

Sodexo expands Combat2Coffee partnership to further support veterans

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Sodexo Government has strengthened its commitment to veterans by expanding its Combat2Coffee partnership with the opening of two cafes at its defence sites.

In September following the rebranding of two coffee shops, Sodexo is now operating three Combat2Coffee cafes; the Gunner's Café at Larkhill Garrison and the Ramillies & Blenheim Cafés at Andover.

Combat2Coffee is a not-for-profit community interest company (CIC) founded by Royal Anglian Regiment veteran Nigel Seaman. Its mission is to use coffee as a catalyst for conversation and mental health support for veterans. Combat2Coffee operates community hubs and mobile coffee vans where military personnel and veterans can connect, share experiences, and receive critical support. Through its barista and coffee roasting training programmes, the organisation also provides valuable employment skills to veterans, prisoners, and ex-offenders, helping them transition back into civilian life.

Combat2Coffee patron and former England football captain Terry Butcher attended the opening of the new Combat2Coffee Gunner's Café at Larkhill. Butcher, whose son Christopher tragically passed away after a battle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following his service in Afghanistan, has been a long-time advocate for mental health awareness among veterans and their families.

Terry Butcher, patron Combat2Coffee, said: "I'm incredibly proud to support Combat2Coffee and its mission to provide vital mental health support for veterans. Initiatives like these create safe spaces where veterans can connect, share their stories, and receive the help they need. As someone who has experienced the profound impact of mental health struggles on a personal level, I know how important it is to have these resources available."

From its roastery in Ipswich, Suffolk, the Combat2Coffee team of staff and volunteers, many of which are veterans, ex-uniformed or prison leavers, produce the unique Combat2Coffee blend using fairtrade and sustainable premium coffee beans sourced by Nigel himself from two family farms in Brazil.

Nigel Seaman, founder of Combat2Coffee, said: “The launch of Gunner’s cafe is a massive milestone in the growth of Combat2Coffee and supports the message we want to convey. Launching in a military establishment not only offers us the chance to help troops when they are struggling, but also educates them on what we can do for them when they leave the military.

Sodexo’s partnership with Combat2Coffee began in April 2024 after the CIC participated in Sodexo’s supplier inclusion programme which helps break down barriers which historically may have put off SMEs and VCSEs from pitching for supply contracts with large organisations like Sodexo.

Sodexo and Combat2Coffee have a shared commitment to continuously supporting the UK Armed Forces and veterans.

Mark Baker, Chief Operating Officer Defence, Sodexo UK & Ireland, added: “Our partnership with Combat2Coffee reflects Sodexo’s deep commitment to supporting the wellbeing of veterans and serving military personnel. By expanding our collaboration across key defence sites, we are not only enhancing the food and drink services we provide but also creating vital spaces where veterans can find community, support, and opportunities to build their future. It’s an honour to be part of an initiative that brings people together and makes a meaningful difference in the lives of those who have served.”

With over 30 years of experience supporting the Armed Forces, Sodexo serves 75,000 customers at 35 military bases, employing 4,700 colleagues. Sodexo’s deep understanding of the military environment allows it to provide services that enhance the lived experience for personnel, regardless of rank, as well as the civilians who support them.

As an early signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant, Sodexo has demonstrated its commitment to the military community. It has held the Gold Award in the Employer Recognition Scheme since 2017, the Ministry of Defence’s highest recognition for employers that support veterans, reservists, and their families. Sodexo continues to actively recruit ex-forces personnel, reservists, and their families.

In June 2024, Sodexo UK & Ireland was ranked 17th on the [GREAT British Employers of Veterans Top 50 list](#). This annual ranking celebrates companies that provide meaningful career opportunities to veterans and members of the Armed Forces family. 2024 marked the first time the list ranked employers by order of achievement, further highlighting Sodexo’s leadership in veteran support.