



Talking points

Silent Conversation 1: Excerpt from A Pacifist in the Cadets

published on <http://antimili-youth.net>

E, who wishes to remain anonymous, wrote this about her experience in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF).

'When E first saw pupils walking down from the school along the road carrying weapons (to the firing range, as it turned out) – she thought “SHIT! KIDS WITH GUNS – WHAT’S THAT ALL ABOUT!”

Today – it is “the norm” for E, she doesn’t even give it a second glance as it’s just an everyday occurrence. Now E or, as she is now called, Sergeant H hands the guns to the kids of 13 and 14 and puts the bullets into their bullet holders – even though she says, that at the time it feels normal and ordinary – when she thinks about it, it feels wrong.

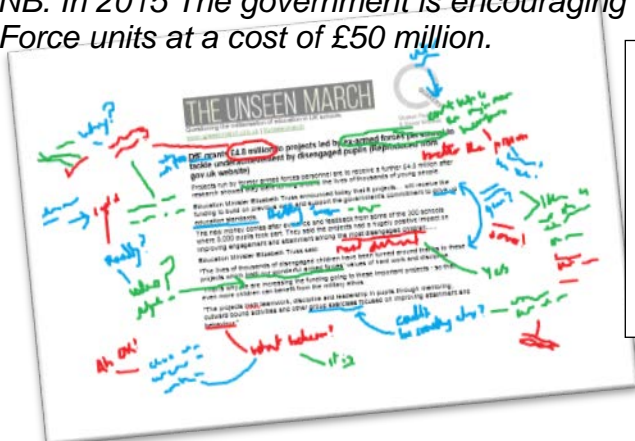
At seventeen, E went into this private school at Lower 6th [and] was handed a uniform.... She says they would not have the same opportunities to participate – or in her own case – to teach – rock climbing, archery and so on – all funded by the MOD. She LOVES the sport and the activities.

But all the activities start and finish with marching and saluting – E does not salute (she cannot, as she refuses to wear the beret!). But, she says, most of cadets and the trainers put on their “Army heads” as soon as they put on their uniforms.

The trainers – all ex-military ... – shout and bark out orders, calling the young ones “Scum Bags!” – “Get over here!” etc. But so do the six- formers who earn their stripes – E went from Lance Corporal, to Corporal to Sergeant H; she now has 3 stripes, this gives her (in her words) status, respect and closer affinity with the staff authority within the CCF and younger pupils will now take her orders.

E would not be able to complete her A level PE course without joining the CCF... But, although she loads the semi-automatics for the children she is in charge of – who then shoot 10-rounds at a time at human cut-outs. E will only fire the old wooden rifles, one bullet at a time, at countryside scenes or a circular target. She was a pacifist when she went to the school, and considers herself a pacifist still; something that caused quite a dilemma for her – ‘should a pacifist join the CCF?’ ... E feels strongly, that what these young people are involved in is APPALLING!

NB. In 2015 The government is encouraging more state schools to start Combined Cadet Force units at a cost of £50 million.



SILENT CONVERSATION

Without speaking, read the material. Write questions and comments on what you read. Respond to others’ comments and questions by writing next to them (and so on!)

Silent Conversation 2: Drills for peace in WWI

In 1915, Charles Evans, Headmaster of Leighton Park School, wrote of the dangers of training that “accustoms [boys] to war as an inevitable method of settling disputes in national life”

“Youth is not the age of militarism; it is the age of ideals; when a boy responds to the heroic in war it is to the spirit of heroism not to the spirit of war that he responds.”

“We who object to militarist methods as educationally unsound, rigid, cramping and biasing, must endeavour to base our own efforts on defensible principles.”

“The number of militarists of the type of Lord Roberts will be enormously increased [after the war]; the number of men, that is to say, who honestly believe that in military and naval force alone the safety of the country lies. This fact needs but to be stated but to carry conviction. But on the other hand the rest of men will not be merely unconcerned; there will be many men- thousands I believe, fathers of men in the trenches, men too who come back from war on land or sea- who see the horror the thing, the folly of it all, so strongly that they will no consent that their children’s lives shall be dominated by militarist ideals. Pacifist training for boys will be sought by many who will be determined in their intention of

