



Never Such Innocence (NSI) Invites Service Children to have their Voices Heard

Overview

Over the last 6 years, NSI has found that poetry, art, speech and song are powerful mediums for young people to share their thoughts and feelings on conflict and its impact around the world. As part of their work, NSI is inviting service children to share what it means to them to have their mum, dad, uncle, aunt, granny, grandpa, brother, sister or guardian serve in the Armed Forces. [Voices of Armed Forces Children](#) welcomes service children, 5-18 years old, to use creative arts to share what the Royal Navy, Army or RAF means to them. The project asks young people to explore the words courage and honour and/ or to share how it feels when a family member leaves for an extended period or are wounded, injured or sick.

The work of NSI takes three forms: workshops, roadshows and an international competition. NSI delivers free workshops (in person and online) to schools across the UK, providing an accessible outlet for young people to share their thoughts, happy, proud, sad and any fears and anxieties. Pupils learn how to use the creative arts as an outlet for addressing challenging topics, promoting positive mental health, confidence and self esteem. Following the workshops, young people are invited to community roadshow events - a coming together of community leaders, to hear what the young people have created. Finally, their brilliant work can be entered into our international competition. One participant said, *'This was the first time I felt that my voice was heard.'* The impact of the project is profound in the lives of young people.

Not only do service children have an opportunity to share their thoughts, the project allows families to have open conversations about how their children might be feeling. A couple of weeks before their dad was set to deploy, one such family sat around the table and started talking about what was coming. The children were invited to draw and write what they were feeling. The work they created was powerful and enabled the family to have an important conversation, which brought them closer than they had ever felt. Not only was the immediate family impacted, but it was uplifting to the extended family too.

To date, NSI has heard from over 15,000 young people across 60 countries. They recognise how vital it is that service children have their voices heard and invite them to join this conversation.

Current Partners

We are working with all Families Federations, Service Pupil Champions, Home Command, Reading Force, SCiPA, MKC, Norton House at DNRC, Submariner Memorial, SSCE, NAM and members of all three branches to engage service children in their communities. We've had videos of support from General Sir Nicholas Patrick Carter, GCB, CBE, DSO, ADC Gen, Lieutenant General Tyrone Urch CBE, and Command Corporal Major Steve Parker.

Activities with Armed Forces

Previous Roadshows and Workshops at:

HMS Iron Duke, Portsmouth

RAF Valley, Anglesey

RAF Odiham, Hampshire

RAF Leeming, North Yorkshire

RAF Lossiemouth, Moray

RAF Museum, Hendon

HMS Caroline, Belfast

Warminster Garrison, Wiltshire

RAF Museum, Cosford

Royal Hospital Chelsea - Intergenerational workshops with pensioners

SOAS London in partnership with Army for '*A Fight for Freedom*'

Ministry of Defense, London - Triforce youth engagement teams present

Invictus UK Trials 2019 - held workshops for family of competitors and showcase the children's work at the trusts with a special awards ceremony

'*A Fight for Freedom*' Bonus strand of the 2019/20 competition, in partnership with the Army. Recognised the contributions by African and Caribbean soldiers during the Second World War.

A 2019/20 Competition Winner had song recorded by Army band in Scotland as part of the 2020 Army and the Arts Fringe programme

2020/21 Activities

RAF Leeming Workshops - September 2020

NAM Poetry Workshops with Army Veteran and NSI Poet in Residence, Clive Sanders - October 2020

Helensburgh Workshops and Roadshow - February 2021

RAF Brize Norton (TBC)

Home Command (TBC)

Reading Force Workshops (TBC)

Army Foundation College Workshops and Roadshow (TBC)

Song of the Service Child - March/April 2021 for Armed Forces Day

Submariner Memorial Words of Remembrance



My great grandad- Theo Brush served as a Royal Irish Fusilier. He was a larger than life character, full of joy and loved life. He joined the army in 1937 and spent a large portion of his time serving in Malta. He was captured during World War 2 in the Dulopeguese Islands and held as a POW from 1943-1945 in a Stalag in Germany. The amazing thing is he met his brother Josh Brush at the POW camp who he hadn't seen in four years!!

During his time as a POW he was given the job of hunting deer for the guards and then preparing it for cooking. He had worked as a butcher before joining the army and was good at carving the meat and feeding the starving guards. It was while hunting for deer that my great grandad and a few other men planned their escape through the forest!! Luckily they succeeded.

I never got to meet my great grandad - as he passed away before I was born. But I have grown up listening to wonderful stories about him. I have so many questions I would love to ask him about his time during the war. My painting was based on a photo of him when he joined the army. I put his medals along the bottom... they are a symbol of all he accomplished and I am so proud that he served his country - he is an inspiration to me!



The drawing 'Behind Each Man' is meant to show both the humanity and deliberate anonymity of the First World War soldier, with more attention paid to the surroundings, the uniform and the backpack, than the face of the man himself. I was so honoured to have been selected as 2018's first prize winner in the 11-14 age group, for this picture I completed when I was 13 years old.

Morrigan Atherton Forslaxo

This is normal for me.

This is normal for me, but some people don't know how it feels.
It can get rough sometimes, children tease because I'm different.
Dad is not there.
I watch the sea for him, I stand still and stare.

This is normal for me, but it might be different if you stayed around a lot.
Christmas, birthdays, holidays, New Years, when we have been apart.
Missing someone so much I have no words for being so sad.
Separation and silence.

This is normal for me, counting days until you are gone,
No mark on the calendar to count down your return.
You had to leave me in hospital, I knew you had to go.
You do such a good job and you were hurting too I know.

This is normal for me, it would help if you knew how it feels.
To feel special, to be part of my family and community.
Every time I see you I am filled with such joy.
You're important to me, you're important to everybody, our country.
I still watch the sea. This is normal for me.

www.neversuchinnocence.com

President: Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence KCV O CB ADC(P)
Registered Charity No. 1156148 | Company No. 8680319



www.neversuchinnocence.com

President: Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence KCVO CB ADC(P)
Registered Charity No. 1156148 | Company No. 8680319

Artwork: Charlie from Northern Ireland painted a portrait of his grandfather and wrote a story about his life; 2018 winning artwork by Morrigan about soldiers in the First World War; 2019 winning poem by Jacob - written about his father who is a submariner.

Left Column: Rt Honorable Theresa May MP, Air Chief Marshal Michael Wigston, CBE and Lady Lucy French with RAF Salon Orchestra at CWGC Headquarters; Royal Hospital Chelsea Pensioner working with pupils for intergenerational workshop; Pupils in front of tanks at Warminster Garrison.

Right Column: Pupils performing in Wren Chapel at Royal Hospital Chelsea; Junior Soldier Ben reading his speech on '*A Fight for Freedom*' at the Ministry of Defence; Army Foundation College pupils at the Ministry of Defence; Pupils performing a song at RAF Lossiemouth.

All of the artwork and pictures will be attached in a separate email - if you would like any other information about them please let me know.