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| <b>Institution:</b> University of Glasgow (UofG)  |   |  |
| <b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28 History   |   |  |
| <b>Title of case study:</b> Waterloo Uncovered: supporting the well-being of serving personnel and veterans through participation in battlefield research   |   |  |
| <b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2008–present   |   |  |
| <b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>  |   |  |
| <b>Name(s):</b>   | <b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>              | <b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> |
| Tony Pollard  | Professor of Conflict History and Archaeology | 2005–present                                 |
| <b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2015–31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020   |   |  |
| <b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N  |   |  |
| <p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Professor Tony Pollard is academic lead for a team of archaeologists investigating the Battle of Waterloo. Selected serving Veterans and Serving Military Personnel (VSMP) transitioning to civilian life are participating in this investigative project, Waterloo Uncovered. Most are dealing with physical injury and/or mental health issues such as PTSD, and active participation in research involving conflict archaeology offers an educational and social experience delivering proven health and well-being benefits. Of 152 currently serving or veteran participants, many report life changes such as deciding to study archaeology, improvements to their well-being, and meeting their self-selected goals (reported by 81%).</p>   |   |  |
| <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Professor Tony Pollard is one of those responsible for distinguishing the unique scientific field of conflict and battlefield archaeology, co-founding the Centre for Battlefield Archaeology at UofG in 2005, and the <i>Journal of Conflict Archaeology</i> in 2006. Through the Centre, Pollard played a leading role in establishing and refining investigative methodologies that now underpin the field of battlefield archaeology, through projects focusing on important conflict sites such as Bannockburn and Culloden [3.1, 3.2]. Over the past 15 years, the investigation of historic battlefield sites using a combination of archaeological and period-specific historical research [e.g. 3.3] has become established as a distinct field</p> <p>Pollard's expertise has formed a major contribution to the Waterloo Uncovered (WU) research project (e.g. 3.4–3.6). Since 2015, Pollard as the academic lead, and two other directors with whom he helped set up Waterloo Uncovered as a charity, have been carrying out pioneering investigations of the 1815 Waterloo battlefield in Belgium. Waterloo represented a key turning point in European history, bringing about a long period of peace which helped shape modern Europe. However, until Waterloo Uncovered began in 2015 there had been minimal archaeological investigation of the battlefield, so under the direction of Pollard's specialist expertise, the project's findings significantly advance our understanding of the battle, its aftermath and the landscape in which it was fought. Waterloo Uncovered is unique, besides being the first intensive, multi-disciplinary archaeological investigation of Waterloo, as a veteran engagement project that focuses on a historic battlefield.</p> <p>While Pollard has led on the research design of the project as well as working directly with VSMP participants, other contributors to the project include the University of Ghent, Belgium, which provides state-of-the-art geophysical survey, and University College Roosevelt, Holland, which since 2018 has run an associated summer school on battlefield archaeology. The University of Leicester provides technical support along with LP Archaeology, an independent archaeological consultancy based in London. The VSMPs themselves play an integral role in the</p> |   |  |

research process, as the project design explicitly draws on the lived experiences of the VSMP participants for the interpretation of the landscape as a battle space. This co-creative research approach adds a layer of meaning and purpose to VSMP engagement, because it not only benefits the quality of the research but works in complementarity with other benefits, such as the acquisition of technical and social skills through the work, which had been well-established in earlier research [see 3.6].

For example, archaeological fieldwork has included application of a combination of techniques (geophysical survey, excavation and metal detecting) at Hougoumont Farm – a site that represented a key location during the battle. However, archaeological investigation necessitates not only the application of techniques, but ongoing interpretation of the results. Hougoumont comprises several enclosures, some of which no longer survive. Veteran participants who had served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan recognised similarity between surviving enclosures with compounds in which they had fought, offering impressions of how they might have defended or attacked that location [3.4]. These, and other VSMPs' insights into how soldiers would have moved, shaped the archaeological interpretation of the site [3.4]. In addition to more traditionally archaeological findings such as [3.5], the project has also published findings on the collaboration itself. For example, the mutually beneficial nature of the collaboration between VSMP participants and archaeologists has been elaborated on in depth in [3.6], in which one of the co-authors was himself an VSMP participant in the project. This volume was in 2020 nominated for *Current Archaeology's* Archaeology Book of the Year.

