

Getting to know TEAM HIGHGROUND



Alex Hoppenbrouwers



LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –
OUTDOORS

1. Who are you?

I'm a fairly new member of the Trustees. Due to the small nature of HighGround I tend to get involved in all types of things. However, I tend to focus on simplifying the operations of the Charity through technology – for such a small organisation this allows us to be incredibly efficient! I also help on the sales aspect – how we get in touch with potential corporate donors.

2. Why do you support HighGround?

It's difficult to put this into a few sentences but I'll try. I believe that as a group veterans have a huge amount to offer society. The outdoors sector provides a significant opportunity for those that are practical and have spent their time in challenging outdoors environments – I believe this marriage is really well suited and HighGround enables veterans to easily take advantage of this opportunity.

3. What are the benefits of the outdoors in your opinion?

I'm a firm believer in taking a proactive approach to your mental health. Being outside has huge mental health benefits, creating a calming effect. There are then the physical health benefits of the exertion that working in the outdoors brings.

4. Do you have a connection to the military?

I have a friend that is currently serving in the Army but unlike quite a few of the Board I have no military experience, I hope this gives me a fresh and alternative perspective that adds value to the Charity.

5. What do you hope to take from your experience at HighGround?

For me, helping our beneficiaries is the main takeaway from my experience of HighGround. In addition to this, in 10 or so years time it's my intention to start a charity. I have no idea what it would do apart from enabling underprivileged people to increase their skills or become more self-sufficient – an incredibly broad target!

6. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Having spent time in Venture Capital (investing in startups) and now working for a part of the go to market team for a tech startup you can probably guess that there is a common theme. My aim is to start a tech company in the next 3 or so years so

hopefully by 10 years time this company will be of a significant size. The startup I work for at the moment (Tinybird) helps companies with real-time data, I'd like to continue this interest and start something related to the data space.

7. Do you have any gardening tips?

I don't tend to garden that much. However, I have been growing Oyster and Lions Mane mushrooms after becoming interested in mushrooms through a Netflix documentary (I guess how all good interests start!). The key to growing mushrooms is to maintain the appropriate humidity, oxygen/carbon dioxide levels, and temperature. For me, the love of mushrooms comes from the fact that they are so healthy and have added benefits - lots of scientific papers suggesting Lions Mane has neuroprotective effects for instance.

8. What do you admire most about veterans?

I think the most admirable thing about Veterans is a 'can-do' attitude, no task is too challenging. In the UK, companies don't make enough of the opportunity to hire veterans if we compare this to the US. However, companies are catching on and seeing that here is a group of people with huge amounts of potential and grit.

9. Why would you recommend HighGround?

For our beneficiaries it enables them to rapidly gain an insight into the outdoors sector, if you are vaguely interested in the outdoors sector it will rapidly allow you to see if there is something that suits you (tree surgery, animal husbandry etc). Then once you've confirmed it is something for you, we can then get you on the path to employment in the sector. In summary, HighGround will take you from an interest in the outdoors sector to then having a job in the outdoors sector.

10. What do you enjoy most about working at HighGround?

The fact that our work directly benefits Veterans, potentially changing their lives. To go deeper into this, I think that our charity is somewhat unique in that the aim with all beneficiaries is that they will no longer need the charity. It's this ability to inspire self-sufficiency which I feel is incredibly powerful.

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

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