GCF BOSNIA

FOR THE CHILDREN OF GORAŽDE

A charity dinner in the company of

General Sir Michael Rose
KCB, CBE, DSO, QGM

For the children of Goražde, Bosnia Herzegovina

ARMSTRONG WOLFE™

Wednesday 22nd March 2023

The Committee Room, The RAC, 89 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HS

General Sir Michael Rose
KCB, CBE, DSO, QGM

Often referred to as General Mike Rose, is a retired British Army General. As well as being Special Air Service Regiment commanding officer, the General was Commander UNPROFOR Bosnia in 1994 during the Yugoslav Wars.

In this capacity he oversaw the British Army's deployment to the Central Bosnian town of Goražde as part of Operation Grapple. The town's primary school is the beneficiary of the charity in remembrance of the 6 British soldiers that gave their lives on UN duty in the town.

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FOR THE CHILDREN OF GORAŽDE

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Timings for the evening:
The RAC, Pall Mall

1800 - 1900	Reception drinks: The Committee Room, 1st floor
1845	**Arrival of General Sir Michael Rose**
1900	Guests seated for dinner
1900 - 1915	**An introduction to GCF Bosnia:** Maurice Evlyn-Bufton
1915 - 1945	General Sir Michael Rose
1945	**Dinner served**
2045	Charity Presentation
2100	**Charity Art Auction**
2130 - 2200	Drinks and Exit

Who we are

GCF Bosnia is a UK-based charitable foundation which is committed to helping rejuvenate the previously war-torn town of Goražde in Bosnia. The charity specifically supports Goražde Primary School and seeks to provide a brighter future for its students and to date has raised £106,500.00

Where it all began

GCF Bosnia was founded by Maurice Evlyn-Bufton in 2013, who was previously a captain in The 1st Battalion The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment (1RGBW) in the Bosnian conflict (1992 - 1995) and is currently CEO of global financial services advisory firm, Armstrong Wolfe.

The foundation was set up in memory of four of Maurice's comrade's, Privates Ben Hinton, Philip Armstrong, Martin Dowdell, and Chris Turner who were killed on two separate incidents whilst on United Nations' duty on Operation Grapple 1994-1995 in the eastern enclave of Goražde.

In 2012 Maurice along with sixteen other former comrades of 1RGBW returned to Goražde to replace the memorials stones of their fallen comrades. On the last day of the visit the group were invited to the local primary school where they were greeted by the children singing them a song in Bosnian thanking the British Army for saving their parents and grandparents.

Moved and inspired by this gestured Maurice asked the school headmistress what can be done to help. From this discussion a commitment was born to establish an English language teaching centre and to re-establish a playing field both in memory of their fallen comrades and as an investment that would benefit the future generations of Goražde. Through his company Armstrong Wolfe, Maurice set a target to raise £25,000 to meet the schools ambitions and set up the Goražde Children's Foundation to manage these funds. The charity is committed to raising further funds for improvement to the gymnasium and resurfacing of the playground.

Changing the Narrative:
The humanitarian role of the British Army (UNPROFOR) Bosnia

The charity's aim is to raise monies for the primary school in the town, to give hope, purpose, and a better future to its children. In doing so, it honours the past and in remembrance, the six soldiers that gave their lives on United Nations service as part of the British Army's operational deployment, under the code name Operation Grapple, 1994 - 1995.

In September 1994 I was a young captain in the British Army and was privileged to be given the opportunity to join fellow officers in leading soldiers of our infantry battalion into Bosnia; an experience I will be forever grateful for. Throughout the late, hazy summer days of 1994, into autumn where the hills and valleys that surrounded the town became rich in colour with the seasonal fall, to the snow-capped peaks of winter and to early spring 1995 and new life beyond, I found myself patrolling the mountains as part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

It was a six-month period that would leave an indelible mark, adding a purpose and colour that would be stitched into my life's tapestry.

