, I'm just not quite sure how you can you know, meet your fellow humans. Look them in the face and just not kind of have a regret about that.

**J** James Geering 38:50

Yeah, exactly. Well, speaking of the Himalayas, one of the things that NIMS really can educated me on was the, the unsung heroes that is that are the Sherpas. And that, you know, there's a lot of lot of people that are the subject of that particular climb that failed to mention, or maybe it's not made apparent enough that there was a team of phenomenal human beings that help carry all this stuff to the top. So if you have, you know, kind of lens on that, talk to me about that element.

**P** Philip Neame 39:19

Um, yeah, well, I mean, I mean, my first Himalayan expedition, as it was, first ascent in the Annapurna range that we did. I think we were one of the earliest expeditions, if not the first expedition to Nepal, and not to use high altitude Sherpas. So you know, we did it ourselves. We did it, you know, clean and simple. And, I mean, I look back and really, that was, I think, you know, for me, the best of the expeditions I've done, you know, part It was a first ascent that I made. And there's nothing quite like treading ground, which no one else has tried before you don't know what to expect and so on. But it was, you know, small and it was unsupported do self contained expedition. I mean, whether we could have ever been there, I would have ever been in a position to sort of contemplate Everest without Sherpa support. I don't know that I do matter. But certainly on the two expeditions that I've been to Everest. Yeah. These guys are unsung heroes. And they take huge risks. They've been well paid, yes, they've been relative terms, and so on. But, you know, if they come to grief, or they injure themselves, and so on,

what's left for them is pretty stark. And I think it's, it does depress me to see people, you know, in their hundreds going off and saying, yes, you know, I've summited Everest. Well, you know, on whose back? Exactly, it's a question.

**J** James Geering 41:25

Yeah. Because, I mean, that's the thing. If it's a team, then that's great, but credit the team, you know, and the just one more area on this before we transition to your military journey. Another thing that I know he's passionate about is cleaning the mountain. Now, you wouldn't think an average person like me that's never really ascended anything other than a ski mountain on a chairlift? You know, you're not thinking about environmental pollution there. So talk to me about that element to an educate us.

**P** Philip Neame 41:50

Yeah. Well, certainly, you know, when I was on Everest, I mean, it's pretty appalling. South Col, the amount of rubbish up there and so on discarded oxygen bottles, you know, it was a, it was a rubbish tip. Did it worry me? Probably should have done but if I'm absolutely honest, I don't think it did. I thought, well, you know, this is the price. Is it upsetting? Scores of people, the only people it's upsetting are the few people who got up here. And, you know, there weren't many people getting to the south column beyond in 1976. So, you know, I took this a pragmatic view and said, Well, yeah, you know, how do you get it all down? You know, it's so I suppose, you know, these days, that's a little battling over, that's probably rather irresponsible. But it was, you know, my view as a pragmatic, you know, how many people is it going to upset only the people who are contributing to the rubbish? So, you know, that's the way of the world. But, you know, in a larger sense, clearly, the increased traffic, on average now, has multiplied that by a hundredfold. And clearly, it is now a different, different problem. And particularly if you think lower down, where its impact is felt by many other people. So, you know, times change and and I think attitudes have to change as well.

**J** James Geering 43:33

Absolutely. Well, you were in school for in law school, to be a barrister, I actually was going down the track to become a doctor till I realized that you have to be good at maths to get through the classes. So that was the end of my, I ended up becoming a paramedic, which is way more fun anyway, but wasn't destined to be the traditional doctor room. So now you're hanging off cliffs, walk me through that transition out of university and into the RAF?

**P** Philip Neame 44:03

Well, I was I left university for two years and failed my secondary exams. And sort of thought, okay, maybe when I was aware that I had to think what I was going to do for a living and you know, probably, were looking back actually, the word choices, you know, I could have gone to university read something else other than law. I mean, I found it deadly. It was like you learning case law or lack of power, it was not exactly stimulating. And I enjoyed geography, and I actually I was offered a place to read geography at Cambridge. Thanks very much to our rowing

coach at school. But I turned it down because, you know, I said, I'm sorry, I want to read law and thought that was a way to go and become a barrister without really being aware of the alternatives. Um, so anyway, I left university, I thought, okay, you know, law is no longer available. And I sort of bug it off after Glencoe for several months, working in a hotel up there, thinking, you know, I might get an awful lot of climbing down, wasn't as easy as all that. But after a while, I thought now I think perhaps I'll give the forces a try. I, you know, I Sunday, a little bit about them from my dad, and so on. And my older brother, well, both my elder brother and my twin brother had gone into the army and so on. But I thought, Man, I can't just be another one joining the army, like the rest of the family. So I instead applied for the RAF, thinking, you know, they might give me a chance to fly. But they offered me a commission in the RAF regiment. And so that's how that journey started. No great plan is just, you know, the way it sort of evolved. And I spent six years with the RAF regiment. And three of those were with their parachute squadron. At the end of that, six years, you know, decided don't really like what I was doing. reasonably good at it. So I applied for permanent commission. And this offered one on the strength of which I was then posted away from the passage squadron to what was called a ground defense training job experienced where they didn't even have aeroplanes big administrative headquarters. And I thought, hang on, you know, I didn't sign on for this. So I haven't actually signed accepting my location, bit of a long story, this, and at the same time, as I say, you know, as geared up for my first Himalayan expedition, which the parachutes water under it, okay, me to go on. But my new commanding officer, that's bridge said, Boy, I don't think I can release my RAF regiment officer to go on this expedition. Especially, and this was, you know, sort of mid the mid 70s Instead of aircraft hijacking. occurring every other week, especially he said, in view of the security situation at Heathrow. And I said, I'm sorry, so I thought I was an expedition at Heathrow. back and, you know, I thought, My future's not here. So I declined my permanent commission, actually, when first of all, in the end, the RF Zed, okay, if we can find some understanding for you, you know, maybe we can make your own your expedition. So ask about Thank you very much, but didn't make any commitments. And by then, I'd already been in touch with the passionate regiment and had a warm reception from there, regimental Colonel. So I got out as far as Hong Kong on the way to Nepal for this first expedition. And I wrote a letter to the RAF saying, you know, don't no longer want my permanent commission. And the next day, I sent another letter off, you know, formally applying for commissioning in the army. I wasn't allowed to transfer I had to leave and rejoin. So that all kind of went ahead. And I disappeared into Nepal for two months incommunicado, to get back to Hong Kong, kind of thick pile of signals waiting for me, saying, you know, has to report to the air secretary's department in mid by a certain date. And as per defense counsel instruction blardy blar if there were no RAF flights available, I just paid my own fare home and go civilian. And fortunately, the the the medical officer that I have contact had been on the same station as me in the Patrick's squadron. So I went to see him and said I got a problem. Marie is what you need feel is a very heavy cold. So I was duly given a very heavy cold also the chip said and I delayed my return until there was an RF flight available. That was another long saga because then the flight went us in Ghana where there are no civilian flights anyway. So my appointment with the air secretary is branch in mid had to be postponed yet again. And then when I got back, you know, I was I felt I had a rotten smell hanging after me, was not warmly received. But by then, as I say, my, my application for the army and the department regiment had been accepted. So I just shut down, moved on. And so that really got me into the Patrick Red Room. And I mean, really? I don't know why I didn't do it. There really? I mean, I think it was, you know, I think in those days, the the the sort of opportunities for the RAF regiment in sort of grand grand scheme of things were very, very limited. And so I have no regrets about it. And I really love my time in the RAF regiment. I have absolutely no regrets about also deciding to leave them and enjoying the parachute regiment. And I guess, had I not taken that decision. I would never have got down the Falklands. So

J James Geering 51:09

what correct me if I'm wrong was Northern Ireland before the focus on your career?

P Philip Neame 51:14

And yes, I'd been there done a couple of tours in Northern Ireland with the RAF regiment. I think it was very right at the very first started the troubles in August 1969. I was one of the first military elements sent out and that was to protect RAF Alder Grove, which is also serves as civilian airport, outside Belfast. And I remember so turning up there, and being briefed by the station commander, that the IRA had threatened to cross the border in force and attack a military target called a grove. RAF Alder Grove was home to something like 80, Phantom phantoms, which had just been ordered from America, but were having their engine swapped out for British engines. So that was certainly rather attractive military target 40 2007 Phantoms in large hangars, you know, would have been an easy, easy, easy and very tempting target. And I'd been sent out there without our machine guns. So I immediately said, Well, I think, you know, you're saying, gonna just cross the border and strength, what strength 300? I think I need my machine guns. Yes, I think you do these things. Yeah, that was the first sort of experience really. And then, you know, again, it's a second tour, where you're set up during the upgrade season, to reinforce other elements out there. So yeah, that was the start of my experience in Northern Ireland. It was quite interesting. I was I started taking an Irish girl out while I was on that first tour all ago. And I was sitting in a lay by in a car with her one evening, and a couple of heavies pulled up behind us, and started knocking on the Windows asking what we were doing, and that's something and I was going to get out of remonstrate with them and so on. And she was very sensibly telling me just to stay, sustain the candidate go away. And as they drove off, she said, just see what sort of country we live in Philip, when you have Catholics going around behaving like that. So how do you know the Catholic? Well, I didn't actually give it a Catholic. You know, I thought, blimey, you know, we have some, you know, we have some problems here. And I think that we were very slow in the UK to really understand the nature and the depth of those problems. Because that that memory was never forgot that there's a real wake up. It's,

J James Geering 54:14

it's really hard for me to wrap my head around the silos that we created in these two tiny rocks that we all grew up on, and that we're all completely interrelated. I mean, you go back in our lineage, we're all Scottish, Irish, Irish, Welsh and English, you know. But when I spoke to John Gray, I mean, he was over there and the concept, for example of our recent military going overseas to someone you know, with different race, different religion, and obviously the ones that they're hunting are, you know, extremists and you know, more often than not very violent, oppressive murderers as well. But in that particular conflict, you're still are in the British and Irish territory, they're our people. So what was that? Like? I don't know, if you have any perspective of, of literally, in theory being at war with British and Irish, who I would consider we're all the same people.

P

P

Philip Neame 55:15

Yeah. Yeah, that's an interesting question. I mean, you know, I did several other tours, you know, with the parachute regiment, as well, and how we're out there with one of the years Special Duties units out there. So, you know, I got to sort of know, the environment at various levels quite well. I mean, I think I got pretty cynical, I think I got to the point of thinking that, you know, uniform troops in, in our school were just actually duty targets. And all the real work was being done, you know, under the covers. And I think, you know, that level, you know, we were sort of very much focused on, you know, targeting individuals who were clearly bad men. And I think it was very much a sort of bring the bad men to justice approach rather than, you know, seeing, you know, the Catholics or the Protestants or the hours generally as the enemy, I don't think I've ever really kind of played a part. So it was always as it were, I suppose. I mean, whether it's true or not, whether it was convenient, so self deception, but I always felt we were there to you know, restore justice, rather than anything else.