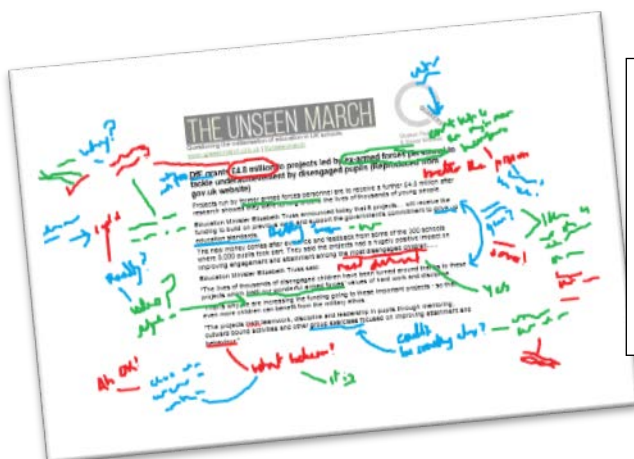


Field Marshal Lord Roberts was a famous advocate of conscription. Image by Alexander Bassano [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

giving no military bias to their sons; they will want a whole training for boys, but one also that shall turn out not trammelled in thought by an upbringing that includes a training in the art of killing, and that accustoms them to war as an inevitable method of settling disputes.”



British cadets in 1916, By Photographer unknown / unattributed (Alma Mater Colcestriensis, 1916) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons



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Silent Conversation 3: DfE grants £4.8 million to projects led by ex-armed forces personnel to tackle underachievement by disengaged pupils

(Reproduced from gov.uk website)

Projects run by former armed forces personnel are to receive a further £4.8 million after research showed they were turning around the lives of thousands of young people.

Education Minister Elizabeth Truss announced today that 6 projects... will receive the funding to build on previous work and support the government’s commitment to drive up education standards.

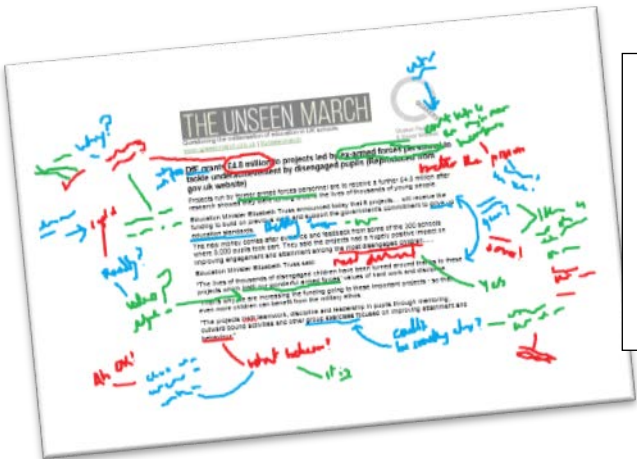
The new money comes after evidence and feedback from some of the 300 schools where 8,000 pupils took part. They said the projects had a hugely positive impact on improving engagement and attainment among the most disengaged children.....

Education Minister Elizabeth Truss said:

“The lives of thousands of disengaged children have been turned around thanks to these projects which instil our wonderful armed forces’ values of hard work and discipline.

“That is why we are increasing the funding going to these important projects - so that even more children can benefit from the military ethos.

“The projects instil teamwork, discipline and leadership in pupils through mentoring, outward bound activities and other group exercises focused on improving attainment and behaviour.”



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Silent Conversation 4: Veterans for Peace UK Letter

In a letter to *The Guardian* in 2010, six veterans expressed their concern that the tone of remembrance events had changed. Ask your students what they think of the letter:

“The Poppy Appeal is once again subverting Armistice Day. A day that should be about peace and remembrance is turned into a month-long drum roll of support for current wars. This year’s campaign has been launched with showbiz hype. The true horror and futility of war is forgotten and ignored. The public are being urged to wear a poppy in support of ‘our Heroes’. There is nothing heroic about being blown up in a vehicle.



There is nothing heroic about being shot in an ambush and there is nothing heroic about fighting in an unnecessary conflict.

