



RECONNECT

A Partnership between the Burton Addiction
O'Connor Centre and Care after Combat



*Reconnecting to the world
after drink/drug treatment*



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A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN
THE BURTON ADDICTION
O'CONNOR CENTRE AND
CARE AFTER COMBAT

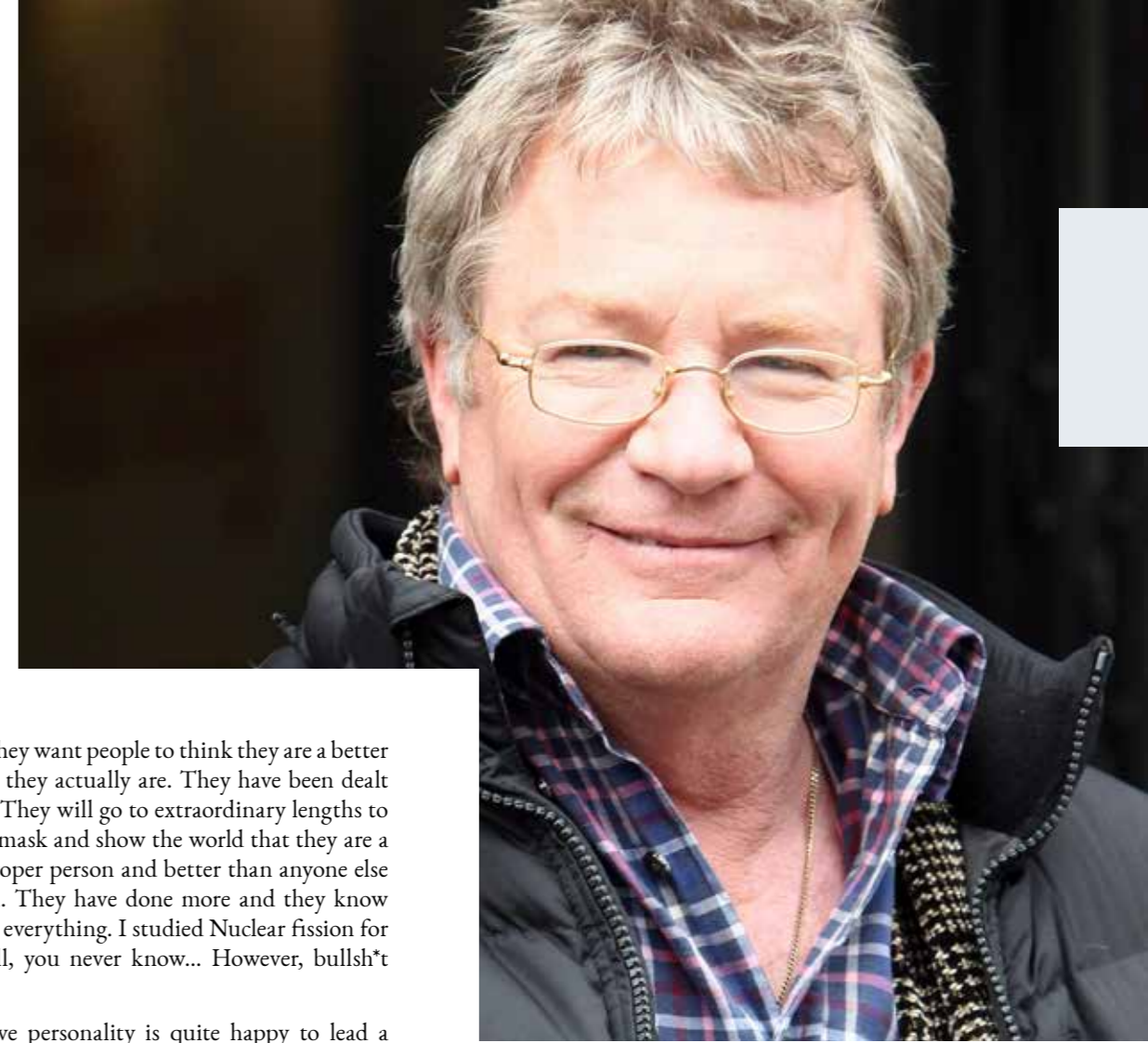
The well-being of former serving members of the Armed Forces has been at the centre of policy and research for some time. There is evidence from clinical practice and academic research showing that veterans can encounter difficulties dealing with the impact of their service experience after leaving the forces as well as challenges moving from military life to civilian life.