J

James Geering 56:52

Well, again, you have, you know, obviously the countries of origin, but then you have religion, and I found that so crazy as well. They're both Christian, and yet they you know, and obviously, it's not just in Ireland, it's happens all over the world where religion, you know, separate even Buddhists, there are violent Buddhists, which blows my mind how that works. But, but yeah, so you know, to have neighbors that happen that use a slightly different book, murder each other is insanity, just forget murder, just just dislike each other, hate each other, just because their version of the same holy book.

P

Philip Neame 57:25

Yeah, I do remember thinking, you know, I mean, you know, probably upset all sorts of people are saying this, but I mean, I remember thinking, you know, actually, you know, you don't know what bigotry is, until you've met someone from Northern Ireland. I mean, it is, it defies logic, really, in many respects. But it's driven by it's driven by fear, I think, unless you address those underlying fears. I think you're not really going to, you know, the problems will continue. I think over time, but clearly the situation is improving. But that's the situation that I think you're dealing with.

J

James Geering 58:14

One I think mirrors and I'm not saying it's the same level of, you know, have certainly no violence, but it mirrors what we've seen, for example, recently with the COVID, regardless of anyone's perspective on it, there was a division there was what are you are you a are up, make up your mind. And you know, every time that we are divided, we become weaker and weaker and weaker, then we start fighting amongst ourselves. And one of my guests recently made a really interesting point, they said, you know, what happens when, you know, when a village is fighting against themselves, they're not looking at the castle, where the real problem is, you know, medieval times and I was like, that's, that's amazing. You know, the moment everyone's getting on now they're going, why are we paying taxes to this dude, again, you know, so, you know, we have to take a step back and go, Why, when I was a little boy, am I being taught, oh,



there are different kinds of Christian you gotta hate them. There are different kinds of Muslim you gotta hate them. When you know, ultimately, it's robbing that young boy or that young girl from a life of just enjoying this one opportunity on this planet that we get.

P

Philip Neame 59:19

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. It's yeah, I think yes, there are ruthless people who manipulate this fear factor. That's you know, that's the that's behind an awful lot of this. And you know, that is all playing.

J

James Geering 59:44

Yeah, exactly. Well, so you have these tours in Northern Ireland. We at that point as far apart from you know, the troubles the UK is thank God not known a lot of conflict since World War Two. Walk me through your Journey kind of, you know, the beginning of the Falklands War and then finding yourself on the screen.

P

Philip Neame 1:00:05

Right? Well I and I was posted, you know, shortly after my last Northern Ireland Tour, Special Duties, I did a tour and a headquarters for about 18 months and then was posted to, to para in, I think October 1981. And just shortly before that got married my honeymoon between this sort of between working in this headquarters and going to do, I got married, gone on a honeymoon to China to try and climb and unclimbed mountain in the Chinese part of the Himalayan that was in April May sort of time. And so I ended up taking over this company into the company. Quite an interesting experience. You know, the, the company were clearly the Cinderella company of two parents, for more, you know, ever reason, I've sort of over time put it down to the fact that, you know, D comes behind a and b with the other two rifle companies. A and B Company shared an office block. The company shared an office block with C Company, which was the troll so sort of slightly different. And that was the, the company that John Graham was in. And so we were sort of the company of a sort of outliers. And, as I say, always behind in the queue for everything, they didn't buy the alphabet as much as anything else. So it was always, you know, on exercises, you know, a company left for the company right forward, and it always was that left and right and so on. And we started goose green, it was just the same, and the company or the company reserve, you know, we think about you later sort of thing. And, you know, it affected everything really ate, you know, meant we were lost in the Koufos of rations. And when it came to start allocating Ford observation officers for artillery, you know, the, the number of fly hours had been reduced from four per battery had been reduced from three to two. And so, you know, come the Falklands, guess who didn't get the qualified fo od company. So had lots of implications. And not only that, but we seem to be the parking lot for, you know, the sort of bad lads who were proving to be difficult for a MP company to, to manage. So, people who would, you know, put on the sort of infamous three month final warning, often found themselves in the company, and, you know, they'd either sort themselves out and just stay, or we'd be the people who would have to push them on their way as it were. So, I mean, I've picked this up pretty quickly. And I don't know, if perhaps it suited me is sort of echoes, if you like of, you know, being a bit of an outlier, you know, like the Cox of the first date, you know, so I didn't worry me this, and if act, again, I was a bit of an outlier, because I also, I was



really an unknown factor, you know, my background, no one knew anything about my background beyond the fact that I had passed the company. And that was an option that I could have done as well, interestingly. But that had been picked. I mean, that was all it really mattered, but no one knew much about me, whereas the other two company commanders of A and B Company, had gone through Santos together, they were known fact is they'd served in the battalion before and so on. So it was quite an interesting, dynamic, and I was quite happy with that, in fact, you know, I really probably rather exploited it, and, you know, determined that, you know, in the company would do things our way and solve the rest of them. And I think that was probably a good thing. You know, I think it helped build the company's morale and resilience which, you know, paid off when we did eventually go to the end of the Falklands. So that was a sort of situation that I kind of ended up in. And then in April 82, I mean, I was up in Scotland doing some ice climbing with an old mate of mine, and we were both there with our wives and so on. And then we heard about the invasion of the Falkland Islands. So, you know, kind of got interested, but you know, wasn't expecting too much until eventually a telegram arrived for me, you know, with a one word brood of how we choose the name of our barracks and also to pair a battle on. And in the balloon of our raid, so the one word brunoise. And that meant to end the barracks, so you know, whoops of joy and everything else enthusiasm. Not echoed by my wife, I have to serve the auto shop to see what was gonna happen. So that was the leading, I suppose the the atmosphere was still very much, you know, kind Come on, folks, we're all grown up, we're not going to go to war for, you know, these couple of islands down the other end of the South Atlantic. And we don't even know where they were, you know, first thing is look at the map of Northwest Scotland and plan find. Absolutely. And so it was, you know, the whole thing was a bit hoping that something something for us to do would emerge. But we couldn't really kind of absolutely believe it was gonna happen. And I think that atmosphere was still prevalent when we embarked on the Norland day itself, you know, almost reinforced by that experience, because, you know, the lowland was a North Sea car ferry, you know, flying between Rotterdam and hull. And so, you know, the, the whole atmosphere of unreality, if you like, was kind of reinforced by means of transport, and all that sort of stuff. So, it was, you know, I mean, I think we took it all very seriously, but it was quite difficult to really, you know, believe that we were going to have to go and do some market stuff. And it wasn't really I think, in Belgrade, I was sunk, first of all, and then a couple of days later, the Sheffield, one of our destroyers was resistant. That, you know, it really became obvious. You know, it was gonna end up in something bloody and serious, you know, until when these have tripped down have been a very jolly affair, if you like. And, you know, certainly once we got the news of the Sheffield, you know, the law and went pretty quiet is the kind of implications finally sunk in. And, and again, just reinforced by the instruction that came out. But in future, you know, because of the risk of Argentinians, some greens and so on, that we should all sleep in our bunks fully clothed in case we had to abandon ship. short notice. I gotta say, I didn't convey the instruction, rather get a decent night's sleep. But, you know, yeah, it also turned a little bit series for a short while. I've got to say, Not for long, I mean, the irrepressible humor of you know, the the Tom's collective term for soldiers in the parachute regiment, quickly reasserted itself. And, you know, within a couple of hours, there were some awful sick jokes going around about, you know, sailors and seamen, and the Sheffield and so on, I'm not going to repeat that.



James Geering 1:09:28

I can imagine it pretty, pretty gross.



1:00:01

P

Philip Neame 1:09:31

And I remember, you know, visiting, you know, my Tom's also, I think most of the times were below the waterline on their deck and the officers were fortunate enough in being perfect. Zach descending a couple of decks to see that Tom was in the Nafi. And, you know, hearing these jokes and thinking, no need to worry them or all right, but I think this is an underlying message really then took away from it is that humor is so important in these situations. And it's really what keeps morale alive and hopes alive and all sorts of it.

J

James Geering 1:10:12

So just to kind of paint the picture, as you said, you were basically transported on the ferry, what what was the security around you? Because I mean, that is not a vessel that is built for attack. Yeah.

P

Philip Neame 1:10:26

Well, I mean, that really the Nolan was, you know, their crew were unsung heroes. The basically, the Norland was one of many ships taken up from trade is what's referred to as stuffed. And certainly on the way down, we docked in at Freetown, West Africa, and the crew were sort of given the chance to leave and go home. And a couple of people, a couple of the female members of the crew left for, you know, genuine compassionate reasons. But all the rest stayed, you know, having been given the option. So I think that there's quite a lot. And then I think we still 10 days out for the fourplus still outside the IES, we just back to enter the total exclusion zone, I think, signal came out from Naval, the chief naval officer saying, like, from now on, civilian crews are and will be under naval orders, and subject to Naval discipline. And so I remember the master of the Norland who had a navy crew, planted on top of him, but he was still very much the master of this project, really being quite upset that, you know, this signal had come out saying, you know, you know, under martial law, as it were, because, you know, he said, you know, my crew had already made the commitment, you know, they made the commitment of free download, you know, it's not a question of that now being enabled, or, you know, do they not, trust me sort of thing. And it was interesting, just the whole dynamics of that. Anyway, you know, that's where it was, and the Norland effectively, was used as an amphibious assault ship during the landings very much in harm's way. But, you know, on the trip down and around San Carlos water itself, you know, protected by military warships, destroyers and frigates, whose job was to get us to our final destination in one piece. But, you know, clearly, you know, there is existed still, you know, no guarantee that you're going to pick up an enemy submarine or whatever, very much subject to the air attacks on San Carlos water from the Argentinian Air Force on a daily basis, and is much at risk as the military ships themselves. So I've always thought they were a pretty impressive picture of, of madness really delivered the goods?

J

James Geering 1:13:22

No, it's amazing. Absolutely amazing. And you think about that being given the option to not take your ferry into the, you know, Argentinian war. When you think about, you know, the an invasion, obviously, we're thinking of Normandy and the incredible resistance that that that

allied force had when they first hit the beaches. John was talking about, you know, expecting that, but actually not having resistance initially. Is that were you experienced as well?

P

Philip Neame 1:13:51

Yeah, I, it's very clear that, you know, the San Carlos have been chosen as the landing point on the expectation, or at least the hope that it would mean, the landing would be repurposed. So the fact that we met no opposition at the start, you know, didn't eyes me, I suppose. I think, perhaps that reflects the fact that probably, you know, as a company might wonder, you know, I was privy to briefings that didn't percolate all the way down to the John. So yeah, I mean, I think, have we been opposed? I'd have been disappointed. I mean, it was. But that all said, I mean, it was still a pretty momentous day. Night really, again, it started off it with all I mean, what underpins all military operations, and I think is that they're always just one step away from chaos. And you've got to first of all, you know, accept, almost expect that. And, you know, train yourself to cope with the chaos and the uncertainty that so I mean, as we were making our way into San Carlos water, I think we were still waiting for confirmation from the naval command that you know, what time of the what? When was HR? And was it definitely going to be tonight? And we'd have no confirmation plans. We've had plans, yes, but no confirmation. And H Jones, our CEO was pretty volatile character. You know, it was chewing his fingernails sort of waiting for this confirmation. And eventually, we signaled the frigate broadsword and said, Hey, is there something we should know about? And we got a sort of, like signals back? So I'm saying yes, but it's far too secret to tell you.