### 3. References to the research

- 3.1 Pollard, T. 2009. *Culloden: [The History and Archaeology of the Last Clan Battle](#)*. Pen and Sword Military: Barnsley. ISBN 9781848840201. [Available on request from HEI]
- 3.2 Pollard, T. 2009. [The Rust of Time: Metal detecting and battlefield archaeology](#). In: Thomas, S. and Stone, P. (eds.) *Metal Detecting and Archaeology*. Boydell and Brewer. ISBN 9781843834151. [Available on request from HEI]
- 3.3 Pollard, T. 2016. [A Battle Lost, a Battle Found: The Search for the Bannockburn Battlefield](#). In: Penman, M. A. (ed.) *Bannockburn, 1314–2014: Battle & Legacy: Proceedings of the 2014 Stirling Conference*. Shaun Tyas: Donington, Lincolnshire, pp. 74–96. ISBN 9781907730504. [Available on request from HEI]
- 3.4 Eve, S. and Pollard, T. 2020. [From the Killing Ground: Digital Approaches to Conflict Archaeology, a Case Study from Waterloo](#). *The Journal of Digital War*, inaugural edition, Palgrave Springer Spring 2020. (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/s42984-020-00013-y>)
- 3.5 Pollard, T. 2020. (Forthcoming) These Spots of Excavation Tell: The Ker Papers, Early Visitor Accounts and the Archaeology of Waterloo. *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*. [Available on request from HEI]
- 3.6 Evans, M., Eve, S., Pollard, T. and Ulke, D., 2019. [Waterloo Uncovered: From Discoveries in Conflict Archaeology to Military Veteran Collaboration and Recovery on One of the World's Most Famous Battlefields](#). In: Darvill, Timothy, Barrass, K., Drysdale, L. and Staelens, Yvette, eds. *Historic Landscapes and Mental Well-Being*. Archaeopress, 253–265.

**Quality:** The majority of publications are peer-reviewed, with 3.1 a key text in the field of battlefield archaeology. The research has been carried out using pioneering combinations of established archaeological methods as well as historical research, as outlined above.

#### 4. Details of the impact

[Waterloo Uncovered](#) (WU) is a project and charitable organisation that ‘*aims to understand war and its impact on people — and to educate the public about it.*’ WU uniquely combines this mission with assistance to VSMPs through active involvement in archaeological research. Due to Tony Pollard’s expertise and leading role in conflict and battlefield archaeology, two officers from the Coldstream Guards, a former captain who developed PTSD after serving in Afghanistan and a serving major, invited him to collaboratively develop an archaeological research project that would both investigate the Waterloo battlefield and enable meaningful participation of military veterans. Pollard led the initial collaborative fieldwork in 2015 at Hougoumont, chosen partly because of a historical connection with the Coldstream Guards.

Over 6,000 artefacts and human remains have been excavated (Figure 1), and new digital technologies applied to give a fuller picture of how the battle unfolded in relation to the site’s topography, adding details such as an obscure gateway where French soldiers assaulted the wall. Insights like these have transformed understanding of the battle. This French incursion is not detailed in historical records, so the archaeology is telling the story for the first time, showing that the French soldiers entered [a tightly enclosed space](#), in contrast with the openness of the landscape today. It is the synthesis of multiple sites and techniques that have transformed the overall picture, and brought home the [human cost](#) of the battle. Archaeological fieldwork is by its nature costly, limiting participation, but to date 152 VSMPs have taken part, with between 20–66 new VSMPs joining each year. These are in addition to other participants, volunteers and students, totalling 422 over the years 2015–2019 (unfortunately, the July 2020 field season had to be cancelled due to Covid-19).



Figure 1: The team examine a musket ball that has been found on site at Waterloo Uncovered. Source: <https://waterloouncovered.com/about/our-story/>

Participants’ self-development is supported in areas including teamwork (in a civilian context), communication, historical education, and transferable archaeological and survey skills. The

VSMPs' own past experiences often make a positive contribution to interpretation on site, deepening the value of the experience for them. Feedback gathered yearly demonstrates the difference made to participants' lives [5.3–5.5]. In 2018, for example, many VSMPs indicated the experience had changed them in some way. MI stated, *'I'm living my life once more thanks to Waterloo Uncovered'*. SM, a serving soldier, reflected that *'WU ... has helped me in more ways than I could imagine.'* Another serving soldier, DB, told WU *'the rich multi-disciplinary mix you have on the project was the key to adding value to my ongoing rehabilitation... I think I returned to my family more relaxed and with a more positive outlook about the future'*. JG stated: *'this is the best therapy I have ever had ... you have made a big difference to this old soldier's life'* [5.4].

There are an estimated [~2.5 million](#) veterans in the UK (2016). PTSD in the military increased [from 4% in 2004–2005 to 6% in 2014–2016](#). However, there is insufficient government-funded support; hence the growth of charitable organisations like Combat Stress (a supporter of WU) and Help for Heroes. WU attained charitable status in 2016 and is now a leading provider of veteran engagement in the Humanities, recognised in 2020 with a [Points of Light Award](#) from the UK Prime Minister. The importance of the benefits of WU lies in the unique challenges faced among VSMPs, many of whom are forced to leave service through injury; difficulties re-integrating into civilian life are common and complex.

