

The ex-Rifleman – Matt Stringer



Matt Stringer, 26, was deployed to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 6 in 2007 with 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment (The Vikings). The battalion lost nine soldiers on that tour including five of Matt's friends.

He deployed back to Helmand Province on Op HERRICK 11 in late 2009 for another tough tour. In March 2010 the battalion deployed on a two-day operation in relatively unknown territory. Late on the second day Matt was involved in an IED blast which killed two of his colleagues, injured his platoon commander and rendered Matt deaf from the blast.

Matt was casevac'd out of Afghanistan in March 2010 and after prolonged medical treatment it was clear that his hearing would never fully return and that issues of balance would also make life difficult for him, which they do to this day.

He was placed on light duties and acted as driver to his Commanding Officer who later became Commander 7th Armoured Brigade in Germany, the famous Desert Rats. It was clear however that given his medical condition he would no longer be fit for military service and in February 2013 he began the discharge process.

Finding civilian vocational opportunities that replace a military career and its inherent characteristics of strength of association and pride is the biggest challenge. Finding an appropriate role for Matt, who has spent a year of his life in the harshest of conditions fighting the Taliban, was no exception.

Matt had expressed a desire to embark on a mechanic's apprenticeship and was introduced to Mission Motorsport in March of 2013. He was bitten by the motorsports bug and subsequently had the chance to attend track days, courtesy of track day operator Goldtrack, and motorsports events at some of the most prestigious race circuits in the UK.

In August 2013 Matt was discharged from service and, like many soldiers was still struggling to come to terms with his new life, still lacking any real sense of direction. Mission Motorsport had engaged Track Group, a Kimbolton based motorsports team, close to Matt's home town. Track Group took Matt on work placement for two months while ABF The Soldiers' Charity provide funding to cover his living costs during the placement. The placement provided time for the owner to make a full assessment of Matt's ability as they were looking for a new race truckie. The ABF were again approached for funding and on Feb 28th 2014 Matt passed his C+E license, enabling him to drive Track Group's articulated trucks in support of its racing operations.

Having established himself as a successful member of the race team Matt secured a contract for a second year, in agreement with his employer he embarked on a City and Guilds NVQ Level 3



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Apprenticeship in Light Vehicle Maintenance and Engineering with Mission Motorsport in September 2015. The NVQ was delivered both in the workplace and in the classroom and Matt was appointed to be the chief mechanic running a Lotus Elise race car for the remainder of the 2016 season as a fully qualified mechanic. He attended the 24h Races in Dubai, Barcelona, and Silverstone as part of the pit crew for teams in the Hankook 24-hour series.

With the help and support from the charity, Matt really has gone through a complete journey having taken the bold step to become a self-employed vehicle livery technician. In August 2019 he launched his own company 'Matt's Wraps' and despite the pandemic, has gone from strength to strength. Today, Matt now employs 2 people to work alongside him having won a large livery contract with Cox Automotive which sees him work on up to 250 vehicles a month.

"It's been an amazing journey with Mission Motorsport," explains Matt, "and I can't believe where I am now and how much I have learnt compared to where I was. I've got a lot to thank Mission Motorsport, for."