J

James Geering 1:16:11

You don't need to know about the enemy and where they are, and how many

P

Philip Neame 1:16:15

so called alongside us. And they sort of any sort of bits of string if you like, pushed over fat module papers. And so the whole thing was a little bit of chaotic. And then I remember when we, you know, so we knew we were going through that night, we had, everything was brought forward a couple of hours, and so on. So the whole thing was a bit of a rush. And while we were waiting to transfer from the Norland to the landing craft, Don Lamb who was the master of of the Norland got up on the PA system, we they're all there, you know, came up, ship, dock, and and everything else. modes have huge burdens on our backs. Everything else sweating away in the in the year was, I think the continental lounge. LRB got up on the loudspeaker system. And as if we were just sort of putting into Rotterdam said that, you've been a lovely bunch of passengers. It's been a pleasure having you ashore, having you aboard. And so we hope you have a good time at Sure. And we look forward to sending you home safely, shortly. Well, it was it was just perfect. I mean, you know, your immediate lump in my throat. And, you know, my, my attitude from that moment really was the, you know, the Norland had become our mothership, you know, we really bonded with this crew. Surprisingly, I mean, you know, it could have easily gone the other way. And my view was right, We've sailed down, we're gonna go and do the job ashore, we will say about that she is the mothership. And the relationship with the crew was extraordinary. You know, there was a large number of stewards on the Norland significant number of whom are outright queens. So, potentially combustible atmosphere. But I

think the Tom's quickly realized that, you know, if they made an enemy of the students, the students could make their life pretty miserable. And it all worked out. And, you know, there's one who can tell you his name. Anyway, doesn't matter, but who was nicknamed Wendy, which sort of kind of summed up the sort of personality if you like, Wendy was very, very good born entertainer, and very good piano player. So when they used to lead the thing, songs, you know, the mafia, continental lounge, in the evenings and things like that, and became very much Italian mascot so much so that he she was made an honorary member of the Italian and presented with battalion tie and everything else. So it was full of, you know, really kind of endearing sort of the moments like that, really. And a real surprise, I mean, I think, you know, the command element of the battalion were really nervous about you know, this could all go you know, match over Paris and, you know, it's do it you know, go down the wrong way, but they need them worried. It was just it was amazing experience. So, yeah, we went ashore it was unopposed and but again, you know, the the confusion sort of all CHAOS was always just one step away. I mean, we, the landing craft take us to shore arrived in the wrong order. So, you know, many different companies when they went ashore were not in the right place and so on. It's all supposed to be well choreographed. That didn't happen. So chaos on the beach. And we supposed to be that we been told that the the beach and had been secured by SBS patrol. But when we went ashore, the lead companies that have met this patrol, and sort of, you know, who were you sort of thing? You know, they weren't expecting us that night. And

J

James Geering 1:20:38

that's not a good sign as everyone you're asked. You know,

P

Philip Neame 1:20:44

it was it was sort of you know, who you were to Cairo, who were you, SBS. But we weren't expecting you until two days for another two days. It's, so a lot of the things could have gone wrong. But fortunately, nothing seriously did. But as I say, it's just an example in these situations, and I'm sure it applies to, you know, kind of first responder type operations around the world. You know, you've got to cope with the unexpected with the chaos and the uncertainty. And often, whether you succeed or fail, comes down to your ability to do just that, to have the resilience to cope with uncertainty.

J

James Geering 1:21:29

Yeah, I mean, if you actually saw what a fire ground looks like, it is absolutely organized chaos. I mean, there's, there's an overall plan. But yeah, I mean, I'm sure anyone listening that was in the fire service can think of all their clumsy moments, and I've had numerous but overall, you move the needle, and you get the job done. But it's not this, Hollywood orchestrated, you know, beautiful symphony of firefighters, it's, you know, I'm falling over with, there's a fence on top of me, because I just pulled too hard. And then this guy can't get the door open, and then someone walks over and goes is unlocked, you idiot. I mean, there's a lot of that going on. But overall, we get the job done. Absolutely. And like you said, there's the need to have a plan B and A Plan C, that is the key to being successful.

P

**Philip Neame 1:22:12**

Yeah, well, the old adage is certainly you know, that no plan survives the first shot. And, you know, it's so true. But if you've got that, you got that mindset, right, you know, then you overcome that. And, you know, if you, you know, if you know, the drills and everything else, people know what you're going to be doing, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, then, you know, then you have the ability to adapt and change the plan on the hoof.

J

**James Geering 1:22:47**

Well, just before we get to your advance, Wendy, that is a great insight, I think into you know, again, one of the dividing conversations at the moment, you've got this very, very pro, LG, whatever the the acronym is, and then you got the very anti, and then in the middle, again, are all the normal people that like, Yeah, I think I'm fine with whoever loves whoever, as long as it's not hurting anyone. But because we pigeonhole now you're talking about a crew, some of which are gay men and women, some of which, you know, a drag queens or whatever, whatever they do, who signed up to stay on their ship and go towards a war? This is the problem when we, you know, tar everyone with the same brush is that every single person is a single person and their sexuality and religion and everything is irrelevant. There was a some incredibly courageous individuals, that unarmed said, yeah, we'll come to a war, you know, and I'll sing some songs while we do it.

P

**Philip Neame 1:23:48**

No, absolutely. I think is so true. You know, yeah. If you look three issues, then you'll find them if he insist on giving everyone a label, then it's divisive, you know. unhelpful, yeah,

J

**James Geering 1:24:09**

absolutely. So you arrive on shore, you know, kind of an he talks about H. Jones as well. I know, that's a sad part of this overall story, kind of walk me through, you know, the hours after that.

P

**Philip Neame 1:24:20**

So, you know, our first objective, we were sort of positioned on the sort of southern perimeter of the beach shed on Sussex mountain. So it's about 800 feet high. As I recall, we were carrying in excess of 100 pounds per man on our backs. And it was a horrific slog up to this top of this mountain. We expected it to take, you know, basically, about three hours to get to this summit. And so, you know, I think we set off where we landed at On the beach, you know, just after midnight, we should have had plenty of time to get to the top in the dark. But, you know, we made and we expected those SN three hours. But that was all based before we really had any experience of the terrain. And it was, you know, horrific peat bog and stone runs and stuff like that. So it was a good three hours after first light before we actually got on to objective. And at which stage as soon as first light came up, you know, the Argentinian Air Force started to get engaged with the kind of disruptive landings. I mean, fortunately, we were spread out not an obvious target for any aircraft, frankly, and it wouldn't, you know, aircraft coming over, we're not going to pose a serious threat to the galleon always wanted to have a go at us, you know,

possibly cause some casualties. I mean, their attention was on the shipping in San Carlos water. So you know, we see these things, flying overhead. These are half hearted attempts to engage with our small arms, we had a air defense detachment with this weapon called blow pipe, which is really pretty hopeless missile system. By the time the operators have blowpipe got their sort of kit ready and possible to engage, you know, the enemy had already gone over ahead. Mr. Hall was not fast enough to catch him up. So it's pretty ineffective, he couldn't get a head shot. So you know, the sort of limitations if you like of the kick, we have beginning to become a partner, etc. But we got eventually got up. And we had a grandstand view, I suppose, from Sussex mountain of San Carlos water. And that was, you know, that day and for the following six days was, you know, to colloquially known as BOMB ALLEY, and it was, I mean, you know, in a sense, we were witnessing, you know, a ship a day, you know, variably, the naval ships being sent by the Argentinian Air Force. And it was, you know, it was exciting stuff. I mean, you saw the jets coming in, and, you know, the flying of these Argentinian pilots, certainly impressed. And then, you know, you'd see some ships being strike that there would seem to be targeting the naval ships and other logistics ships, which I think was a blessing in a sense, because I think if they sent more logistics ships, we've struggled later on. But it was, it was pretty demoralizing. And I think, day three, you know, there's a mutterings going around the company of you know, is this another deliberately sort of touching? We're getting pretty cynical. I mean, certainly, you know, the, well, we sort of beginning to wonder, What on earth are we doing up here, you know, there was no obvious threat to us from Grand attack, from the Argentinian forces to the nearest neighbor, it was a good screen, and there was clearly no effort to come and, you know, engages on land. So we felt pretty useless, frankly. You know, frivolous, you know, when we're going to start taking the battle to the enemy. And that was certainly HTC approach. I mean, you know, born aggressor, and I think there's a spirit of, you know, the parachute regiment, as well, you know, you were bred for a fence not, you know, not just sitting on board hillside waiting for things to happen. So, I mean, the momentum began to build for us to do something, and he was lobbying like mad with the Brigadier Julian Thompson, to lead us off the leash, and the tide goes green. And there's a bit of logic here, because the position where we were, I mean, everyone knew the war was going to be won or lost around Stamey and position where we were around the bank beachhead, we were the furthest battalion from Stanley. So I think he was thinking I know what's going to help me you know, I'm going to be left to defend the beach and the rest of go off and when the wall that was very much I think it's his mindset, everything else. So he was lobbying to be let off the leash and, and attack, Goose green. And eventually, I mean, Thompson, very sensibly, I think was sought goose green as a distraction that it could be bypassed and being one of the great sort of things of military doctrine is concentration of effort. And I think he saw an attack on guru sprinters dissipating is a separate which just need to focus on not winning the battle for standing. But eventually he authorized a raid. And so I was my company was sent off to secure an assembly area, Camilla Creek as a preliminary for that, that raid, and it's gonna be a battalion strength raid. So the idea was to go and knock a few heads about among the guys that goes green and then withdraw. And, you know, he was not at all happy with that. So how can you ask a soldier to risk his life for just a hit and run raid? You know, I think probably, there's precedent enough to also see that a hit and run raid was probably potentially unhelpful, I mean, you always have this problem with RAID is, you know, if you hit and run RAID is when you've, you've done enough hitting, and when you start running, I mean, you know, somebody can answer that question deserves a medal, you know, but, I mean, you know, where do you say, well, we've done enough or we picked up? Is it because you've started to draw too many casualties that we pull back, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera? And then put yourself in in the Argentine industries? And say, Well, you know, what, how would they play that? Argentinian Argentinian forces rebel, parachute regiment, attack, you know, that's not quite what anyone would have wanted. You know, this is kind of morale game and everything else. So, I mean, I think he saw through this



