

2021

Little Troopers

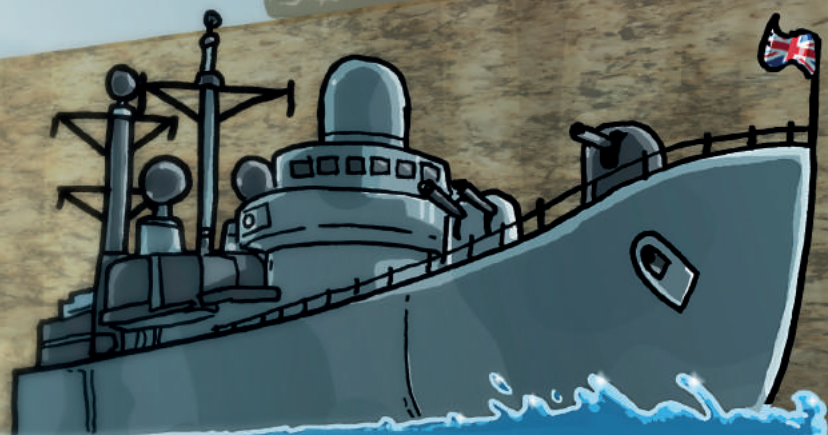
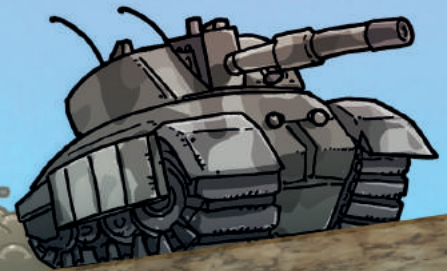
HIGHLIGHTS



2021 marked our ten-year anniversary and despite the challenges presented by the pandemic we proudly supported thousands of military children. More than 9,000 children attended one of our events or received resources directly in the post, our online resources were downloaded 4,200 times and 700 new schools signed up to our Little Troopers at School programme.

**Group Captain Andy Turk DFC ADC MA,
RAF Station Commander
at RAF Valley, said:**

"The challenges faced by Service children, such as frequent house and school moves and separation from parents with deployments on operations, can be daunting for them. The support provided by Little Troopers helps make their lives that bit better and we are extremely thankful for their hard work."



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CHRISTMAS SMILES

In December 2021, more than 6,000 service personnel were deployed on military operations around the world. To support children whose parents were serving away from home at Christmas, we ran our annual 'Christmas Smiles' campaign. Alongside a series of events, online resources and giveaways, we partnered with the Build-A-Bear Foundation to distribute 2,000 free teddy bears to military children whose parents were deployed. We worked directly with military units to reach the children most in need, as well as posting out individual bears.

"It has really put a smile on his face as he's really struggling with his daddy being deployed this Christmas."

Major Jon Ryan from the Mission Ready Training Centre,
"Having a small gift such as a teddy to hold on to when they [military children] are feeling low or anxious, due to their father or mother being far away, brings some much-needed comfort."

"My little boy was sad and asking for his daddy to be home so the bear got delivered at the right time"



LITTLE TROOPERS GAZETTE

In response to the pandemic, we launched a newspaper called the Little Troopers Gazette. The Gazette is packed with content written by military children and is then posted to other military children to read at home or in school. The initiative shows the children of our Armed Forces that they are part of a special community of other little troopers who all share similar experiences. In 2021 we produced two editions and posted 2,500 free copies.

One of our contributors commented: "I love the Little Troopers Gazette because it includes lots of stories from children like myself! There aren't any magazines or newspapers out there that are just for military children! It's extra special!"



SQUAD

In September 2021, Little Troopers launched series one of SQUAD – a new podcast for military teenagers. The podcast is the first of its kind to hand over the microphone to real military teens who share their experience of growing up in the Armed Forces community.

The podcast was recorded in London and presented by TV and radio broadcaster Katie Thistleton and Thom Smith, a professional rugby player who grew up as a military child. Fifteen military teens took part in the eight-episode series, with eight of them attending a one-day recording at a studio in London.

In the first two months, 900 people had listened to the podcast.

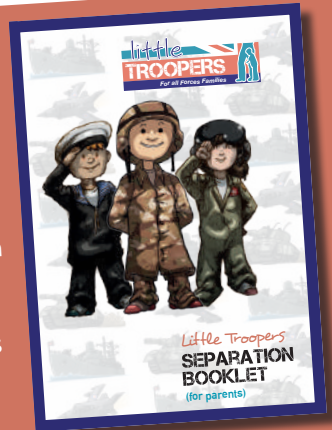
Daisy, one of the podcast guests, commented:

"Being a guest on the Little Troopers podcast has been an amazing experience. I loved meeting other young people from military families who've had similar experiences to me and hearing their stories. I hope any military teenagers listening get a sense that they are not alone; that there are other people out there who can relate to your experiences and are going through the same things as you – whether that's making new friends, having a parent away from home or moving school."



LITTLE TROOPERS SEPARATION PACKS

The Little Troopers Separation Pack was one of the first resources we created. In 2021 we sent out 1,100 packs to families experiencing separation or deployment. Each pack is full of resources and useful activities for both the child and the parent. As well as posting packs to individual families, we work directly with military units and welfare teams who use the packs to support their own activities.