The moderate consumption of alcohol for pleasure and relaxation undoubtedly has an important role in our society. The UK armed forces, like many other nations, have traditionally used alcohol as a means of mediating stress although cultural influences are likely to be further contributing factors. Evidence suggests that military personnel consume considerable amounts of alcohol which may have both medical and occupational implications. Studies of UK veterans found excessive alcohol consumption to be more common when compared to the general population (13% v 6%) even after taking age and gender differences into account. Such high levels of drinking are likely to have both short-term and long-term global health effects with a proportion of veterans eventually finding themselves involved in the Criminal Justice System.

Findings from Research

- Recent studies from both the US and UK have shown that high levels of alcohol misuse, alcohol related problems and binge drinking are common among military personnel.
- Within the UK Armed Forces, prevalence rates of alcohol misuse of 13% have been reported.
- The prevalence of alcohol related harm and alcohol dependence within the serving UK Armed Forces has been shown to be greater than in the UK general population.
- Longitudinal studies of alcohol misuse in the UK military suggest that they continue to remain high.
- Clear links have been demonstrated between alcohol consumption and negative impacts on well-being within military populations.
- Alcohol has been linked to violent offending post-deployment.
- Studies from the general population show that psychological effects of negative life events include alcohol misuse whereas, positive life events such as marriage are associated with a decrease in alcohol misuse.
- Comorbid Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has been shown to hinder recovery from alcohol related problems in veterans.
- PTSD, psychological distress, smoking status and relationship change are associated with alcohol use.
- The Ministry of Defence uses a NICE - approved alcohol misuse treatment programme, with in-patient detoxification.
- Veterans can seek treatment from charities such as Alcoholics Anonymous and the Care after Combat/Burton Addiction Centre partnership.

A Personal View by Jim Davidson - CEO and Founder Care after Combat



JIM DAVIDSON OBE

IN 1993 I WAS DRAGGED SCREAMING AND CRYING INTO A DRINKS REHABILITATION CLINIC.

I was in a terrible state, I had not been eating, I'd been living on white wine and cognac. My business was suffering, my marriage was breaking up and although not completely at rock bottom I was feeling rotten and needed help.

The problem with *my* drinking is that it never really stopped me from working. It was the hangovers that did. If they could just stop the hangovers, I would be fine. But to use the old Alcoholics Anonymous cliché I was feeling sick and tired of being sick and tired. Basically alcohol was taking more away from me than it was adding. Consequently, I had to top up regularly. Something had to give way. My legs....and nearly my life!

I used to use alcohol as medicine; to wake up, to go to sleep, to get onstage, to get offstage, for sex, to avoid sex, in fact, you name it, alcohol help me achieve it or escape it! That has changed.

When I was in the clinic, my son Charlie asked his mother if I had died? No. My life hadn't ended; I was getting my life *back*. Now this partnership will provide others with a chance.

All addictions are like a rollercoaster ride, once they start they are difficult to get off, and, you can't steer a rollercoaster.

Addictions are a physical, spiritual and mental illness.

Some say that is all about genetics, one is born with the condition. I believe that. I don't think you become an alcoholic for drinking too much, or too often. How many times have we heard someone say, "he drank so much she became an alcoholic" The real answer is for the experts, but I had all the signs at 8 years of age. Not the drinking of course, but all the symptoms.

DR, I THINK I'M GOING DEAF. WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS? THEY ARE LITTLE YELLOW CARTOON PEOPLE AREN'T THEY?

Alcohol is one of the symptoms of addiction. It is where the addict turns to find a solution to his main problem. He/she is one of the few people that have an addictive personality. These people cannot control the desire for instant gratification. The get rich quick fix. The gambler, the heroin addict, the sex addict. These poor souls demand instant results in an attempt to achieve what they believe is their God-given right. "I want it... I want it *now*"

Loan and HP companies must love alxies, trust me on that one. Hedonism is a word that was made for the addict.

Here's another expression. "His life went downhill and he turned to drink". Is this alcoholism? Probably not, just an attempt at self-medication. Or a cry for help,

"Poor me, Poor me... pour me a drink" or "help me or I'll drink at you"

The alcoholic/addict is indeed a special person. One of anything is not enough. They strive to achieve, they seek knowledge. Why? Probably because they want to show off with that knowledge, they want people to like them, they want people to be

impressed, they want people to think they are a better person than they actually are. They have been dealt a bad hand. They will go to extraordinary lengths to put on that mask and show the world that they are a good and proper person and better than anyone else in the room. They have done more and they know more, about everything. I studied Nuclear fission for a while...well, you never know... However, bullsh*t takes its toll.