anyway, we got, like, halfway down to commit, agree. And the brain was then canceled, because helicopters were that we're going to find some guns to support as required elsewhere, etc, etc. So, you know, usual chaos. And so, we were recalled, I got back. So ah, my view was, you know, by now, the limitations of our foot wherever becoming very apparent, and the, the dreadful conditions on the foot, the people are already going down with trench foot. And remember getting back and seeing agents are saying, We can't afford to do this again. You know, we've wasted, you know, 20 miles of footwear of foot life, if you like, and we've got only limited foot life in this footwear that we've gotten so on. And you know, and it was a serious issue. I mean, I don't think he hadn't done the task that I just done. So I don't think he's sympathized a great deal. But, you know, it was a serious issue. And so I was told, just shut up and get on with it. And then two, oh, literally 36 hours later, without as pulled out, again, rates back on, you're going to secure the assembly area, that this this time, we're all going. So it had been elevated and so on. And I think what had happened? Well, I went down thinking the rates back on that time, I was caught up by the rest of Italian crew, and met up with he again, he said, it's no longer raid, we're going to recapture the second weeks. So I gather what had happened was that in that period, if Thomson had been called at the SAP net, and been briefed by the headquarters back in the UK northward, and was told to elevate these rate to recover the settlement, and I think it was told in no uncertain terms, if you're not prepared to do that, we'll find some of the waves. And so that was the sort of situation evolved. And I mean, it's not the way of a military operation should be planned. Because, you know, first of all, determine what your aim is recaptured the settlement. And then that determines, you know, the resources and the plan that follows that if, you know, halfway through someone says, Just do a bit more one stone, you know, you haven't really got the resources required. And I think Thompson always beat himself up a bit about that, because he thinks he should have allocated, more resources probably should have allocated this not just half a battery of guns, maybe a full battery, but also the light tanks that we have with this and so on. I think he he castigated himself unfairly there, because actually, you know, he might have given us a full battery of guns, but we certainly didn't have by them we'd lost the Atlantic Professor Got the heavy lift helicopters that prompt at the bottom of the ocean. So we just, he did allocated a full battery of guns. But we wouldn't have had a full batteries worth of ammunition down on the gun line. So you know, why risk, you know the assets? So, the whole thing was a little bit, you know, we sort of dribbled into this operation, if you might, you know, rather than Greece have focused, etc. So I think it is. Well, I think actually, they just wind back a bit, because I think, ah, perhaps began to realize, taken on more than he bargained for when we had 24 hours, first of all, to sort of recognize some of the ground that we're going to attack. And we began to get into sort of more detailed picture of the enemy positions that hadn't been helped by the fact that, you know, that first night military guys, just as firstlight was coming up with listening into the BBC World Service on our HF radios. And I was up in in a loft room in in in a farmhouse, alongside battalion headquarters, and heard this announcement, you know, on the radio, it's been announced in Parliament today that there is now Patrick Italian within seven miles of goose green. Well, if we could listen into the BBC World Service in you know, so could the Argentinians it's fairly obvious, ah, went absolutely apoplectic, we had a BBC reporter embedded with this junk called Robert Fox, who got the full brunt of 80s Roth. But the net result was, you know, we were looking forward to a day and shelter in this in the farm buildings, but they were the obvious target. That was obviously where the enemy aircraft would come looking for us. So we will have to disperse out with the Cubs, and the cold and the wet and everything else. So that didn't help morale. And I think, you know, he really must have been under huge pressure at this point, you know, he'd been lobbying for this operation. Suddenly, as the the details of enemy positions began to come in and pick up on their, on their maps, you know, which began to feel more and more with red blobs, indicating enemy. And then, you know, this setback of the announcement that clearly the, you know, the attack was no longer a complete surprise. I take my hat off to

him, because he had his limitations. He was a bit impetuous, volatile, and so on. But, I mean, I always think it's before the action before you start a big, you know, north wall in the Alps or whatever, that you know, the spirit is, is truly tested. Once you're involved in the action, you know, the adrenaline, the focus on the job in hand, and everything else takes over. And I mean, I'm sure you've experienced, exactly that is a first responder. So, you know, if he was beginning to feel a little bit worried, he certainly didn't share it. I mean, he absolutely had his final briefing, you know, instilled in us, I think, a complete faith that we would prevail, despite all the setbacks encountered. And you know, less than men might have sort of, not, they might have just asked for a second chances. They don't think we can do this, and so on, that he certainly didn't any absolutely instill this belief, could be faith that we would prevail. And I take my hat off to him for that. And I think because also for his absolute focus, you know, if we're going to engage on this, we have to succeed, you know, forget the idea of a raid or whatever is not enough, it must succeed. We, you know, without a defined successful outcome, this will be a failure, because effectively what he was saying. And so, I think that's when he was really tested. I think that's kind of at that moment, if you'd like to be perhaps, these VC because I think, you know, he conducted things pretty well. People criticize his plans of being too detailed and so on. For me well, A, he's plan actually, for me painted a vivid picture of one way in which we might succeed, we might recapture the second. So I sort of think of it in terms of visualizing success, it's, you know, athletes are trained to visualize crossing and breaking the ribbon at the hamburger, 100 yard sprint, whatever it happens to be. It's briefing to detail bats are criticized for being too detailed and so on. But for, for me, his briefing achieved that. And I think we all actually understood, you know, this is just one way it might pan out, but actually, from today is going to be very different. So, anyway, we set off. Again, the resource is clearly limited, but I think one huge mistake was made. And, you know, I suppose it really, he probably has to take the responsibility for that, because it was his plan. And that was the time space appreciation, we just have not appreciated how long the job is going to take, if you'd like to cut the amount of ground and so on. I mean, we had planned for so six attacks on six separate identified enemy positions. We have to cover from the start line, the region of seven kilometers. And we've allowed ourselves only four hours to do it. Well, you know, in the best of conditions, that was probably ambitious. But actually, in the, you know, reality of the conditions that we face, it was completely impossible. And soon after the staff that battle, good on the company in reserve, as ever, we were deployed within an hour of the start of a battle. And that first night that was, you know, absolute chaos. We it was our age, this quarter, I'd been ahead of he and his tech, which I shouldn't have been, we got lost on the way in came sort of trotting up behind me and saying, What the hell are you doing? Who's supposed to be behind me? So I'm just waiting for the battles to stop. And then he said, right, well, actually, you know, I think I did this, again, sort of indicates that he was, you know, people's will say, Well, he's a bit literal, the plan was literal, and so on. But he was actually thinking of other ways as well. He said, I think, you know, I'm gonna go and see if we can't feed you straight through the axis of the of the advance and getting behind the, the enemy and roll them up that way. So he trotted off ahead of me on a track leading into screen came back about a half an hour later, and said, I just been shot at from, from well, that hill over there. And of course, it's pitch black nights, I couldn't see we've been on Patreon so so we, you know, the only way it really was to advanced a contact with one of my platoon is leading. And we eventually carried this position where he'd been shot out from restarted or draw fire. And it looked pretty intensive. But we got onto the top of this without picking up any casualties. You know, I mean, the the air was thick with tracer. But fortunately, no one went down, like overseas or too easy. And was about to start reorganizing. We might run right rear platoon started coming under machine gunfire and you know, began to only in retrospect, did it work it out if you like, we really just come against this. We are continuing right flank at that position. There's a whole lot more on our right and so on, which had also been bypassed by the company on our right. And so they started calling for help and you know, from



where I was, I couldn't see precisely where they were, I couldn't see where the enemy were engaging them from. So actually, you know, I was pretty nonplussed that wasn't much I could offer and forks me again, I think this is the strength. The this was the resilience in the company and the strength of the Patrick Redmond stones, you know, constantly pushing people to use their initiative. So it was one of my other platoons. My left rear platoon commander used his own initiative then to come across take the pressure off the the right rear. Yes, the right rip too. And so it's all a bit confusing. I had really no input in that at all, absolutely dependent on junior leaders to use their initiative, right from a particular monitor who'd only been out of standards for, you know, something like six weeks. Haven't done. It's purging commanders course or anything like that, at that stage, dependent on people I met to use their initiative. Right down to their section commander level, my ability to control it or to offer guidance was frankly, zero. And, you know, the the the Tom's stepped up to it. So we dealt with that problem. But in the process, between those two platoons, they picked up four casualties. Well, two had been found and sorted, one was wounded. Yeah, so couple have been sorted out one being wounded. But we had effectively two people unaccounted for. So missing. And then you have a dilemma, because, you know, at what point do you sort of say, well forget them and move on? Or do you know, take time to try and look for them and so on? Well, you know, we never found them that they were picked up later on in the morning. You know, one was, one was, one was essentially manda who'd been shot. And beside him was his, one of his section. Who, interestingly, had been there when he was picked up, found dead lying across his section commanders body, and with a shell dressing in his hand ready to obviously, Tim said, you know, who's going to try to apply first aid, one of the things we'd emphasize before we'd started this battle, and before, during our training on the northern was, you know, in the attack, you cannot stop and look after casualties, you've got to push on security objective, and then we sort the casualties out. Because if you are by, you know, applying first aid to someone's or just being shot, you're still in the killing zone. And this was a mindset, which we had to sort of get across, after Northern Ireland, you know, counterinsurgency, where the, you know, in counterinsurgency operations, minimize casualties, you know, the first priority is to sort of casualties that translate them. You know, this was not counterinsurgency, and it's a different set of principles had to apply. Here was an example where, you know, you know, this young Tom had done the natural thing, you know, trying to help his injured section commander, that he'd actually done exactly the wrong thing. At that time, you know, each other, just, okay, sorry, mate, I've got my job to finish, we got to secure the objective, etc. So, you know, it's quite an interesting thing experienced all this, but the real implication that I'm getting to, is that at that point, it became completely obvious that our time space appreciation had been, you know, nonsense, frankly. And it took us, I mean, on every exercise I've ever done, you know, I mean, if he was still we are organizing after 20 minutes, you know, you had the directing staff that beating around the endzone saying what's going on. But it took us an hour and a half to reorganize, before, you know, eventually people have been pulled in every direction. This is pre GPS. So, you know, I mean, they've been on the far side of the moon, for all I knew, in trying to work out where I was, where the rest of the company was, etc. And we had this additional difficulty, you know, we're so and so well, we need to try and find him. It's not easy just lost, you know, we don't want to leave behind etcetera, or is he injured or, or dead. So, you know, an hour and a half flew by, and by the time they like emerged, you know, we were only Well, we hadn't secured either settlement, we're really only halfway down the isthmus that we had to recapture. And the plan really was, well, I've effectively went out the window. On the cover of darkness, we had all the advantages. You know, we were able to close and once we closed with the enemy, you know, frankly, there was no competition. I don't think they had any. There was not a fervent will to fight if you like among the Argentinians in the dark. And you know, say once closed, we went just went through the magnetic through butter and But some daylight, absolutely broad open ground, great fields of fire and visibility and so on. All the advantage went on to the defense went to the defense,

