

Fatality notice: Sergeant Matt Tonroe has been killed in action in the Middle East

Sergeant Matt Tonroe.

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that Sergeant Matt Tonroe from the 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment was tragically killed in action whilst on duty in the Middle East on the 29th March 2018.

Sergeant Tonroe was born in Manchester on the 14th of August 1984. He enlisted in the Army on the 27th September 2004. On completion of his initial training he joined the 3rd Battalion of The Parachute Regiment in Colchester where he served as part of the Sniper Platoon. He rapidly developed an array of competencies and combat experiences that were to lay the foundations of an outstanding career.

During his service, Matt deployed numerous times on operations to Afghanistan and the Middle East. His distinguished service reflected a man that was happiest when professionally tested on operations. He relished responsibility, the opportunity to contribute and when the time came, to lead. He was a natural in this role.

Matt was also a capable and respected parachutist. As a gifted instructor he was free with his time and his advice, and would dedicate himself to support and develop this skill in others.

He was well known within his unit, well-liked by all and he will be sorely missed. When talking of Matt, his colleagues recount his humour, mischief and endless endeavours. Laid back, but a consummate professional, Matt was utterly selfless and always strived to achieve excellence.

Matt was very much a family man, making every effort to see his beloved mum around numerous overseas deployments. He is survived by his mother Michelle, his brother Alex and girlfriend Olivia.

Sgt Tonroe's Officer Commanding said

If you had met Matt Tonroe, then you would have liked him. He bristled with the contentment of a life lived to its full. His bravery and talent as a soldier, was matched by his compassion as a human being. He was an individual, with the courage to set his own course, and the perspective to see new possibilities at every turn. He was destined for great things in our unit; his leadership was both natural and apparently effortless. He is already missed. Without Matt, our company has lost some of its humour; some of its

warmth; and some of its sheer opportunism. We will always remember him.

Sgt Tonroe's Commanding Officer said

Matt Tonroe was a deeply intelligent man and one of life's characters. He was a caring and considerate soul, a loving and dutiful son, and a friend to many. Yet he had a steel core, served his country with pride and was a first class soldier, proven in combat, faced risk willingly and was ever ready for more. He thus died as he lived: daring and fearless in duty. We mourn his loss dearly, are proud to have known him and will honour him by continuing this fight.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said

My thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Sergeant Matt Tonroe at this dreadful time. Sergeant Tonroe served his country with great distinction and it is clear from the tributes made by his colleagues that he was not only exceptionally dedicated and courageous but also a gifted and intelligent instructor who was respected by everyone he served with. Sergeant Tonroe fought to protect British values, our freedoms and to keep us back at home safe. His sacrifice, unflinching commitment and bravery will never be forgotten.

[Press release: British Army re-joins Boxer programme](#)

The British Army has taken a step towards exploring a deal for a fleet of new armoured vehicles, potentially supporting at least 1,000 British jobs, by announcing it is re-joining the Boxer programme today.

The UK will re-join the Boxer programme and explore options to equip the Army with the 8x8 troop carriers to modernise its vehicle fleet and meet the Army's Mechanised Infantry Vehicle requirement.

The UK played a major role in the original design, development and testing of the Boxer, and would reassume the rights it had as a project partner if a deal was to go through – allowing the option for the vehicle to be built and exported from the UK. The deal could see the Boxer fully assembled in the UK

with at least 60% of the manufacturing with British industry, sustaining and developing UK industrial capabilities, facilities and skills.

Artec, the consortium who manufacture the Boxer vehicle, have already made commitments to British industry by signing partnership agreements with BAE Systems, Pearson Engineering and Thales UK, in anticipation of a deal being struck.

It is expected that British companies would compete for the manufacture and supply of many of the vehicle sub-systems, as well as for a full production and assembly line in the UK. Estimates suggest Artec's planned investment in the UK could secure or create at least 1,000 jobs, based across the country including locations such as Glasgow, Newcastle, Sheffield, Stockport, Telford and Wales.

With the likes of Rolls Royce already powering Boxers with engines and Parker-Hannifin, William Cook Engineering and other British companies also supplying sub-systems for the vehicle, this deal could secure a broader industrial UK partnership.

The MOD is now taking forward negotiations with the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR) and Artec. Looking forward to the Assessment Phase, concluding in 2019, this will consider the comparable benefits of manufacturing locations and different supply chains for Boxer, as well as value-for-money. Any deal will be subject to commercial negotiation and assessment in 2019 and the aim is to have the first vehicles in service with the Army in 2023.

OCCAR is a European intergovernmental organisation which facilitates and manages collaborative armament programmes through their lifecycle between the UK and European allies. The organisation manages the Boxer programme and, as an OCCAR member state, the UK has the necessary Intellectual Property Rights to the Boxer and greater control over ensuring Britain benefits from supply chain work.