The addictive personality is quite happy to lead a life that is false. He is happy to be a liar. Deep inside he puts on a brave face and fights desperately with denial, the alcoholics' best friend. When confronted with the caring question "do you think it's time to get help?" he replies...

"I'm fine, I'm just going through a bad patch"

"I don't drink during the week"

"I only drink beer"

He will then distance himself from the question asker and seek solace with his fellow drinkers... or in extremes will perform a "Geographical" and move away... to start the rollercoaster again.

The comedian Dave Allen was great raconteur, and as well as ridiculing religion, he set out to make the drunk a lovable person, especially to other drunks. He once performed a poem "there is love between sister and brother... there is love between a son and a mother.... but there's no love that can compare, with one drunken sod and another."

Does this have something to do with a feeling of belonging. The alcoholic tends to seek out other alcoholics in an attempt to normalise his life. To get that *okay* that he seeks, to be told he is a good bloke, to *not* be judged, to not be given stupid advice by people who do not understand.

It is this feeling of belonging that can help to controlling one's addictive personality.

The American AA founder, Bill W said:

"We came to realise we were powerless over alcohol, we sought out other alcoholics. We came to realise that power greater than ourselves was the only thing that can help."

Bill and his team of fellow drunks formulated the 12-step programme to recovery.

Rarely do people fail who stick to its concepts. There are some poor souls that cannot, for no real reason, except the 12-step programme and their journey is a rocky and lonely road.



A personal view by Jim Davidson (cont'd)

THE BIGGEST PROBLEM THAT THE VETERAN FACES IS ALCOHOL

To them there is nothing finer than standing at the bar in a pub, or in the Sergeants mess, knocking back the pints and telling tales.

This of course is perfect for the alcoholic as he has lots of tales... *some* of them are even true.

The Ministry of Defence are quite rightly concerned about the amount of alcohol consumed by serving personnel. They have changed the rules regarding drinking.

We applaud the steps the MoD is taking, but serving soldiers have regulations and controls, veterans do not.

Why do all Servicemen's clubs centre around a bar? Is it a re-creation of the Sergeants mess? Sure, veterans love being around other veterans. They prefer the company of someone who are shared adversity, who has shared great triumphs.

The German philosopher Von Clausewitz stated:

"Only those who have seen war can truly understand war..."

The point he makes is true, but one must be careful of the veteran dismissing the civilian as someone that is not worthy of his company because he has not suffered like the veteran and his brothers have.

When the veteran looks back on his life in the Army/ Navy/Air Force he attributes those times as the best days of his life. Of course they were, he was at his prime. He had achieved greatness; he had done something with his life. However, he was told when to get up, when to go to bed, he was fed, watered, and no matter how much he moaned about the Sergeant Major he knew that the Sergeant Major would always be there for him.

If you take that away, reality starts to set in... you can't fire a gun any more, you can't drive a tank, you can't fix that Tornado... you have no role or purpose...no relevance... "What's the point?" you have become one of *them!!!* what you *can* do... is drink.

The determination of the veteran to bond with his peers is a powerful weapon and can be used to provide treatment.

I'm talking about his Brothers in Arms.

Many servicemen have said to me that they do not fight for King and country. They fight for their friends, for their troop, for their patrol, for their company, for the battalion... the Regiment. This is their family. This is also who they share their problems with.

A feeling of belonging for the alcoholic, is the same as the camaraderie for Brothers In Arms.

For the alcoholic veteran, or serving person, the concept of sharing one's problems is one that is pretty simple to grasp, the trouble being that the veteran and the soldier needs to trust the people he is sharing his problems with and be willing to be the recipient of their problems. This takes time

We do not believe that veterans should be treated in a separate manner than civilians.

After all, a veteran is a civilian, and the sooner he gets used to it the better. Care after Combat and the Burton Addiction Clinic have been working on the problem of the alcoholic/addicted former members of her Majesty's Armed Forces... and the best answer was the Burton Addiction Centre.

The 12 -week residential course consists of veterans and non-veterans working together to restore themselves to sanity and prepare for a life of sobriety that is manageable and has purpose.