the Argentinians. So we had, you know, very different, different about on them to engage. And effectively, daylight brought us complete stop for virtually complete stop for three hours in a company who will move forward with, you know, as daylight came out, so, they're actively ambushed from an Argentinian position on Darwin Hill, which was a bit of a surprise, they were there. I was in reserve again, looking at this big company had gone over this main ridge line towards goose green, as they like came back, forward slow, and were brought to a halt by nest of heavy machine guns about, you know, good to kill kilometres to their front or just under two kilometers to their front. And you know, basically the battalion's portrait standstill. And, and if this is the kind of situation where, you know, Thompson was inclined to beat himself up and say, I should have given you more resources. I've always said no, you know, if we made a sense of time space appreciation, it wouldn't have been an issue, you know. So, I found myself as I say in reserve, and to my right, I could see on the shoreline the the Eastern sorry, the southwestern shoreline of the isthmus, I could see a number of Argentinians go heading south, clearly being bypassed in the night and trying to rejoin their own position. So the seating traversing a little flat piece of land and disappearing behind the cliffs or the so shoreline itself. And I thought, well, that looks like it might be a covered approach. So I reasoned that actually, if we picked up the same sort of terrain, and gotten ourselves down to that shoreline, we might be able to make a concealed approach and to have right flanking attack on this Bakker position, which is holding up the company. I offered this to age, old, why my neck and not to tell him how to run his battle. So I accepted that, okay, then a little while later, we started being bracketed by enemy artillery. So I thought where I was pretty sort of exposed position. So I thought I'd try and avoid that by moving forward under the leaf, the sort of main main ridge line across the business. He saw me he told me that I was to stay where I was. So asked me what the hell I was doing. And I used the opportunity, again, to say, look, you know, I think there's an opportunity to right flank this problem. And again, was, you know, told Jeff to stay off. And absolutely. He, his problem, I think, was that he allowed himself to become too embroiled in a company's battle. And it lost, complete perspective of the battlefield. He was really almost acting as a platoon commander or a section commander in a company's battle, rather than as a battalion commander, saying, you know, actually, I've still got half more than half my battalion unengaged that I could do something useful with. So that's quite frustrating. And eventually, I took the view that, you know, until Darwin, Darwin Hill fell to the, to a company, we weren't going to go anywhere. And that was clearly going to take some time. And the day was suddenly should have been over by now, but it was suddenly going to turn into a very, very long day indeed. So my reaction was to tell the times to get a blue one, which I think was met with some surprised by some of the guys because it's not the sort of thing that you would do on an exercise made attack to stop and get everyone on the cover. But we were going to need all the fuel we had if we're going to keep going until the end. So we got to brew on I just remember my porridge had just come to the boil. When I got the news over the radio sunray is down I ate for being shot. And shortly after, I got a really call from Chris Keebler to ice saying, you know, go and try and find the company and see what you can do to help so porridge still, in one hand rifle in the other, we set off, like a vagabond army the effect, I mean, people talk about the the effect of the car being shot and so on. And then, you know, kind of the two things can happen, you know, one is, you know, the CEOs killed, morale gets shot to bits, you know, and everyone loses heart, that sort of one scenario. And the other is, you know, with, you know, anger enough of anger and, and whatever we charge in and seek out revenge against the enemy to typical sort of scenarios, long times of military history, I mean, the fact is neither hand that H is being shot, really surprised no one because we knew he was a passionate believer in leading from the front and not asking anyone to do something that he wouldn't do himself. You know, we all knew that he was, you know, volatile, headstrong, and so on. So it didn't really surprise anyone, you know, I mean, that kind of comment around my company. And even, you know, when we got the news was, you know, mad bagger, you know,

they all thought it's going to happen. So, we just carried on as, as we were really, I think the difference that his death made, though was that it liberated the battlefield, I mean, it finally allowed his subordinates to use their initiative and get things moving again. So the company pinned down forward slow about these heavy machine guns, caught up our anti tank missiles, once Diamond Hill fell from with which they could then engage, you know, the the heavy machine gun saying as, and, you know, I, having decided that, trying to find the company, and join them on the forward slope was a pretty fruitless task. Again, push cable to allow me to have a look at you know, whether I could add flanked the position. And so I took my company down to the beach, and to see where that red leader is, interestingly, a goddess with 500 yards, shorter disposition, and those guys are grazed. sheep pasture is like a billiard table, no cover at all. And so, you know, clearly we weren't going to be able to get closer to the enemy undercover. But we were finally at least within our own light machine gun range. So I got all my machine guns down on a little embankment, that down by the beach, and starting to engage these these enemy positions. But at the same time, over age two and a half to the Milan started to engage these positions. And we had a sort of useful double up going fairly soon after that. Milan missa would hit us in enemy Sanger. Below it debates, the survivors were drying, you know, crawl out to find shelter, and another thing, and we were able to slot off the, those survivors. And I mean, literally, very soon after that white flag started to appear. So then the question was, you know, was this a genuine offer to surrender? Or was it you know, become on experience in Northern Ireland was, you know, that I think, could easily be better come on, so you don't immediately assume it's a surrender. My own view at that point was, well, if it is a surrender, you know, it's going to save us an awful lot of time and ammunition, if we accept that. So I propose that you know, we take the risk that we assume it's a genuine offer of surrender. It took me about half an hour to persuade, you know, the to IC kind of do that. So you're taking command and other people, you know, this is a risk worth taking. Eventually, I got the Go ahead. And I had a little sort of conversation with those around me, saying like, you know, this is my judgment call. So it's time I my pay. I will be the First one to move. And, as it were, test the genuineness of this surrender. As I got to move fi lam i setting reminders a big chap called Tom Harley's have grabbed me and pushed me down fairly firmly, and said, Don't be a practicer. You, you you're needed for other things. This is Tom's work. And I didn't protest too strongly. I left him to the the protractor, I gotta say it was probably the longest 500 yards of us all our lives, you know, is this going to hold something going wrong, somebody let off another Milan, miss another my Toms tripped a mine up and the Big Bang went off. And so every moment that you got close, it's all gonna unravel. Fortunately, it didn't we got onto this position. You know, I mean, it was the scene of devastation, most of the most of fled the position. And those that were only about 30 or 40. Argentinian soldiers were all either, you know, I mean, dead or injured, and already are fit to fight but still want to see them fleeing across goose green airfield was being led, it seemed to me or seem to ask, led by an officer on a tractor. And there's a trailer for sort of Argentinian soldiers desperately chasing after this tractor trying to climb aboard it and so on. And my runner says, oh, there's leadership from the front film. And I went there, the guy was an officer, and I really don't know, but it you know, suited This seemed at the time. And so my reaction was then just, you know, we're at this phase war, you know, exploitation, certainly Hot Pursuit. Yeah, this hot pursuit. And, you know, we really Bailey's stopping to reorganize some of my company behind just a, guard the prisoners until they could be handed over, we just, you know, charged after them. And I was, you know, very pleased when, you know, a little while after the battalion, to do IC got on the radio said, you know, hair trigger screen, I said, we already are, you know, waiting for orders, we're just gonna go and do it. And that was all okay, until we began across the airfield. And we started come on the AAA fire. Now, AAA guns were anti aircraft guns, but they lowered the barrels, and we're using them as effectively, you know, ground cannon, that was pretty frightening. So we managed to climb some dead ground on the north side of the airfield and hit

that dam as our route to goose green. We then ended up in a minefield fortunately, not well laid, and they were all trip mine. So you can see the trip is very clearly see the minds themselves, but you know, avoid the trip, you're gonna be fairly safe. But nevertheless, it's kind of a complicated life, put it that way. And bought one of my students to be at a standstill, like to pull them out and tell them to head up on the Rhine covering for fit another tune in and eventually we got to the schoolhouse, and which was known to be a sort of a holding area for the Argentinian Garrison, you know, so, you know, a lot of soldiers have been seen around me, the school has just north of the settlement itself. And between us and the school house, I could see what looked like a deserted command post. So I thought, well, I just neutralize that first. So I got a couple of my one of my sections and ordered them to stick a light anti tank rocket into this command post. And the situation began to descend into pure fast because we missed the bloody barn door at 50 yards. With this, you know, is 50 yards ahead of us, you know, the light antitank rocket has a range of accurate range of up to about 200 yards we should have hit it. But you know, this is it picture the scene is this young Tom is sort of shoulder fired rocket. But he's been almost on the run chasing the enemy. He's then tiptoed through a minefield, so he's packed thing of it is,

J

James Geering 2:05:02

his nervous system might be slightly,

P

Philip Neame 2:05:04

just a little bit overwhelmed. So, you know, the sort of rocket is waving around like, you know, a divining spirit, and he misses it. So you get another guy, same thing happens. And eventually the second rounder steps happen a little bit more time to recover a little bit more experienced, you know, scores a bull's eye. And we also have standing around sort of give him a round of applause. Back to see on a battlefield, but you know, probably it's what what occurred. So, you know, you know, life went on, we put an NFC tag on the school house at the same time. My one of my opportunities I sent up on the right, I mentioned earlier, I got the news from their platoon sergeant, that the platoon commander had gone up to take a surrender from another white flag, it's in flying. Well, that was the first I'd heard of it. No one else knew what he was doing. And so it was a potential disaster waiting to happen. And in fact, that's exactly what happened. You know, I mean, building, get the message to tell him to stay ready, is, you know, the lesson if you like from the earliest around it was you need to have everyone lined up knowing what you plan to do before we go ahead and do it. And this hadn't happened. It all went wrong. They were started to parley with the Argentinians some small arms fire came in from somewhere probably from our machine guns. And the whole thing unraveled, is this to do commander was shot with the section that he had with him. So I sort of left the attack to take care of itself on the schoolhouse with my left it to my to it and I went up to join this platoon to see what was going on. cut a long story short, eventually that all resolved itself, that I was then told not to advance further. Because other things were planned in your marriage that actually we finally got an airstrike lined up coming in a friendly air strike. And, you know, we've been waiting for this firm much of the day but Foghat See he stopped that taking place. So I was told to go firm with the air strike, and then you know, see what needed to be done after that. And we heard the jets coming in. But the Jets were actually coming in. From the south. I expect him coming in from the, from the north. And it was flying straight towards us, not towards the enemy positions, and sort of slowly realized that this was not a Harrier. But the Argentinian Skyhawk,

when its cannons opened up, and it was coming straight for us lined up on a track, I thought was the end of a promising career, I have to say. And literally this kind of fire coming in stitching in I felt all I had to do was put my hand out and it would be gone. Incredibly, no casualties. And then, you know, two minutes later, we could hear jet engines again, go is it as in unfortunately, it was our aircraft this time. And they went in attack the settlement, neutralize the enemy artillery and the triple A's. And things began to get under control. But again, it was a period of absolute. Well, the unexpected, every step of the way, for your curls. And then the instruction came over that we were to go for. Slowly, it became clear, you know, during the life of them became nearly read last night at this stage became clear that the plan was to negotiate a surrender of the settlement of the Argentinian garrison in the settlement. So that was kind of the end of the battle, my brief during the night came down to discreetly oversee a sort of parade, meadow outside the settlement where the sort of formal surrender would take place. The deal had been that we would allow the Argentinians to surrender with dignity, sort of appealing to the Latino kind of mindset if you like. And as we sat there waiting for this little ceremonies to take place, we couldn't believe it's 1000s, or hundreds and hundreds of Argentinians. poured out of a settlement and went through this surrender ceremony. And just, you know, unbelievable. And we, as the lead company at this point went forward to disarm them. And you know, we must have looked like 100 or so less around at this stage. No idea. So bedraggled vagabonds and the Argentinians must have thought, you know, what the hell is going on?

J

James Geering 2:10:33

John was talking about that, too, if they had actually known the numbers that were out there, and like you said, the, if the supply chips have been here, how close, you know, it could have turned can be completely the other way?