When I reflect on my time in Bosnia, an enduring memory is the deep-rooted feeling that we were hamstrung in what we could do, that the UN mandate under which we operated frustrated the impact we could have made; that we were but sightseers on others' tragedy.

My feeling was not unique, as through the years that have passed, I know many of my comrades felt the same. This haplessness was exacerbated by history quickly and rightly noting the failure of the UN mission in Bosnia, encapsulated by the massacre that the UN bore witness and responsibility in Srebrenica.

It is not surprising the feeling towards the UN in Bosnia, for those that lived through the genocide and the generations that have followed and listened to their parents and grandparents, is that the UN were accountable for this failure and other travesties that could have been avoided.

My time spent in Bosnia over the past 25 years has afforded me opportunities to speak to those from all generations and has gifted me many friends. Through on-going conversations there has been a growing understanding between us that Bosnians could, and I feel passionately should, differentiate between the failure of the United Nations and the perceived unwillingness of the foreign soldiers that made up UNPROFOR to act in accordance with humanity and prevent death and suffering.

The politicians and the bureaucrats of the world and the UN failed, but the foreign soldiers on the ground should not be found accountable or responsible for these policy and political failings.

I witnessed our soldiers act with professionalism, stretching the interpretation of the UN rules of engagement to do what they could. They were compassionate, had charity and deployed their ingenuity to support the town's people and children in a humanitarian capacity within the limits of inadequate resources.

This feeling was far better articulated in General Sir Michael Rose's foreword to my book Donkey Mail and Bully Beef:

> *"By 1994, the United Nations deployed over 23,000 young peacekeepers to Bosnia in order to deliver aid to 2.7 million people caught up in the region's three-sided civil war.*
>
> *The majority of these peacekeepers were volunteers who believed that it was their duty to help others, no matter how risky the mission. Sadly, many of them were killed or injured during the three-year period for which the war lasted, of whom seventy-two were British.*
>
> *However, their deaths were not in vain as the UN presence in Bosnia undoubtedly prevented the country from being overrun by the Serbs and, of course, without the humanitarian aid that was delivered, many more thousands of Bosnians from all sides of the conflict would have perished through hunger or disease.*
>
> *Following UN-brokered deals, the war did not end sooner because the USA - tacitly supported by NATO - armed the Bosnian Muslims in direct contravention of the UN Security Council resolutions that the international community had been signed up to in 1992 at the start of the war.*
>
> *This illegal arming of the Bosnian Muslims undoubtedly derailed the efforts of the UN to bring about peace. It caused a prolongation of the war and thereby the suffering of the people of Bosnia, and without any significant territorial gain for the state of Bosnia.*
>
> *It was a clear betrayal, of not only the UN peacekeepers and the people of Bosnia, but also of the international convention. It is also clear that if the USA had allowed President Izetbegovic to sign up to the Owen-Stoltenberg peace plan in July 1994, the Srebrenica massacre would never have happened.*
>
> *This book serves as a useful reminder of the confusion, difficulties and dangers faced by those brave soldiers serving in the UN mission in Bosnia, at a time when the international community lacked strategic coherence. It also serves as a moving testimony to the four British soldiers who died whilst serving with the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire, and Wiltshire Regiment (RGBW) in 1994"*

The memorials to Ben Hinton and Fergus Rennie, high above the town of Goražde

Early morning view from the memorial site

On the final day of my September 2022 visit, back in Sarajevo, I happened upon a museum in a side street near the Old Town, the Museum of Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide 1992 - 1995.

Entering the museum, I was unsure what to expect. It was brutal in its presentation of the cruelty, callousness, inhumaneness that had been showered onto the Bosnian people during the war. Each room had you wanting to move through quickly, but you found yourself entrenched, captivated, reading, rereading, in the hope perhaps at the final reading what you had read would change. It was unashamedly laying before you inhumanity.

It simultaneously made me feel proud for what we had done but angered at what we failed to do (as UNPROFOR). Towards its end you are confronted by a wall dedicated to Srebrenica, and a leading headline 'The failure of the United Nations'.

