

A powerful new event commemorating the centenary of the end of the First World War combines music, art, poetry and prose to encourage people to seek peace and reconciliation.

*Journey Through Conflict: From Then Until Now* charts the experiences of servicemen and women in conflicts from the First and Second World Wars and the Troubles in Northern Ireland to recent campaigns, including Iraq and Afghanistan.

This performance features renowned one-handed concert pianist Nicholas McCarthy alongside veterans who will talk about their personal journey through conflict, injury and rehabilitation. The resulting performance is described as both uplifting and inspiring.

Narrating, producing and directing the event is someone who has had first-hand experience of conflict and the drive to seek peaceful resolution.

Major-General Andy Salmon CMG OBE, spent 36 years in the Royal Marines and is a former Commandant General, Head of Service. He served in many global conflicts, including The Troubles, The Falklands War, Angola, Sierra Leone, The Balkans and three tours of duty

**'Every story that we tell comes from the soul of that person'**

in Iraq, spanning 19 years.

Andy, who retired from the services in 2013 and lives on Dartmoor, says serving in the military has been no barrier to the creative side of life.

"I always viewed being creative and artistic as an essential part of everything we do," he says. "I suppose my military background does help. It's really useful in terms of knowing how to create a plan, how to build a team and knowing how to communicate with everyone," he says.

From 2008-9 Andy was the last British General in Basra, closing down the UK campaign. It was here that he used the arts to bring different groups together. "One of the ways we got together and started a constructive dialogue about the suitability of replacing the politics of conflict with the

# Performance of peace

A former Royal Marine is transforming experiences from the theatre of war into a powerful performance, says SU CARROLL



**ABOVE:**  
Major-General  
Andy Salmon  
CMG OBE

politics of hope was through music, poetry, singing, art and feasting. We would fuse some of these things together to create a completely different atmosphere and environment for people you would think are polarised."

Learning from this experience, *Journey Through Conflict* was born in 2016 and has now evolved into *Journey Through Conflict: Then and Now*.

"We hear the testimony of veterans who were scarred physically and mentally," says Andy. "We have a 96-year-old woman veteran from the Second

World War and veterans from more recent campaigns. Through voice, singing and poetry they will be telling some of their own stories of conflict.

"Our purpose is catalysing inspiring journeys and to find a way for people to express themselves from the very core of the human condition. Every story that we tell comes from the soul of that person. It does have an incredible impact." ♦

**The performance is at Clifton Cathedral, Bristol on 18 October. [journeythroughconflict.org](http://journeythroughconflict.org)**