P

Philip Neame 2:10:45

Yeah, yeah. I mean, you know, absolutely, I mean, that they wanted to counter attack during the night. I mean, we were down to our last rounds of ammunition until we could be resupplied at night. You know, there wouldn't have been much we could have answered with that. I mean, I have to say, though, that, you know, as night fell, I did think the day designers, I mean, I knew we were short of ammunition, and so on, that's absolutely bloody mattered, that I had this, you know, you're going to feel, you know, and there'd be no evidence of, of counter attacks on them. Throughout the day, despite opportunities and so on, they didn't show that aggression, suggested there was going to be one I set quite well that night.

J

James Geering 2:11:39

Now, as far as the wire, I remember, being a young boy, you know, and then saying a lot of them were, you know, Argentinian farmers that were kind of forced to go over there. When we talk about the current conflict, you know, the Ukraine, we're one of the current conflicts. You know, my whole thing is, again, we're painting Russia as the enemy, how many Russian men were told to go invade a country that they have no interest in invading, they just want to get back to their life and in their home? You know, what did you see as far as that, that why, and

I'm sure there was some, some fearsome soldiers that were all in on the mission and the Argentinian side, but did you see a lot of people but, you know, we're basically voluntold to go over there as well.

P

Philip Neame 2:12:20

Well, yeah, I mean, there's certainly there was, you know, it was difficult to detect, you know, a kind of determination, or, you know, I mean, I think visibly, you know, they were, I think not well led, you know, whenever we took prisoners, they all have pretty despondent and disorientated, really, I mean, the the sort of, kind of what, what, what are we doing here, and they had been clearly misled in terms of what the mission was that they were coming to liberate the value in Mount Venus. That's what they believe. And suddenly, they were found they were occupying the amount of Venus. So I mean, yeah, I really think there's some close comparison with the Russian army in Ukraine, and I guess their morale must be pretty fragile. You know? Yeah. So I mean, yeah. That mean, there's no question. You know, they were not well LED. They were misled by the leaders. And I think, you know, clearly, it undermined. It certainly didn't contribute to their ability to fight through that way. And they, you know, that's the you know, that's one of the essential ingredients of winning a battle, you know, is if you can undermine the enemy's will to fight win. That's half the job done. Probably more important than the material assets, you have to help.

J

James Geering 2:13:59

Absolutely. I mean, that goes to a nation as well, you know, divide and conquer or unify and rise up.

P

Philip Neame 2:14:06

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, morale is, you know, a precious ingredient. Whichever side you're on. And, you know, I think there's no question, you know, our morale was high. You know, we, I mean, there's no question there's green had been a very serious neck stretch, you know, but, you know, I think overall leadership, you know, thinking very much of age and so on. You know, helped us prevail.

J

James Geering 2:14:45

Now, again, like, I think I was, God, how old was I think eight when it happened? We got that right. Yeah. Eight. So I remember it being you know, a moment of pride obviously, when you guys were actually doing the heavy lifting but as a nation, you know, seemed like there was a lot of unification how were you guys receive when you came home? But then also what was the longevity of that gratitude for the Falklands era soldier?

P

Philip Neame 2:15:16

I think well, first of all, I think I just sort of touch on how were we received by the for the Falkland Islanders. I mean, there's no question that gratitude. I mean, the sense of that



raikiana islanders. I mean, there's no question that gratitude, I mean, the goose green that community to been locked up in their community or for four weeks. And so I mean, it really wasn't a genuine act of liberation. And, you know, until then, if you like, my attitude of being well, we're just they're doing a job, you know, actually, you know, great group of, you know, sheep Shaggers, several 1000 miles away, you know, wasn't my concern, it was, you know, it was a professional soldier, we're paying to go and do what is required. I think, liberating the the community goes green kind of started to change my view somewhat. Realize, actually, that this was this was a just war, certainly, if you like that we were engaged in something much bigger than just being a professional soldier. And I think, again, you know, we're going to be after our next battle of wireless. Originally, we went into Stanley, you know, the obvious gratitude with which we were received was, you know, frankly, overwhelming. And I was personally back to the four queens for a year in 1989, seven years after the end of the war. And, you know, that was still very obvious, then, in fact, you know, the garrison, generally, that stage were kind of tolerated by the island versus any large Garrison tends to be that because I've been there and add to, you know, the aliveness couldn't do enough for me, if you like. And so it's quite interesting. Getting back home. I think, well, we missed the sort of great homecoming that the Marines had, you know, sailing back into Portsmouth, and Southampton. We were very back to Ascension Island on the northern, which was, you know, a joyous trip, really. And then flown back into Brize Norton. So we had no grand welcome. I mean, to be fair, Colonel in chief, who's Prince Charles then came down to is not welcome us back, and so on. That was, you know, all appreciated, but it was, you know, very quiet sort of having coming. I think, you know, certainly, you know, among my community and friends and so on, I think I did feel appreciated. I think there was a very kind of there was a pride in the sort of population, I think in terms of, you know, what we'd done, A, we were proud ourselves, but I mean, you know, I think it was pride, which was shared across communities. And so I think I've certainly felt appreciated. But I think the difficulty is that in some ways, you know, everyone wants to know, what, what is it like, and they want to talk to you about it, and so on. And I felt sort of, in a way, a bit alienated. You know, I didn't know what to say, when people say, what was it like? Well, it was odd, you know, it was just saying, on big expeditions, you know, people say, Well, what was it like? Naughty hard, but, you know, and then there's not a conversation. And you've got to well, so ask yourself, why, and, you know, I think I just felt that, you know, the expeditions as well. It's exactly the same experience, you know, actually, unless you're talking to someone who's been there, or been somewhere similar. You know, it's, it's impossible to really communicate what it was like. And, I mean, I, you know, last year got my own book published on my thoughts and experiences and Mmm, it's quite interesting because my first line editor, if you like, was my wife. So she was reading stuff I've written. And she said, that. I've never heard about this incident before. Why didn't we talk about it? And, I mean, that was a sort of sobering moment and, you know, led me to write, you know, a few paragraphs on that itself. Because, you know, actually, but, I mean, I'm sure I'm not exceptional, I think, you know, it is, I'm sure that to most people, it's a sort of, it's a thing apart, it's alienating. And you, you don't know how to communicate it. Not without a lot of thought, and or perhaps I can communicate it better on paper than in a conversation. And I guess, you know, I mean, thinking of it your audience as well, but I mean, I guess they must all have experienced with that. I think, you know, if you've been in serious neck stretching situation, whether it's fighting fires, or, or whatever. You'd didn't know how to put into words. I don't think it's idleness. I think it's probably the designers. You know, it's combination of that and reluctance to put it into words unless you unless you feel that you're genuinely being understood. And I think that's the alienation game. Start talking to someone about these experiences. Did they really understand? Or am I just wasting my breath?



Absolutely, I wrote a book three years ago, and I know exactly what you're talking about, because it wasn't a biography. But I use stories from my career to illustrate a point in each chapter. So it could be mental health, sleep deprivation, you know, there was a takeaway for each one. But some of my family were like, I have no idea. And the sad thing is like, this is these are these are, these are a singular calls over for minus a short career, 14 years. But these are what first responders, you know, military members, whatever it is, this is, this is their life, year upon year upon year, and like you said, you know, when when, when we're asked which I have to be fair, I haven't really been asked this really much, but I hear a lot of people this really Jaws with them is oh, what's the worst thing you've seen? Or, you know, in the military? Oh, what was it like to kill someone? You know? Yeah, but, but you can't, unless you can climb inside my head, which I don't recommend. It's not fun. Just just be by the book by Philip Nemes. Book, and yeah, or John's book. And you'll get an idea then without interrupting without, you know, formulating your own opinion, but you'll be able to be led through this journey, and they'll paint the picture. And by the end of that, when you close the book, you'll understand a little piece of what they went through.

P

### Philip Neame 2:22:58

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I think, you know, absolutely agree. I mean, I think the other aspect of that homecoming again, and we touched on it earlier, was, you know, I mean, how did we deal with soldiers who had been impacted by some very difficult experiences? You know, I mean, I can think of two cases in my company, which sort of, you know, I look back and kind of worry me. One was a chap who was injured at what became known as the white flag incident where two commanders killed and everything else, and he was very badly injured. And, you know, managed, nevertheless to extricate himself from the sort of killing ground if you like, and get back to our own lives. I mean, seriously, shut up and babies, we managed to evacuate, and that might mean live. But he rejoined us, I think, having physically recovered about five months later, he came back to the company and, you know, using a sort of an old fashioned expression, I mean, he was unbeatable, you know, nothing wrong with his conduct beforehand. He wasn't one of these who'd been posted to me on a three month warning like many happy but he was just, you know, he completely unbeatable and so he kept on ending up on charge and being marched out in front of me neither to dish out a punishment and so on. And eventually I got to this hour I sent them off to see the doctrine and see the CADRE and so on. With no factor at all. In the end for the greater good, if you like, I decided that, you know, we had to discharge him. And, you know, I regret that now, I think we should have done more for him. There wasn't more obviously on the menu that I could have done. But, you know, that was the position we were in then. And I think, you know, looking back, you know, it was shocking that we discharged him after what he'd done and been through, and the other chap who, and I remember as my company runner who, you know, was a natural rogue, but a very effective, talented rogue. I mean, you know, he was my pillar of strength, if you like, you know, kept me, you know, fed, he kept me in cigarettes, because he smoked, and I didn't prefer not to, things like that. And I did start smoking there. haven't given up eight years earlier. One stage effectively, you know, I was cut off with one of my wireless range, one of the tunes and was concerned about what was going on with the other two. And I've lost radio contact with them. And so I sent this chap, Hanley back and said, Look, you know, I'm busy up here, go and get these two to two commanders and tell them what to do. And, you know, eventually sort of half an hour an hour later, I rejoined them. And there was handling I mean, you know, to be able to pursue commander saying yes, handling handling. He was he was running the company. I was almost redundant. Well, I mean, you know, the, he was exceptional blow. And anyway, the Christmas



after we got back, he smuggled back in the Argentinian store, that he liberated, deliberative. We'd all been ordered, you know, if you've got any contraband weapons, and so on, and so on. And when they happen, and he was arrested, he lived in Nottingham, he is rested in a pub in, in Nottingham, waving around this Argentinian pistol. And the police wisely, you know, sent him back to us to deal with, with him rather than send it through this simple process. And so he was charged, marched in front of the CEO who sent them to 30 days in jail, in the Italian jail. And as he sort of marched out, and I was sort of alongside him. He said, The Oh, no, no, I know what happened. He sort of said to the CEO, will you give me time out of jail? Because my brother's getting married, his brother was also in the company. And his wedding is about to take place. And the CEO said, No, you know, so as he's being marched down to the jail, he sort of said to me, you know, I'm going to my brother's wedding, it's not happening. Okay, do my brother's wedding. Me, don't be a prime, you know, well, he went to his brother's wedding, he broke out of jail. And we did the military police. And so eventually came back, having attended the wedding, turned himself in, but was charged again for, you know, breaking out of the jail. At this point, the CEO, decided he'd had enough and, you know, discharged him. And I pleaded his case, you know, I said, you know, he's a very good man, we should hang on to him. You know, and, in fact, I kind of got the impression that, you know, the CEO saw me as part of the problem, if you like. And so he was discharged. And I look back, and he, he was clearly devastated. And, you know, he come back to Airborne Forces Day, one year, he came back and we got into a fight, he was just, you know, leave his unsettled and seriously beaten up by some soldiers from another regiment, and never fully recovered as a result of that. Now, I look back at that as well and say, you know, that was shameful really. But those were the days were in, you know, and it was still very different that was still, you know, just staying on a bit like we're discussing the starting around the people returning for the World War One and so on. And we have no understanding of my people behaving oddly and things like that. Now, I think we do and I think it is a different culture now, but does not do you know, those occasions.