At its reception I gave thanks for the work they had done in bringing this museum to being, to be responded to in perfect English by one of the two founders of the museum. We found common ground quickly and she listened with enthusiasm about the charity's efforts.

Soon afterwards I found myself with coffee in hand, talking to her co-founder Suada, a former colonel in the Bosnian Army. Suada agreed with my thoughts regarding the role of the UN and that of the soldiers tasked to act within its policies.

We parted with a meaningful handshake, and a promise that a few of my books would be sent to be sold with the monies to go to the museum. Suada left me with an open invitation that he would happily help me if he could in my efforts.

A few days later I tip-tapped an email to Suada:

> *"It was great to meet you and many congratulations on your museum, it is impactful, meaningful and should be visited by all that come to see your beautiful country. What happened in recent history must not be lost in the mists of time.*
>
> *As we parted, you kindly offered to help me in my efforts in Bosnia. Since 1992, 59 British soldiers have lost their lives on UN duty in Bosnia, and countless more have been injured on service in a foreign land in the name of peace. During their time, and mine in Goražde, we did what we could from a humanitarian perspective to help. In my own case the legacy is alive today in what I am doing for the school in Goražde (www.gcfbosnia.org). This is linked to the remembrance of the six British soldiers that gave their lives on UN duty in Goražde 1994 - 1995 and all those that served on peacekeeping operations in the city.*
>
> *As we chatted over coffee, the many failures of the UN mission in Bosnia are not questioned, and the people of Bosnia have justification to hold this view. The failure, however, to recognise the humanitarian work undertaken by foreign soldiers deployed to Bosnia as part of UNPROFOR is something I feel passionately about and feel there exists a need to provide a perspective on this contribution and to recognise the good done by so many. Here, therefore, is what you could do for me:*
>
> *Would you consider having a small display in your museum for the British Army's contributions (and specifically, our young soldiers) as part of UNPROFOR, focused on the humanitarian work undertaken, presenting a positive perspective?*

> *In doing so, I feel the loss of comrades, the mental scars carried by many, the service given by young British soldiers sent to a foreign land will perhaps provide a renewed sense of purpose and pride in what was achieved despite the UN, rather than because of it.*
>
> *If this request could be accommodated, I am confident I can provide British Army uniforms, equipment, and many photographs. I write in hope, and not with expectation."*

Within 24 hours I had a reply:

> *"Dearest Maurice, it was great to meet you too. We are very grateful and pleasantly surprised by your email, and more so the enthusiasm you have for our country to help us. We would welcome the opportunity to add the presentation as you have outlined at our museum, indeed we would be extremely grateful for your help to ensure we can do so.*
>
> *The role of the British army throughout the Bosnian conflict has been remembered for the humanitarian work, undertaken in arduous conditions. This ran alongside the role they sought to play to provide security and protection. Without doubt we built a level of trust and respect for the British army.*
>
> *I saw many, many humanitarian aid convoys entering Bosnia and Herzegovina and how the British army protected and then dispersed these important convoys and rations to my people. The private soldiers on the ground-built relationships with us.*
>
> *They were professional but always friendly, forging friendships and showing compassion, especially for the plight of our children. Their medical help will always be remembered, as will their undoubted professionalism as one of the best equipped and trained forces in the world.*
>
> *I am sure if their mandate was different, if the United Nations had not restricted them so heavily, they would have provided far more help and protection. I know from those I spoke to then and now this was their wish, but we are thankful still for all they did."*

Suada, Museum Founder and former Colonel, BiH Army.

I was overwhelmed with this response, and with this possibility, came a determination to make it happen. However, time is of the essence, as on 29 April 2023, a new memorial to the six fallen British soldiers will be unveiled in Goražde in the very near future. Our aim is to get 50 old comrades who served in Goražde to Bosnia to attend, staying initially in Sarajevo.