Specialised one to one treatment is provided to the veteran by experts and group meetings where veterans can share stories that look to the future, rather than dwell on the past.

To grow some self-worth, to get that self-esteem swagger back, to live life, to turn a page, to move forward and take ground and not waste time seeking something that really, was never lost... One's relevance.

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud
Under the bludgeoning of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the
scroll,

I am the master of my fate
I am the captain of my soul.

Invictus

William Ernest Henley, 1849 - 1903



FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN 1998 TO AN IMPRESSIVE PORTFOLIO OF SERVICES ACROSS STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE ON TRENT, BAC O'CONNOR PROVIDES EVIDENCE-BASED DETOXIFICATION, RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION.

In addition, BAC O'Connor have a recovery academy, which teaches all aspects of independent living through to education & training, voluntary work, preparing for employment, a number of leisure activities and space to socialise.

Our programmes are delivered by a multi-disciplinary competent and experienced workforce with specialisms in PTSD (post-traumatic stress), Child Trauma and a number of our staff have personal experience of addiction which complements our diverse and highly qualified teams. The programme incorporates elements of the twelve-step programme, originally proposed and first published in 1939 by *Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)* as a method of recovery from alcoholism, which underpins the recovery process. We have a number of Recovery Houses across Staffordshire for clients who need extra support and time before they move back into the Community. BAC O'Connor has a proven record and has produced some of the highest long-term outcomes across the United Kingdom.

Dr Jane Jones together with Dr Nicholas Murdoch both of whom have considerable experience with addiction amongst the UK veteran population will provide additional specialist support to the staff at Burton Addiction Centre, thereby augmenting a proven eclectic programme. This partnership is merging the joint expertise acquired from working with addiction over a considerable number of years.



NOREEN OLIVER MBE
FOUNDER & MANAGING DIRECTOR,
BURTON ADDICTION CENTRE

BAC O'Connor are delighted to be working in partnership with Care after Combat; our service personnel and their families sacrifice so much for our country and can be deeply affected by their experiences. We have supported a number of veterans into recovery from alcohol and drug addiction over the years and this partnership will ensure that more people will get the help and support they need. Recovery is possible and together with Care after Combat we can help men and women who have given so much to go on to lead happy fulfilling lives.



DR NICHOLAS MURDOCH
CARE AFTER COMBAT

I have worked in alcohol and substance misuse services for many years and am very much looking forward to working alongside my colleagues at the Burton Addiction Centre. The BAC programme, which has professionally developed over a considerable number of years and from the experience of a diverse group of attendees is enhanced with the provision of tools for self-reliance. Being responsible and making informed choices are central tenets to recovery which is further complemented by the Recovery Academy. I am both thrilled and honoured to contribute to what is a holistic approach to addiction and the recovery pathway.



DR JANE JONES
CARE AFTER COMBAT

A collaborative partnership between Care after Combat and the BAC O'Connor Centre provides a breakthrough in quality and service provision for ex-service personnel. By uniting the excellent skills and knowledge Care after Combat and the BAC O'Connor Centre have this partnership offers a unique step forward in Veteran healthcare. This union brings together recognition and help for Veteran specific issues and combines it with the ex-service persons need to integrate with services not military related. This approach enhances the ability of ex-service personnel to make the often-difficult adjustment from military life to civilian life.

The first Veteran to benefit from this partnership said, "for the first time, in a very long time, I look forward to waking up in the morning". The Care after Combat and BAC O'Connor partnership will provide an important, necessary and strategically valuable service for ex-service personnel who may still be 'fighting for their lives'.



THE RIGHT HON. ANDREW
GRIFFITHS MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY
OF STATE BUSINESS, ENERGY &
INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Knowing both organisations well, it gave me enormous pleasure to have instigated this unique venture. We owe a great deal to our veterans, and I am thrilled that this new partnership will go some way to giving those who require it, some much needed help.



Get in touch

- 🏠 FIRST FLOOR, SUITE 18
NEWARK BEACON INNOVATION CENTRE
CAFFERATA WAY
NEWARK NG24 2TN
- ☎ 01636 653 050
- 📷 @CAREAFTERCOMBAT
- 🐦 @CAREAFTERCOMBAT
- 📘 /CAREAFTERCOMBAT
- 🌐 /CAREAFTERCOMBAT
- 🌐 WWW.CAREAFTERCOMBAT.ORG



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01636 653 050



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