J

James Geering 2:30:09

So that's something that I've talked about a lot. If you have someone who, as you mentioned, you know, when they first came into the company, like some of the people that maybe you ended up with in the company, yeah, we're a problem from day one, and they continue to be a problem. And then, you know, you get rid of them. That's, that's a different conversation. But I always say, if you got a police officer, or a firefighter or paramedic, a dispatcher, you know, someone, when they were first with you, was a great member of your company of your military, or whatever it is, and then they change. That's a very different conversation, because they came into you one way. And that's a huge indication that it's something to do with the job. Obviously, there's compounding elements outside the job, but the job is contributing to their personality change. So I can put my hand on my heart, and we're talking only, you know, 15 years ago, 18 years ago, where, you know, we would poke the bear, someone was having a bad day, and the fire station would make fun of them, you know, you'd make it worse. But now, with this lens of mental health that we've all been educated on, you realize that that angry guy, that salty guy isn't salty, they're struggling, you know, and this is the compassion that we got, if you were, if you never should have been in the uniform, then that's a whole different conversation. But if you had someone as you said, that was a great soldier that was a great police officer. And now 10 years in, they're an absolute mess. That is where we need to be compassionate as, as their brothers and sisters to take care of them. They may not be able to continue in that profession. But we can't be judgmental, we can't be provoking them, we got to look at it with a much more compassionate lens.

P

Philip Neame 2:31:49

Yeah, I agree. Yeah. You know, derailed handily was, you know, he was he always he, I mean, in a sense, he was always close to trouble. But he was a bloody good soldier. And, you know, so he always required some management if you like, but, but he was still a good soldier. And, you know, often it's these difficult people who actually are the most valuable when it comes to the crunch?

J

James Geering 2:32:31

Absolutely. I think this is the the thing with the what happened to us before we put the uniform conversation. There's a lot of us that are trauma when we were younger, made us good firefighters, good soldiers. And now in 2023, when we're having this open conversation, the the key is that trauma can become a superpower, if you are able to deal with them. Now that we have these tools, we want people with a storied, you know, early life. choirboys don't become great firefighters is just the way it is. You know, so, but if it's left unaddressed, and there's a lot of people in uniform had some horrible things happen when they were younger, then that becomes a fracture to their foundation, which is going to rear its ugly head at some point.

P

Philip Neame 2:33:15

Yeah, yeah. No, I agree. Yeah, well, it's a step in the right direction. I think we've taken over the last few years. Yeah,

J

James Geering 2:33:26

absolutely.

P

Philip Neame 2:33:27

You know, I mean, it's difficult, because I think, you know, it's very difficult for people have not been involved in that sort of environment, really, to quite understand what the issue is, or maybe that's, that is undoubtedly, part of the problem.

J

James Geering 2:33:49

Absolutely. Well, you mentioned about writing the book. So your book is penal company on the Falklands. So talk to people about, you know, the story that you've written, and then where they can find that book.

P

Philip Neame 2:34:01

Right. The book is published by pennant sword, and I think probably published in America and I

forget the name of their American publishing company, but it's, you know, it's Google. It even find it on Google. And it's, you know, penal company on the Falklands and memoir of the parachute regiment at war. I thought of writing this actually about over 10 years ago, and two sort of triggers really, behind it. First of all, I been involved in helping produce a film down there called returned to the Falklands, and that was in 2012. Celebrate the, whatever it was 30th anniversary of the war and the producer, which are called Jeremy Freeston. It was a really good chap, and he absolutely sort of won our confidence. I think, you know, this is what, both myself and John Graham were in the film, and I think we trusted him. And that's why it was a good film. Because he, we trusted him, and he listened and so on. And as we're coming to the end of the film, he said, you know, Phil, you know, you really ought to write a book about your experiences, he said, I can see it now the title is there from Everest to the Falklands, and back to Everest, because, you know, recounted some of my climbing experiences, as well as you know, so on, you know, I have a Chilean male back in the pub. So that planted the idea, or maybe I should, and then, shortly, a little later that year, I was asked to go and give a talk at the Royal Engineers depo, in Chatham, and it was in their sights and smells, and the word had been put out, and I was brought up in Canada as well. You know, a lot of my family turned up to listen to my story. And there's other people a large number of people in the garrison, and it's, I got out to start my presentation on the Falklands, you know, I saw a lot of hands waving from the back of the piece of auditorium. And I realized that there was about a dozen of my old Tom's from the Falklands in the audience. Most, you know, some NGOs, sometimes, and so on. And I thought, oh, blimey, now I got to tell the truth. Rearrange the script a bit. But anyway, I actually opened by describing, you know, my arrival in two parents, what I had found in the company, you know, they were the Cinderella and all this sort of stuff. And so, after I'd finished and so on everyone who joined to the bar, this chap who'd been my company, Medic, and was now running a very successful construction business, came home, put a bid in my hand and said, But Phil, didn't you ever know that we were known as penal company? And that was the first I'd heard of a penal company. Genuinely, you know, I didn't. I didn't, Dale. But now that you put it that way, course, I realized we were penal company, but I just never. And so, you know, that was a trigger hang, I really ought to write their story, they've come down here to listen to me tell their story, this presentation. And I really ought to, you know, write their story and get it out in the public. Well, eight years later, I've written down it would it did a creative writing course, and the course of that I produced my first 3000 words, but it hadn't got beyond that. And I was struggling with, you know, quite how to write the story, what to include, and, you know, some of it was going to be contentious, you know, some of it, there was anger that, you know, I wanted to share. It just, I wasn't making progress. And so I during the lockdown, I signed up for another course, with the firm of literary agents who ran sort of creative writing courses, Curtis Brown, and as an online course, lasted five days, and you had to submit 3000 words, which fortunately, I had to be selected for the course. And basically, you know, of all the submissions, they would select the best 15 or 15 Places 15 Places because basically, the course ran for five days, and each day we praised or three of the students work on the course. And anyway, I was selected, I think we had something like 60 people submit 3000 Because I was on a 15 selected. So that was encouraging. Most of the people on this course, were door there were 12 of the 15 were women. They they're still stories were you know, very different to mine. And I didn't think they would particularly enjoy, you know, a story of military Derring dues and so on. But I, when it came to my turn to, you know, be debriefed as it were by the rest of the course and so on. I was absolutely staggered by the enthusiastic response that I had I just I think anything but you know, different and so on. These women were saying, you know, God felt you've opened a window, or opened a door into a world that, you know, we knew nothing about and never expected to be interested in. But it's fantastic. Couple even said, you know, make a film and offered Tom Cruise anyway. I mean, that was really encouraging because I thought, you know, actually, there's a story here, which is more than just of interest to military

readers and, you know, students of military history. And I very much tried to write a book which, you know, kind of explore the, the humanity behind these experiences, which I'm sure again, you know, with your experience, do you relate to that, you know, it's about people. And, you know, I wanted to try and get across a story about people in my views and very exceptional people. But also to get across that, you know, the, these situations, well, they are human situations. And like any human situation, they're full of humor, laughter, grief, absurdity, chaos, you know, that's human life. And so I really tried to produce a book which conveyed that as well. You know, the readers don't have to make up their mind whether I succeeded. The other, it was a really good course run by a woman who had written her own memoir about the death of her brother. And she Yorkshire surfaces are fairly direct. And I was sort of sharing my challenges with her in terms of, you know, how to write it, and so on. And she said, listen, film, no author ever wrote in got published sitting waiting for inspiration, you've just got to start writing. And I'm sure you'll appreciate this as well. And, and then the other prices, and you know, as you write, you know, the solutions will emerge, the ideas will emerge, and so on. And the other priceless bit of advice was, you know, something, well, you know, how do I deal with that? How do you know, write it, just tell it as it was, don't try to explain, don't, you know, kind of larded with your opinions and judgments and so on, just tell them what happened, and let the reader do the work. They good reader will, you know, draw their own conclusions? A bit? Like, that'd be the right conclusions. So write it that way. And I thought that was so helpful. So, you know, it ended up eventually, you know, it taken me almost 10 years to write 3000 words, and I wrote the next 70,000 in six months. Partly because, you know, I had a deadline, you know, the 40th anniversary of the war was coming up. I found a publisher, who said, Ah, yes, but, you know, you've only sent me 30,000 words so far. And we will need 70,000 By October if we're going to hit the 40th anniversary. So that was, you know, I started the book came to life.

J James Geering 2:43:37

Amazing. Now, did you have a sense of catharsis when you got the story from your mind onto paper?

P Philip Neame 2:43:44

I'm not really that No, I wouldn't say there was a catharsis, you know, because I think I'd been plagued with problems, you know, as a result of the war or anything like that. I was angry about some things that had happened. And, you know, both during and and on our return, some of which affected me directly and so on. But, you know, I wasn't, I wasn't traumatized, I don't think. But it was an interesting experience. And I think the most interesting was what I've already referred to, was, you know, my wife, acting as my first line editor. You know, I said, Look, kind of, you know, say what you like about it, if it works great. If something doesn't work or sounds wrong, tell me. She was, you know, really fantastic in that. And, you know, and I, you know, took most of her advice, but it was when she said, you know, but, you know, why didn't we talk about this at the time So that really took it. It actually hit me quite hard. And I thought, you know, Why the hell didn't we? And so in a sense, writing the book sort of healed the harm I'd done, if you like, by not talking about it, then. So that was quite interesting.

J James Geering 2:45:20

Beautiful. Yeah, it's amazing. I mean, you always think about the individual pouring their soul

onto the pages. But yeah, I mean, opening that window to parents, spouses, children, whatever it is. That's another entire line of communication that, you know, I mean, I think this is one of the most misunderstanding things, misunderstood things, is that most people want to help, you know, we keep it to ourselves, especially if we're in uniform, we're the protectors were the problem solvers. But just, you know, when you ask for help, it's amazing how many people line up and doesn't have to be a deliberate, I'm struggling, but like you said, some things that you locked away that maybe you're ashamed, or maybe you don't want to burden your family with, they want to hear that maybe they don't want to hear the McRib grotesque details, but, you know, what did my my husband, my wife, my child, my father do for this country?

P

Philip Neame 2:46:11

Yeah, and I mean, I had, you know, some simmering anger about, you know, events after, you know, after return, you know, I think, within to parents self, you know, a number of things were not well handled, and, and so on. And I was angry about that. And, you know, to be honest, because of that anger, you know, I didn't behave particularly well as a husband. And as we'd often, you know, got pissed with my company sergeant major in the service mess. And so, rather than going home, you know, because we could talk to each other about our experiences, as much as anything else. And so, yeah, it kind of made me think about that. Yeah, it was that was productive. It was definitely productive in that sense.

