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### 27 YEAR OLD VETERAN TURNS HIS LIFE AROUND IN 2016

**“My children saw the angry version of Dad. My wife kept saying she wanted her husband back because I was massively different,” said Heritage Heroes Veteran David Teague**

**Following participation in the Heritage Heroes programme David secures a new job and a new outlook on life.**

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2016**

Last Christmas was a very different affair for wounded veteran David Teague. Struggling to cope with crippling anxiety, he would barely leave his home. Less than 12 months later, and thanks to a partnership between Help for Heroes and the Canal and River Trust, he will be spending this Christmas in full-time employment and with a newborn son.

David, 27, was only 16 when he joined the Royal Engineers in 2005. Hoping to see the world and learn a trade, he spent five years abroad in Germany, did two tours of Afghanistan and was also deployed to Jordan and Austria.

His life was turned upside down when, following his return from Afghanistan, he was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). From being active, outgoing and playing army rugby, he found himself feeling constantly on edge and anxious and he started to withdraw from society.

“I lost confidence and couldn’t make decisions for myself. I had massive social anxiety being around people. I was a bit of a loner if I’m honest, I didn’t have many friends. But I liked it that way, I kept myself to myself. It was really difficult for my family because I wasn’t the man they used to know. My children kept seeing the angry version of Dad. My wife kept saying she wanted her husband back because I was massively different,” said David Teague.

Earlier this year, David spent time on the [Heritage Heroes](#) programme, a partnership between the Canal & River Trust and Help for Heroes. Heritage Heroes is an ambitious canal restoration and career recovery programme for wounded, injured or

sick servicemen, women and veterans. David took part in the first phase of the project in the Cotswolds. This was the platform he needed to get back on track.

The project, made possible by £500,000 funding from players of [People's Postcode Lottery](#), aims to train wounded, injured and sick service personnel, veterans and their families for an accredited qualification as they restore forgotten canals across the country.

Being part of the project was a huge benefit to David's recovery and just one month after it finished, he landed a job as a delivery driver with online supermarket, Ocado.

David explained: "Heritage Heroes was the best thing I ever did because it got me out of the house and back into a routine. It gave me something to aim for and brought me back to the real world. I started socialising again and that was a huge thing for me. All of us doing it, we had different injuries but yet we were all in the same boat. It encouraged me to put myself out there again.

"It took me a long time to turn a corner and be in the right place but it's finally happened. If it wasn't for Help for Heroes support and the confidence they gave me, I never would have secured a job I love. I needed to get myself sorted otherwise I'd have ended up on the streets. I pushed myself out of my comfort zone because I realised I needed to provide for, and support my family."

David is now looking forward to Christmas and new year with his wife Danica, daughter Claire-Florence and their newborn son Ben-William.

"If you'd have told me 12 months ago I'd be this happy, I'd have said there was no chance. I was in such a bad state. I'm nowhere near the person I used to be and I have a sense of purpose. All I wanted to do was get to a stage where I can support my family again. I've reached that and more, all thanks to Help for Heroes and Heritage Heroes.

"2017 is looking bright for me. Ocado have offered me more opportunities to keep climbing the ladder which is a massive boost for me and I'm excited about what is ahead."

More information about the project and how to get involved can be found here: [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteer/heritage-heroes](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteer/heritage-heroes)

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

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For interviews with David Teague contact Gemma Attew, on 07773 161 208 or [gemma.attew@helpforheroes.org.uk](mailto:gemma.attew@helpforheroes.org.uk)

**Images available at:** [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7wbx78tqnkrbtd1/AAATHd-wiVNDys\\_E5tcNp4YBa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7wbx78tqnkrbtd1/AAATHd-wiVNDys_E5tcNp4YBa?dl=0)

**Heritage Heroes video with interview of David Teague available at:** <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-campaigns/heritage-heroes>

**Further information about the project's 'Dream Fund' award win available at:** <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/news/canals-and-veterans-come-together>

### **About Help for Heroes**

Help for Heroes offers comprehensive support to those who have suffered life-changing injuries and illnesses while serving our country. This support is provided through grants direct to our Heroes and their families, grants to other charities and through four Help for Heroes Recovery Centres across the UK. A recent study launched in January 2016 by Help for Heroes and King's College London found of the 750,000 men and women who served as Regulars between 1991 and 2014, at least 66,000 need long term support.

[www.helpforheroes.org.uk](http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk)

@HelpforHeroes

### **About Canal & River Trust**

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites.

We believe that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives* and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)

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