



LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –  
OUTDOORS



Nicole Courtney-Leaver

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## Friends of HighGround: PROFILE

Nicole Courtney-Leaver is a TV news producer who helps us with our media output and is also on the new Steering Committee of the Friends of HighGround.

### Tell us a bit about yourself.

I was born in South Africa in the 60s. My Dad was a well-known radio personality (No TV in those days) and my Mum worked for a newspaper. I grew up thinking that I'd be on the stage so it came as a great shock to everyone (and me) when I started working for the foreign press. It was at the height of the Apartheid struggle and quite a violent time so my parents were secretly relieved when I was invited to work in London. It was short lived joy though as the first war in Iraq started a few months after I got there and I was shipped off to Israel to chase scud-missiles. I was delighted. Mum and Dad: not so much.

### What do you do for HighGround?

I've been helping to raise awareness through story-telling so far but am now helping to set up Friends of HighGround which is very exciting.

### What drew you to HighGround?

I was working on a project and a friend invited me to accompany her to Headley Court to see how they were using horticulture as part of their occupational therapy process. I knew immediately that HighGround had got it right. The work they do is so important because it harnesses all the natural talent and expertise of service men and women which could easily be lost, and puts it to use in a sector which is crying out for good people. We have to look after the land but it takes, dedication, discipline, planning and integrity to do it effectively. Who better to entrust it to than the people whose lives have been run on those principles?

### What is your day-job?

I work with a news industry body to ensure that news organisations are given fair access to events of public interest. It's a far cry from Sniper Alley but the basics are the same. I still find myself running towards trouble when everyone else is backing away.

### What is your most important achievement so far?

I'd love to be able to say “Look at what I did” about something exceptional but I've had a pretty adventurous time so putting one foot in front of the other and not entirely losing the plot along the way is probably the thing I am most proud of. I hope I have taught my daughter to be a survivor, to be independent and to be kind as a result of my experiences.

### What attracts you to the outdoors?

The ability to walk for miles without seeing a soul.

### What would you most like to achieve?

Tactfulness.

### What do you do to unwind?

I have tiny garden which is full of plants but devoid of design. It has moved some of my more stylish friends to tears for all the wrong reasons but pottering about in it keeps me sane and I love the fact that I can eat quite a lot of it...

For more information about HighGround's services please contact Anna Baker Cresswell

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