**Archaeologists join forces with military veterans to dig for the secrets of Waterloo.**

A team of leading archaeologists, veterans and serving personnel from the armed forces will be returning to the battlefield of Waterloo in Belgium to excavate for evidence of the fierce fighting that took place there in the battle of 1815

**Waterloo Uncovered** combines world-class archaeology with veteran care and recovery.

Chief Executive Mark Evans says that the impact on veterans and military personnel –many suffering from service-related injuries or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) -can be as important as the archaeological discoveries:

“The opportunities **Waterloo Uncovered** offers can be life-changing. For some, it’s just the chance to be amongst people who’ve had similar experiences, to focus on the practical task of digging. For others it’s an opportunity to follow up their fascination with the history and gain new skills and the confidence to go on to further study. For some people, that can open up a whole new direction to their lives”.

Waterloo Uncovered is excavating at Hougoumont Chateau on the battlefield, scene of bloody fighting in which German and British troops, notably the Coldstream Guards, held at bay repeated French attacks, leaving the are strewn with dead and wounded. Their stand contributed to the final defeat of Napoleon in the battle.

Professor Tony Pollard, Director of the Centre for Battlefield Archaeology at Glasgow University says: “We’re searching for answers to some of the “*What Ifs?”*  of the battle –why did the French fail to capture the chateau, and would the outcome of the battle have been different if they had? Working with veterans –some of whom have had first-hand experience of combat- adds a whole new dimension to the archaeology”.

The excavation began in 2015. Finds to date include a large variety of musket balls, pistol balls and cannon shot from the Allied and French armies revealing the close-quarter nature of the fighting, as well as items of equipment and uniforms, and new evidence of the original buildings destroyed by French cannon.

This year sees an increasing participation by veterans from other nations which fought in the battle. Colonel Ludy de Vos, of the Dutch Veterans Institute, says there’s now more awareness of the role played by Wellington’s allies during the fighting; “There are regiments in the Dutch Army today whose forbears helped beat Napoleon at Waterloo. That’s a story that has been somewhat neglected by the histories of the battle; the growing interest in battlefield archaeology is helping to bring that story to life”.

One group of veterans will be arriving at the battlefield dig by London Black Cab this year on an expedition called ***Waterloo to Waterloo***. Waterloo Uncovered is joining up with the **Taxi Charity for Military Veterans** to bring a party of veterans out to Belgium*.* They will be setting off from the UK on July 12and arriving at the battlefield the next day in time to take part in the dig.

“For us it’s about putting something back” says taxi driver Gray Mankelow, “We’ve taken groups of veterans to places like Normandy and Arnhem, but a visit to Waterloo is a first. I’m looking forward to some digging when I get there!”.

**Waterloo Uncovered will be excavating at Waterloo from July 7 -21st.**

**Note to Editors**

If you would like to cover the dig as it progresses, would like more information about what we find at Waterloo this year, or about our work with veterans,

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**Waterloo Uncovered** is a charity created to carry out archaeological work across the Waterloo Battlefield and in the process support veterans and serving military personnel with their recovery, education and transition to civilian life.

The charity was founded by Mark and fellow Coldstream Guards officer Charlie Foinette, Both men had studied archaeology before joining the army and serving in Afghanistan. Their frontline service convinced them that getting veterans involved in archaeology could be a useful way to help them along the road to recovery and wellbeing.

**Waterloo Uncovered** is comprised of five partner organisations: The Centre for Battlefield Archaeology at the University of Glasgow, L-P Archaeology, Service Public de Wallonie, Ghent University and University College Roosevelt/University of Utrecht.

For the first time this year, links with some of the project’s academic partners, including the University of Utrecht, mean that participants on the dig will be able to work towards gaining Universal Learning Credits that will count towards academic courses under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).