My hope is we can encourage this cohort to visit the museum before the opening of the memorial, and as they pass through its corridors, see the small presentation recognising their service and contribution.

We now concentrate our efforts to bring together 50 old comrades, and a team of riders to head to Bosnia in April 2023. We aim to raise sufficient funds to revamp the school's gymnasium, to be named The Queen Elizabeth Hall. A fitting tribute to those old comrades who referred to Her Majesty as 'the boss', to whom they swore allegiance.

Museum of Crimes Against Humanity And Genocide 1992 - 1995
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Goražde Memorial Ride: Operation Grapple Revisited

27th - 30th April 2023

There will be two travel packages available:

1. **Charity Ride Package** - open to all
2. **Memorial Package** - open to servicemen and women and their families that served in Goražde

Itinerary

Day 1: London Heathrow to Sarajevo; cycle team and group early evening briefing; free time and dinner, drinks in the Old Town; accommodation Hotel Europe, central Sarajevo

Day 2: 80KM cycle ride from Sarajevo to Goražde, with a welcome celebratory finish at the primary school in Goražde; prize giving and school visit; opportunities for exploring the town, followed by dinner and drinks in the town or the mountain lodges of Bijele Vode

Day 3: memorial service to honour the 6 fallen and those that served, with the unveiling of a memorial high above the town of Goražde. This will be followed by a reception at Bijele Vode, followed by time to visit to aged observation posts, walk through the town and/or a scenic journey down the breath-taking Drina River to Visegrad. Back to Sarajevo for drinks and dinner.

Day 4: visit to the 1984 Winter Olympic village; transfer to Sarajevo airport - return to the U.K.

Charity Ride Package - £895

» 3 night's accommodation (double room/single) (bed/breakfast), transport/ minibus, subsistence (snacks/lunch), purchase of a bike to be donated to the school.

Memorial Package - £295

» Twin room option £355 single room option £415 double room/single option to include 3 night's accommodation (bed/breakfast), transport/minibus, snacks/ lunch.

Flights are not included - please follow these steps to book your flight

» **Step 1** Book your flights and inform us by e-mail at **info@gcfbosnia.org** that you will be attending.

» **Step 2** Send confirmation of your flight & details to us.

» **Step 3** You will then receive information as to how to pay for your trip.

» Flights are not included in the above costings and are to be booked direct. Transfers from the Airport to Hotel Europe will be arranged for those booked on 06:00 Austrian Airlines flight from Heathrow Terminal 2 arriving in Sarajevo at 13:40 on Thursday 27th April.

CGF Bosnia Charity Art Auction

The Sarajevo Winter Olympics, 1984

Remembered by many in the UK for recording the perfect score of 6.0 from all 12 judges by the British ice-skating pair, Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean, who skated their way to Olympic glory to the composition of Bolero by Maurice Ravel.

The Olympics came 4 years after Tito's death and were a celebration of the Yugoslavian federation and its people. 7 years later the federation fractured and fell into a war that saw the worst atrocities on European soil since the end of the Second World War.

This selection of original 1984 prints were purchased in the Old Town of Sarajevo by Nigel Wilson, a lifelong friend of Maurice Evlyn-Bufton. Nigel has undertaken the cycle ride twice from Sarajevo to Goražde for the charity.

Nigel is a craftsman and carpenter of fine and unique furniture and bespoke kitchens and has framed each print, some in 5000 year old fallen oak from the fens of east of England, others in walnut and one in olive ash.