Remembrance should be marked with the sentiment ‘Never Again’.”

www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/nov/05/poppies-and-heroes-remembrance-day



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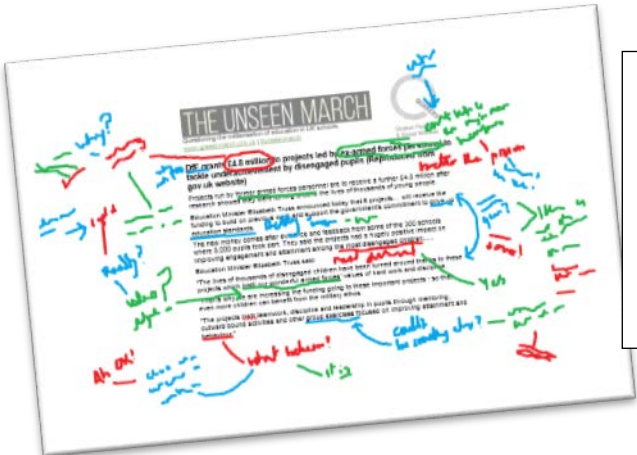
Silent Conversation 5: The Army Cadet Force

(Reproduced from gov.uk website)

For action and adventure, fun and friendship, the Army Cadet Force (ACF) is hard to beat. With around 41,000 cadets (aged 12 to 18) and 9,500 adult volunteers in 1,700 locations in every corner of the UK, the ACF is one of the country's largest voluntary youth organisations. It is also one of the oldest, and celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2010.

We welcome boys and girls from the age of 12 (and in at least year 8 at school), of all abilities and backgrounds and, through a broad range of exciting, challenging, educational and adventurous activities, help them develop physically, mentally and socially. Some of our activities have a military theme, others have more of a community focus.

Combining military and community activities in this way, enables us to offer our young people a unique blend of personal development opportunities, all designed to promote fun and friendship while also helping them prepare for success in their chosen path in life, whatever that might turn out to be.



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Silent Conversation 6: David Cameron's Foreword to *The British Armed Forces Learning Resource 2014*

Britain's Armed Forces have an incredibly proud history. For centuries they have defended the people of these islands, at sea, on land and in the air – fighting off invasion, protecting our allies, safeguarding our trade and promoting our interests and values.

Some of these battles are famous. Trafalgar, Ypres, the Battle of Britain and D-Day are all rightly remembered for shaping the world we live in. Most people in the UK today will have relatives who served in one of those conflicts – and every single one of us benefits from the freedom they secured.

This teaching pack doesn't just offer an introduction to that proud past; it explains why the Armed Forces still matter now and in the future.

First, it shows the reach of Armed Forces. Across the world today, men and women are serving as bravely as any in our history. Sailors are on the seas defending our trade from piracy. Soldiers are giving our allies the training they need. Airmen are coming to the aid of victims in the most dangerous conflict zones. And all of them are working to defend us from the biggest threat to our security: terrorism. What's more, they are ambassadors at home and abroad, from helping us to deliver a peaceful Olympic Games to extending our diplomatic impact.

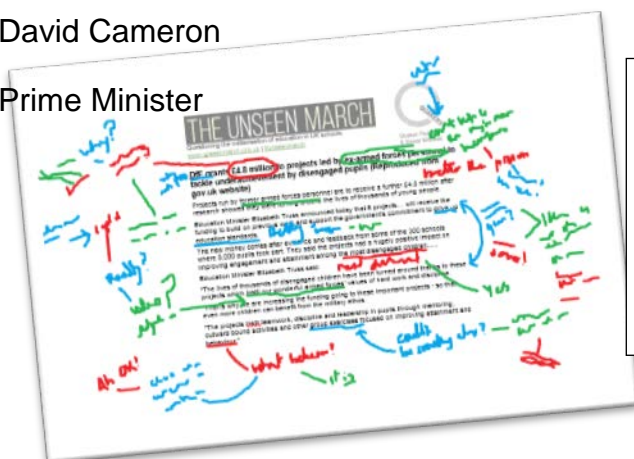
Second, this pack demonstrates the values our Armed Forces embody. Their focus on duty, service, integrity and teamwork – these are the British values we hold dearly. Reservists reflect these in their workplaces. Cadets reflect them in their schools. And around the world, the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Marines stand for freedom, fairness, tolerance and responsibility.

Third, it shows just how much we owe these men and women. There is not a single person in this country who is not a direct beneficiary of their sacrifices and bravery. We are in their debt; and we should be profoundly grateful for what they do.

This pack is written by those who understand the ethos of service and sacrifice required of all those who wear the Queen's uniform. It is structured to work with your studies in citizenship and history, raising questions and areas for discussion, as well as linking to other resources and publications. I hope this will be the beginning of your interest in Britain's Armed Forces – the finest and bravest in the world.

David Cameron

Prime Minister



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