J

James Geering 2:47:09

Now, we obviously experienced quite a lot of peacetime, again, the UK, at least, you know, after the Falklands war until obviously, Desert Storm, and then moving forward to, you know, high up tempo again, what was what, what was it like, as far as going from such an acute event, as the you've just described, to, you know, back to, you know, praying and maintaining peace for for a long time before the Middle East kicked off? Yeah.

P

Philip Neame 2:47:39

I think I found it really probably quite difficult. But I think, also, you know, if you like, it always helps to focus me because, you know, I think until the Falklands, I think probably my, my climbing was probably more important than my military career. And, I think, my experience in the fall clumps, and, you know, I think I did reasonably well, and led my company reasonably effectively. That it that suddenly, you know, actually, there's something here I want to get my teeth into, and, you know, come through this and continue to deliver and deliver effectively. Whereas, you know, without that, I don't know, I might have not stayed in that much longer, and, you know, just focused on my climbing. But I'm very glad I had that experience and that I, you know, continue to develop is in a sense, as a soldier. So, yeah, interesting. Interesting. still have more to think about?

J

James Geering 2:48:56

Well, one thing that seems to be a very positive tool from a transition from a military career or first responder career onwards, is continuing service. And I know that you've managed to kind of merge the non-profit side with your passion for climbing. So talk to me about the ill-

or marry the nonprofit side with your passion for climbing. So talk to me about the Ulysses trust.

P

### Philip Neame 2:49:17

Yeah. Yeah, I think that's an interesting point, actually. I started to the Ulysses trust. In 1992. I was commanding reserve battalion reserve Parachute Battalion in London. And the reserve army sort of took the view that it'd be nice to launch an expedition to try Everest and I arrived and was because of my plumbing background and so on was asked to look at these plans and see if they had any future in them. But my initial take was, you know, actually, no, there's not much future for this awful lot of ground to cover, let alone, you know, getting hold of the money that it would take building a team, which was capable and so on. But eventually, over time, as you know, more and more people got to hear the plans and so on. And I worked with the Titan potential team. You know, I began to think, actually, it was viable, but you know, we'd have to, but not in the timeframe that initially been envisaged. So I've been advising this sort of team, if you like, monitoring progress, and so on. And eventually, I said, Look, you, you're gonna have to slip this at least a year, because you haven't got the thumbs. And also, I don't think you're gonna get the permit to climb the mountain. Until God knows where. And someone then suggested, well, why don't we try and do it in winter? Because there's not a queue of people waiting to climb in winter. And there's yet to be a first British winter ascent. So I thought, yeah, this is interesting. And then the team came to see me and said, Phil, we've just occurred to us that if we postpone it, as you've advised, you will have finished your touring command, and might be available to lead the expedition. I hadn't, this hadn't been part of my calculations at all, absolutely promise you. But you know, this was an offer I found very difficult to refuse. The risks of winter really are dominated by the fact that the jet stream drops over the Himalayas in the winter, comes down to about still talking terms of feet, down to about 24,000 feet, 24 and a half, 1000 feet. And of course, Everest, 29,000 feet is firmly sticking into the jetstream and winds in excess of 190 miles an hour, where you clearly can't do anything. So we set about this thinking, right? Well, what we need is, you know, it's been done three times before. They've as our track record was perhaps not encouraging three teams who've done it before were Korean, Japanese and Polish poles particularly strong reputation of Winton, Himalayan climbing. Most people sort of go winter a wide berth. And so they we were putting our hands up for it. And we tried to. The initial plan was get commercial sponsorship. And we got sort of three potential commercial sponsors into talking to them. And one by one, as they got more acquainted with the real risks of attempting Everest in winter, they also backed away and said, This certainly doesn't make commercial sense. But some of the people we talked to did say, however, you know, we would be prepared to make it you know, we like the idea that we'd be prepared to make a non-attributable non-sponsored, challenge, charitable contribution to the expedition. If there was an act of charity, we could donate it. So there wasn't. So we thought we've been a former charity, and that was the start. For us. It's just the name really is based on the mythological Ulysses. Particularly with the Tennyson's wonderful poem, Ulysses in mind, which, if you haven't read it, please read it. It'll explain an awful lot. It's, so we kick that off, initially, as I say, the prime focus of funding this expedition, but always with the sort of long term, the hope in your mind that we could keep it going and support other reserve forces, expeditions. So like many things, you know, once we were fully funded, I mean, I had an amazing meeting with a merchant banker who'd been in the reserve forces, SS rhetoric. And he said, I'll find your funds. You know, I've heard this countless times already and most people dropped away. And he rang me one Sunday morning. We are 100,000 pounds in debt. All our equipment was being delivered and we're trying not closing on Sunday morning. And he rang me and said, Can you meet me for lunch? I said, Well, as it happens, I'm in London. Yes, I can.



And he fished out of his pocket, he checks or I think there's 200,000 pounds on the back of his, his his colleagues bonuses for a deal, but he just got off the ground, a big public offering. And he said, cash had expressed, they said, because the bank don't know I'm doing this yet. That was the very start, if you like, and of course, once other people knew we were funded, you know, all the sort of fences then got off and said, well, we'd like a bit of this as well. So we actually ended up with quite a healthy surplus of funds, which enabled us to keep charity going and sponsoring other reserve force expeditions for a couple of years. And then since then, it's been continuing exercise of raising funds to support other expeditions. And it was about a year after we got back, that actually, we're getting a lot of inquiries from a young cadet organizations in the Training Corps in the Army Cadet force, and so on. And so we took a view and thought, well, actually, you know, we should really expand its remit to support cadets as well. And, in fact, now the main thrust of all our work is, is supporting young cadets. And well over half of what we know, Grant Friday funds for Expedition is well over half isn't Africa, dead expeditions. And it's in a very much with a focus to enable young cadets, whatever their background is, in some pretty disadvantaged situations, to be able to take part in these expeditions. And any site any type really. So we've, you know, provided financial support for people crossing the Antarctic, going to Everest equally, you know, for cadets making their first foray into the hills of North Wales. You know, it's very much, you know, is there a need? Is it? Is it delivering social value? Yes, if it is, we'll support it. So, you know, if clearly, the participants understand the nature of the opportunity, they're taking part in deriving benefit and social and other development value from them, you know? Yeah, they might I feel, I certainly, I mean, I was not a trustee at the time of the Everest expedition, because I was a beneficiary. I then became a trustee. After we got back. But not closely involved. We had a volunteer who ran it for us, actually ran out sort of rare party during the expedition. He moved on over, died some years ago, I've retired from work, I'd gone into business, when I left the army, I had retired and looked in and see that this chap, it was losing its way, so I got heavily re involved with it, and got it to where it is now. And, you know, as you say, it's it's a way of giving back, I very much see it as I got really involved, because, you know, it was losing its way and it needed revitalizing. Because I saw it as my baby, if you like. You know, very much picking up what you said, there is something there that, you know, when you've, you know, been in the sort of careers that you and I have been in, you know, this, I guess a yearning or a need to, you know, keep putting something back. So, that's, in my retirement really, fairly busy one. We are there now. And I think my concern was always, you know, so happened so often just small charities, the founders turn their toes up, and, you know, soon after the charity done is with them. And I think we're now in a position where we're here to stay. We got very small, haven't stopped feeling I can step away. And if I can do that, I shall be a happy man. Yeah, I mean, and I mean, I think we do make a difference. I mean, certainly, you know, we support probably in the region of hugging 30 expedition. since a year, some big some small, and, you know, something like 1500 individuals, you know, well over 1000 cadets benefiting from these experiences, which, you know, an awful many awful lot of them, you know, particularly the cadets, even though would never get the chance to, you know, have these sort of experiences and opportunities. And undoubtedly, I mean, you know, we've heard some, we've had some great feedback, you know, on individuals. You know, I have my, my, my daughter, my child went away, still a child has come back completely differently. Great stories.

J

James Geering 3:00:45

One of the conversations that come up over and over again, you talk, especially if a child grows up in an environment that maybe isn't nurturing and isn't lifting them up the importance of mentorship, whether it's an Army Cadet Program that you yourself went through, whether it's

the firefighter mentorship program, that one of my friends stood up here, where I live now, there's a lot of kind of eye rolling, and you know, kids today conversations is Gen Z, but the solution is mentorship, you know, trying to be a good parent in your own home, but then also walking outside your front door, and say, How can I take my skill set my life's journey, and apply it to someone in my community to elevate them, rather than watch them spiral downward?

P

Philip Neame 3:01:28

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And I mean, not undoubtedly, I mean, yes, we there's some cadets been taking part in these expeditions who, you know, from good backgrounds, no hardships and so on. And we sometimes get asked, you know, well, do you need to support these? And, you know, why don't you just only fun, you know, the disadvantage? You know, my answer is, when we fund the expeditions, and the expeditions comprise, some who are well off well, to do, etc, well looked after well nurtured, and others who are right at the other end of the spectrum, and the value of the expedition is, these people are thrown together. And each benefits from learning and observing the other had given an inspiration and aspiration from just that exchange. So yeah, you know, it's a source of, well, source of pride and satisfaction. Yeah.

J

James Geering 3:02:36

So for people listening, if they want to help, if they want to donate, they want to contribute, where's the best place to find the Ulysses trust online.

P

Philip Neame 3:02:44

And Google us, we have a website as well, which is [www.ulysses-trust.co.uk](http://www.ulysses-trust.co.uk). And there's buttons on that website, which enable you to donate or you know, if you want to get involved, or you you, anyone listening to this is looking to get in the UK at least get an expedition off the ground and is looking to help them, you know, that's the, the pathway to getting there. Yes, and the points of contact all on the on the website. So I think keeping it simple. Go to the website

J

James Geering 3:03:27

view of all now the books are available on Amazon, I'm sure a lot of stores as well. What about if people want to reach out to us specifically, where are the best places online or social media to do that?

P

Philip Neame 3:03:37

And I'm, I'm on social media, so I'm more on Facebook and LinkedIn than anywhere else. So you know, search for me, there is probably the best way. I'm not always very good at sort of following my Facebook file and so on. But I get there eventually. And, ya know, I'd be very happy to engage with people about the book, or the charity. Yeah. That'd be good.



J

James Geering 3:04:10

Well, Philip, I just want to say thank you so much. We've been chatting for over three hours now. It's been an amazing conversation, but there's so much from you know, and we just we just scratched the surface as well. But between, you know, your journey into the military, your, your climbing experiences, you know, obviously the Falklands conflict, the mental health side. There's so much great, great conversation today. So I want to thank you so much for not only sharing your story and reliving some of the things that you know, probably are less desirable for you to be thinking about. But also being so generous with your time and coming on the show today.

P

Philip Neame 3:04:40

Well, all I can say is, you know, thank you for inviting me and for bearing with my Wittering, which I don't quite understand if you feel the need to edit some of it. I hadn't realized that time and flown past and I've very much enjoyed talking to you. And you know really, yeah. Very good. I wish you every success with the with the podcasts and with your future writing as well.