> *The charity thanks Nigel and Auspicious Furniture for his ongoing support and charity in his giving of his time and craftsmanship.*
>
> *www.auspiciousfurniture.co.uk*

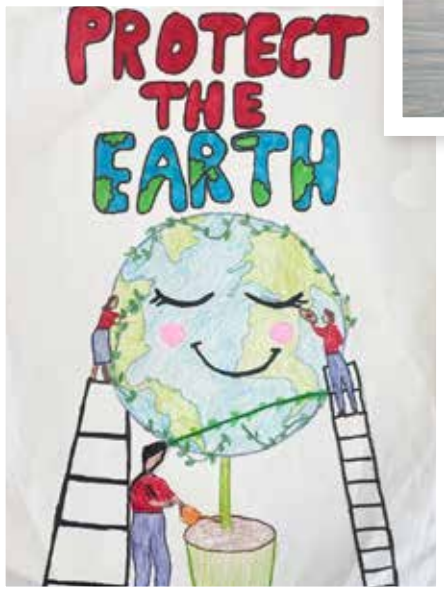
The Shaun Taylor Imagination Prize

In April 2023 Angela Paws, the sister of Shaun Taylor, who was one of the 6 British soldiers killed in Goražde, will be attending the unveiling of a new memorial to the 6 that gave their lives on UN service in 1994. For the first time since Shaun's tragic death in 1994, his name will sit alongside his 5 comrades at a single point of remembrance.

The charity has established an annual competition with the school, named after Shaun: The Shaun Taylor Imagination Prize. Angela sat alongside representatives of the Shaun's regiment, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment, those who served with Shaun in 1994 to choose the 4 winners. Each will be presented a bicycle by Angela on her visit to the school in April. Here are 6 of 60 paintings of this competition, drawn, painted, and given to the charity.

We hope they will add a little colour and have a story to tell when hanging on the wall of some generous soul that has bid successfully for them this evening.

> *Thanks to Rob Johnson of Cotswold Framing, Knightsbridge, Cheltenham for his gift in framing the prints.*



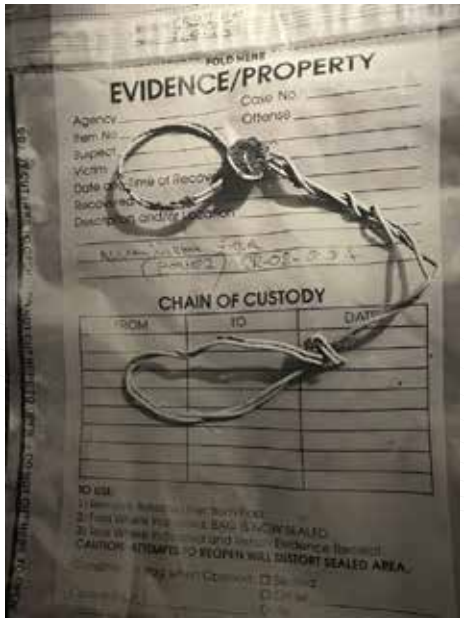
Gallery 11/07/95

Gallery 11/07/95 is the first memorial gallery in Bosnia and Herzegovina - an exhibition space aiming to preserve the memory of the Srebrenica tragedy and the 8372 persons who perished in the massacres.

The permanent exhibition provides documentary scenes of what was left of Srebrenica in the wake of this genocide. Through a wide range of multimedia content - images, maps, audio and video materials, the Gallery offers documentary and artistic interpretation of the events that took place in this small town in Eastern Bosnia during the month of July 1995 *(www.galerija110795.ba/about-gallery-110795/)*

Maurice and Nick Scott (Trustee, GCF Bosnia) visited the museum for the first time in March 2013. Its imagery is brutal in its starkness, the visit leaving an indelible mark on the consciousness, the frailty of mankind lain before you. To this end it serves it propose to ensure the genocide undertaken in the town of Srebrenica in July 1995 must never be forgotten and through this museum it ensures it never will.

The art on sale is a selection of post cards chosen by Maurice and Nick at this visit.



The Soldier Rupert Brooke

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England.
There shall be In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

The Fallen

Phillip Armstrong
Ben Hinton
Martin Dowdell
Chris Turner

A Company -1st Battalion
The Royal Gloucestershire Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment

Shaun Taylor

The Duke of Wellington's Regiment

Fergus Rennie

22 SAS Regiment
The Parachute Regiment

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