



ST ANDREWS LEGACY

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St Andrews Legacy 2024. British veterans Mark Horwood, Scott Blaney, Andy Green and Bernie Broad

STAND TALL

British veterans
make friends for
life on the links

St Andrews, July 2024

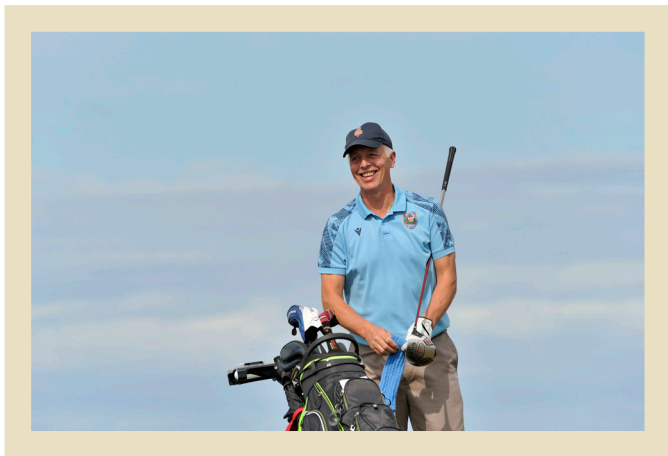
“It gave me my military ethos back”.

Major Bernie Broad of the Grenadier Guards was catastrophically injured in Afghanistan in 2009, going through two amputations in 2011 and 2012, but he credits golf for helping him negotiate such a terrible time.

“I lost a lot of my military values when I was injured, losing legs slowly and the torture of it; but golf gave me back loyalty, integrity, courage, selflessness and discipline.

“I met people who made it inspiring. I meet new friends. I can stand tall and make a difference. I’m back now as I was”.

His innate strength of character is clear to everyone who sees Bernie stalking out his shots on a golf course, and whether he is smiling, grimacing, or bellowing with laughter at the ups and downs. The St Andrews Legacy experience, which allows veterans to talk to each other in a very open way, has helped him to share that strength with the other participants.



Friends you never lose

“Veterans in my experience only speak the language they want to speak to other veterans. They respect telling their stories, learning your stories, and it grows you in such a significant way...and you make friends that you never lose”.

Like Bernie, Scott Blaney was making a welcome return to St Andrews for the first time since 2015. In the meantime, the Grenadier has been on the three-year PGA Training Programme and will be a fully qualified teaching pro in 2025: “maybe in Scotland” he says.

Although he played occasionally as a teenager, Scott really started to get into golf during his rehabilitation from combat injury at Headley Court, where he was fitted with a prosthetic right leg.

“I just fell in love with the sport.

“I think it’s a lot like life: you play it in one direction, that’s just going forward, and it appeals to me so much”.

Scott picks up on the opportunity to communicate with fellow military.

“When you are with other veterans you open up, and it’s a great thing to do. It’s down to one sport; you feel comfortable around each other...it’s that brotherhood, everyone knows, that bled together.

Hidden wounds

“Everyone’s got their hidden wounds they carry, but the Scottish air does them a bit of good!”

Scott took time to remember Graham Proctor, the founder of St Andrews Legacy, who passed in 2020.

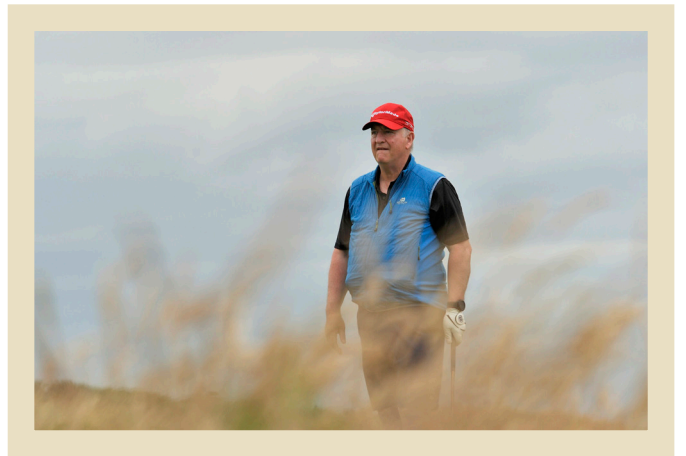
“When he walked into the room, even when you had your back to the door, you knew he’d come in. He had a really good, strong heart. He was a proud Scotsman and he loved St Andrews.

“He lived for the smiles...his aphrodisiac was seeing the guys smiling”.

A decade together

Scott paid tribute to the Del Rio community for their long-standing support. Scott was at the very first fundraiser held at the Modesto country club in 2014, helping to launch what has turned out to be a hugely successful partnership now entering a second decade.

“We can be out here and meet our brothers in arms and get some things off our chests, and stop this mental war that we fight”.



Andy Green made up the triumvirate of Grenadiers this summer.

Working at regimental headquarters, Andy was aware of St Andrews Legacy but had not experienced the trip himself.

“Golfers will understand that our game brings those that play it together in a way no other sport does. The time spent together before, during, and after a round provides the opportunity for friendships to quickly develop, emotions to surface, and lasting memories to be made; all the more so at St Andrews.

“It renewed and reinforced my belief in the good that people can do if they set their minds to it.

“I could not get rid of the tears in my eyes from tee to green on the eighteenth at the Old Course.

“I had been profoundly affected by the whole experience, shared with great people. I will be a better person for it for the rest of my days”.