Parent: "The pack really helped my little girl... Every day she loved doing the chuff chart and it helped alleviate her anxiety about how long it was until Daddy was coming home. She also stuck the hero frame next to her bed and chatted to Daddy every night."

Flight Sergeant, Jane Corban, at RAF Brize Norton:
"The Little Troopers Separation Pack is a really easy resource for us to use and has proved really popular with families. We distribute them to families as part of our pre-deployment information as well as giving them to any children struggling with separation due to military exercises or living unaccompanied. The feedback from families has been excellent and parents now know to come and ask for one if they have a period of separation coming up. The pack has lots of great activities to help children feel special and keep them occupied while their parent is away."



LITTLE TROOPERS TREASURES

Free app for British Armed Forces families... helping you stay connected even though separated by miles

Little Troopers will never miss a bedtime story from their serving parent again!

- RECORD STORIES
- RECORD MEMORIES
- SUPPORTING RESOURCES TO PRINT AT HOME

Search Little Troopers Treasures on your device app store to download

HarperCollins Children's Books

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LITTLE TROOPERS TREASURES

Little Troopers Treasures is one of our charity's core initiatives to help keep serving parents connected to their children, even when they are miles apart. At its heart is a free story recording app that families can download and use on their tablet devices. Our book content is provided by Harper Collins and serving parents record videos of themselves reading for their children to watch back again and again while they are away. Since its launch more than 8,000 stories have been recorded and shared.

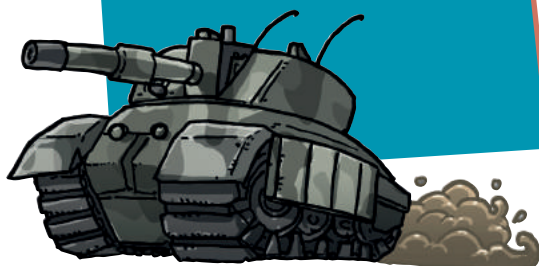
In 2021 we ran a competition for a military child to write a story, which we had professionally illustrated and published on the app, as well as posting 100 free copies to families over Christmas. We also gave away several tablets to children who had parents due to deploy soon.

"An incredible app that allows him to hear my voice and hopefully gives him the reassurance that mummy is thinking of him especially when we are apart."

"It brings us together as a family"

"I can't tell how much Harry loves seeing and hearing his daddy tell him a story when he misses him so much and it also gives me a few minutes to gather myself together from the madness of the day without daddy. THANK YOU!"

"It will really make a difference when I am deployed. Knowing my son will still be able to listen to stories whilst I am away makes me very happy!"



LITTLE TROOPERS AT SCHOOL

2021 was an important year for our Little Troopers at School programme. Thanks to funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust and the Veterans Foundation we were able to run a

virtual event for primary schools, launch brand new resources for secondary schools and launch a new podcast for military teenagers. We also partnered with the Welsh Local Government Association to send our resources to all Welsh primary schools with service pupils.



VIRTUAL WORKSHOP



More than 3,600 children from 250 primary school attended our virtual workshop and the feedback from schools was overwhelmingly positive. 98% schools said they thought the workshop was beneficial and 100% said they would benefit from using Little Troopers resources again.

Pontprennau School in Cardiff:

"Service children have unique circumstances and having their needs recognised is important for their well-being and academic progress. Little Troopers have been able to shine a light on our Service Children and the children thoroughly enjoyed the activities."

St Michaels Primary School in Colchester:

"The Little Troopers workshop provided a great opportunity to spend quality time with and celebrate our service pupils. They walked away from the afternoon recognising their special strengths and feeling appreciated as a part of the community."

Pomphett School in Plymouth:

"The children had a fantastic morning with well thought out activities and great resources. The presenters were excellent, very engaging and fun. The children definitely benefited from coming together as a unique group of children."

Kings Lodge School in Wiltshire:

"The roadshow was of great benefit to our service children as they were able to talk about their experience of service life and the feelings that go with this.... It has given me the opportunity to support them in a very practical way."



SECONDARY SCHOOL RESOURCES

In 2021 we added new downloadable lesson plans and activities to our free online Resource Hub and launched a new Forces Life Club pack. We also created a military child wellbeing course template, which explores some of the more challenging aspects of military life. In 2022 we will be adding an online toolbox to our website to use as a starting point to help them make the most of our materials.

Sarah Thomsett, Service Family Coordinator, explains: "It's not always easy to offer the same level of day-to-day pastoral support in secondary school. The Forces Life Club gives us a reason to regularly bring our service children together and encourage them to talk to about their experiences. It helps them to feel part of a community and also gives us the opportunity to spot when additional support is needed. It's another valuable channel of communication between the school and service families.

"We are already seeing a really positive impact on our service pupils who are growing in confidence as they recognise that being a military child is not a negative thing but something they are incredibly proud of. The Forces Life Club and Little Troopers Secondary School Resource Hub have given us lots of tools and new ideas to help make sure our service children feel recognised, included and proud of their identity."

Poppy Priestley, a teacher from Oakhampton Catholic School, said:

"The well-being course is exactly the sort of thing that would be beneficial for us. We've got a large whole school focus at the moment about well-being and mental health, particularly post-COVID."