The MOD conducted a comprehensive market analysis of Mechanised Infantry Vehicles in-service, entering service and in development. The analysis was guided by the British Army's requirements and how best to deliver them. The Boxer delivered on protected mobility, capacity, flexibility, utility and agility.

As part of the proposed deal, the UK is also expected to see substantial inward investment from Rheinmetall, one of Artec's parent companies, who signalled their intention to launch a production and integration centre for armoured vehicles in the UK as part of the programme. This would represent a significant commitment which would lead to long-lasting armoured vehicle capability in the UK.

The other of Artec's parent companies, Krauss-MaffeiWegmann (KMW), already has a substantial UK manufacturing facility in Stockport, from where it designs, manufactures and supports complex military equipment as far afield as the US and Australia, as well as parts of Europe.

Press release: Pilot scheme launched to help build sustainable future for listed places of worship

A new scheme to help build a sustainable future for listed places of worship will be piloted in urban and rural areas in England, Heritage Minister Michael Ellis announced today.

Expert advisors will work with listed buildings used by all faiths and denominations in Manchester and Suffolk to increase community engagement and vital heritage management skills.

The projects, expected to begin in early autumn, will receive a total of £1.8 million over the next two years.

Eligible listed places of worship in the pilot areas will be able to access a £500,000 minor repairs fund.

The Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals, which was published in December 2017, called for greater community use of Church of England buildings to help congregations raise income to pay for their upkeep.

This new pilot scheme extends this support to all faiths or denominations in order to help worshippers better care for and protect their listed buildings.

Fabric support officers will work within the two areas to provide high quality advice and develop maintenance and repair plans. These will ensure that routine repairs can be addressed immediately and prevent the development of more costly problems.

Community support advisors will work with the custodians of listed places of worship to identify and strengthen relationships within their local area and develop greater community partnerships.

Heritage Minister Michael Ellis said: "Britain has an incredible array of historic buildings important to all faiths which tell the story of our shared history and our communities. However the costs of caring for and protecting many listed places of worship can be prohibitive and lead many to fall into disrepair.

"The innovative pilots I am announcing today will help unlock the community potential of these buildings and provide practical guidance so they can be preserved for future generations."

Deborah Lamb, Deputy Chief Executive of Historic England, said:

"We are delighted that the Government is funding a new project to support the

volunteers who care for historic places of worship. Buildings that are well looked after help to enrich the lives of people across England. They are special spaces to visit and can be enjoyed by anyone, whether for worship or not.

“We know that keeping these buildings in good repair can be a challenge for congregations so we are excited by the potential of this pilot scheme, and look forward to playing our part in its success.”

Bishop of Worcester, the Rt Revd Dr John Inge said: “Church buildings have always been a crucial part of the community life of this nation and the majority of them provide one or more form of social outreach or community facilities. In working with the government on reviewing their long-term sustainability, it has been gratifying to hear many stories of churches that understand their Christian mission in terms of service to the community.

“These pilots will model a new type of partnership between the Church and the Government, investing in people and buildings side-by-side to ensure churches are able to continue to fulfil this function, whilst growing new opportunities to serve the people of England.”

Notes to editors: Funding will be available across different faiths and denominations. The support officers will be based with the Church of England diocese of Manchester and St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

Press release: Prime Minister's Passover message 2018

Today marks the beginning of Passover, as Jewish families around the world come together at the seder table to tell the story of their ancestors' deliverance from slavery.

Here in the UK, we can all take the opportunity to celebrate the incredible and enduring contribution made by our Jewish community, in every corner of the country and in every walk of life.

Of course, the Exodus from Egypt did not mark the end of anti-Semitic persecution. For millennia, the descendants of those Moses led to freedom have continued to face hatred, discrimination and violence. It's a situation that continues to this day, including, I'm sad to say, here in Britain.

It's something I have consistently taken action to tackle, both through investing in security to protect our Jewish communities and through education, with the creation of a National Holocaust Memorial to remind us all where hatred can lead if left unchecked.

The story of Passover teaches us that, while wrong may triumph for a time, the arc of history always bends to the righteous. So, at this special time of year, let us all pledge to stand up and make our voices heard in the face of anti-Semitism.

After all, as Elie Wiesel said, "Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Pesach – chag kasher v'sameach.

Press release: Foreign Secretary's 2018 Passover Message

Passover is a time of coming together, when Jewish communities commemorate the liberation of the people of Israel from slavery in ancient Egypt. It is a time to celebrate freedom as a basic human right.

Pesach Sameach to all Jewish families both in the UK and around the world. I wish them a happy and peaceful holiday.