Mark Horwood of the Welsh Guards completed the British Foursome.

The Aberdare man joined up in 1977 and served in the Falklands.

“I met special people,” he says.

“It made me realize that other people go through the same situation... talking to others, like people who served in Afghanistan, they’ve gone through similar situations.

“It’s great to talk, that’s the big thing, and I think we’ve all hit it off straight away and the talking and the banter has been fantastic on this trip.

“Thanks, to my new friends for life”.

Mark Horwood of the Welsh Guards joins Bernie Broad, Andy Green and Scott Blaney of the Grenadier Guards

Page two: (Clockwise) Mark Horwood at Crail Balcomie; Andy Green at Crail; Bernie Broad tees off on The Old Course; Scott Blaney at Dumbarnie

Page three: Scott Blaney on the Jubilee Course at St Andrews Links; Bernie Broad at the Road Hole; Andy Green weighs up a tee shot on the Jubilee; Mark Horwood putts on The Old Course



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SPECIAL PLACE

American Lake veterans back at St Andrews

St Andrews, July 2024

“This is a special place, here”.

Colonel Samuel Lee Williams has commanded at company, battalion and brigade level, overseeing the actions of thousands of his fellow military, but this summer it was an expedition to Scotland that took up his time, and his team of men was composed of Scott Robinson and Michael Gayken, all associated with American Lake Veterans Golf Course, Washington State.

While alert to the history and traditions of the place, Sam understood the basic attraction of St Andrews: “I haven’t had this much fun in...I would say it’s been a while!”

Sam served for 33 years, retiring in 2017, then finding his way to American Lake, where he volunteers as assistant general manager.

“I enjoyed leading soldiers in combat and peace keeping missions, but I would have to state: there’s a toll there. God has put me in a place to give back”.



A long relationship

American Lake relies on over 200 volunteers to operate and maintain the facilities, so that serving and active military and their families can find the kind of calm and rehabilitation golf can offer.

The course has been upgraded to 18 holes under the direction of master craftsman Jack Nicklaus, twice Open champion on The Old Course and the game’s greatest ever player.

The relationship between St Andrews Legacy and American Lake goes back to 2013, when founder Graham Proctor and trustee Beverly Selman visited Tacoma and met up with Jim Martinson, Aaron Boyle, and Steven Elliot, who all came to Scotland the following year. It was Jim who personally recommended Sam, Scott and Michael for the 2024 event.

“I parred every first hole of each course,” recalled Sam, who played with American Lake golf balls and managed to avoid losing even one of them on the four courses he played: Dumbarnie Links, Crail Balcomie, the Jubilee Course, and The Old Course at St Andrews Links. You don’t get those balls easily and they certainly don’t give them away!

Integration

Introduced to golf at a young age by his father and uncle, Sam has played the game for a long while and he can integrate it into his current life.

“I was looking through some of the pictures of the day...and we were just having a great time; between shots, sharing our experiences of our times during deployments...a lot of emotions, really, and in a very positive way”.

For Scott Robinson the environment of golf is a huge element in its attraction: “When I’m out on a golf course, it’s so peaceful. It’s green, the landscape is so beautiful, and it’s quiet, so it’s just a great place for me to be.”

Raised in Steilacoom, close to Fort Lewis, Scott joined up in 1992 and spent seven years with 2nd Ranger Battalion. He then joined 7th Special Forces at Fort Bragg, overcoming a training accident when a parachute failed to open properly and his fall was broken by power lines, leaving him with third degree burns over 60 per cent of his body.

Scott served in numerous operational deployments over thirteen years, from Central and South America to the Middle East. He served three combat tours in Afghanistan and one non-combat tour in Haiti.



Transitioning

Transitioning was a challenge that continues, but the VA and Scott’s wife Lae and son Mateo, now at college, helped him.

“Being a soldier had become my identity. I knew something was different about myself and I thought it was just because I no longer had a mission to complete. I was diagnosed with a TBI and PTSD. I still struggle in areas I never had issues with before”.

American Lake is located within a VA hospital compound and Scott is now a regular on the course with Lae.

“We have a yearly membership and we golf at least two times a week. This outdoor activity in the beautiful green of Washington has been a special spot for me and my wife”.

Michael Gayken is also a Washington man, from Gig Harbor, who served from 1991 to 2007 including multiple deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“The last couple of years I’ve been getting a lot of help from the VA. I’ve been put on track, with my mental state and my physical state as well.

“So, I figured golf is therapeutic and it’s something I definitely want to improve in. It’s just great getting out there and enjoying the time with the other people.

“Meeting the other veterans has helped me deal with some of the problems that I’m having. I see some veterans that are dealing with a lot of physical problems and there’s other veterans dealing with more of the mental stress of being in the military...you just got to find that balance”.

American Lake veterans Sam Williams, Scott Robinson and Michael Gayken

Page two: (Clockwise) Sam Williams at Balcomie Links, Crail; Michael Gayken tees off on the eighteenth of The Old; Scott Robinson, Michael Gayken, Sam Williams and Brian Evans on the Swilcan Bridge; Scott Robinson celebrates at Dumbarrie

Page three: Scott Robinson at Crail Balcomie; Michael Gayken also at Crail; Scott Robinson, Michael Gayken, Sam Williams and Mark Horwood visiting the Royal and Ancient Golf Club; Sam Williams at Dumbarrie Links