The project's well-being lead commented that the *'social impact of the WU project is remarkable and is certainly changing lives'* and *'in some cases saving lives'* [5.6]. He explained that over 9 months' connection with the project, each VSMP sets goals for their mental health and well-being, with well-being measured before and after. He added that participants *'get a real taste for archaeology, the learning of new skills, working in teams, being outdoors etc. [and] all facilitate good mental health and wellbeing'*.

Another member of the WU well-being team commented, *'I've witnessed the effect participating has had on our veterans and serving military personnel, particularly on their sense of wellbeing and the positive effect on their individual recovery experiences'* [5.5]. VSMP participants reported an average [12% positive change in well-being](#), as measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale [5.5]. 81% of participants met their self-selected goals through the project. One VSMP stated, *'this has been an excellent experience that has helped my mental health massively [and] provided me with an insight into potential career opportunities upon leaving the Army'* [5.5]. Another shared: *'I am a military veteran and suffer from PTSD ... My participation in the project encouraged me to re-start a Masters degree in Archaeology at the University of Southampton, having dropped out in 2009 due to poor mental health, taking Hougoumont as the topic of my dissertation'* [5.7]. This participant afterwards successfully completed their course.

The WU CEO explained that they approached Pollard because of his *'reputation as one of the world's leading battlefield and conflict archaeologists. ... Tony's expertise, which included experience of developing the techniques of the field of battlefield archaeology ... has proven essential in providing vital academic direction and credibility, without which it would not have been possible for WU to deliver its mission year after year'* [5.1]. The Chair of WU, Brigadier Greville Bibby CBE, also believes the academic research was fundamental to the project's success, adding *'without the credible and meaningful results of the archaeological research, it is unlikely WU would still exist, and veterans would not have seen the benefits'* [5.2].

Each year, in addition to new participants, there are also Returning VSMPs, who take on greater responsibility; e.g., running open days for the public and international tourists, and giving talks to

school visits. At [Chalke Valley History Festival](#) in 2016, 2017 and 2018, VSMPs along with archaeologists and students delivered virtual tours of Hougoumont Farm and a pop-up museum with finds from the site. As well as reaching an audience of thousands, including hundreds of schoolchildren, these activities have offered further developmental and skill-building opportunities for RVSMs while supporting the project through public and media engagement.

Broader public engagement includes the *Naked Scientists* podcast, and *Current World Archaeology* magazine, as well as the [Great Game](#) event which attracted 120 participants, hundreds of spectators, and coverage in *The Times*, the *i* and *Daily Mail* shining a light on the issues facing VSMPs [5.8–5.11]. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, WU's 2020 fieldwork season was cancelled, so in partial mitigation the YouTube series [Lockdown Lectures](#) was released, with for example Pollard's [first lecture](#) receiving 32,469 views 748 likes, and 60 comments by early December 2020, illustrating continued public interest in the project.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 Testimonial letter, CEO, Waterloo Uncovered. Corroborating Pollard's influence and impact on the project, how this came about and the importance of his management of the research aims of the project to its success. [PDF]
- 5.2 Testimonial letter, Brigadier Greville Bibby CBE, Chair, WU. Commenting on importance of Pollard and his battlefield archaeology expertise to the project's benefits [PDF]
- 5.3 Waterloo Uncovered Annual Report 2017: <https://waterloouncovered.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Waterloo-Uncovered-Activity-Report-2017.pdf>. The annual reports include assessments of impact on participant health and testimonial quotations from individual participants. [PDF]
- 5.4 Waterloo Uncovered Activity and Impact Report 2018: <https://waterloouncovered.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Waterloo-Uncovered-2018-Activity-Report.pdf> [PDF]
- 5.5 Waterloo Uncovered Impact Report 2019: <https://waterloouncovered.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/waterloo-uncovered-impact-report-2019.pdf> [PDF]
- 5.6 Testimonial letter, Mental Health and Well-being lead, WU. Describing the well-being team's provisions and how the archaeological component led by Pollard contributes to well-being outcomes for participants. [PDF]
- 5.7 Testimonial letter, former participant at WU. Detailing how his own personal experience of participation in the project and working under Pollard's direction impacted significantly on his life, and how this led to a major life decision. [PDF]

### Examples of media coverage:

- 5.8 Wounded war heroes dig into history to help their recovery. *Daily Express*, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Circulation 339,303 [PDF].
- 5.9 Waterloo dig turns up soldiers' lost limbs. *The Daily Telegraph*, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Circulation 374, 535 [PDF].
- 5.10 War veterans to join dig as Battle of Waterloo's hospital site excavated. *The Guardian*, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Circulation 137,839 [PDF].
- 5.11 Human remains uncovered during Battle of Waterloo excavation. *The Herald*, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Circulation 25,869 [PDF].