# Soldier avoids jail after dangerous high-speed chase



A British Army soldier, Harry Smith, aged 21, has successfully avoided a custodial sentence following a dangerous high-speed chase in Coseley, West Midlands. The incident occurred on December 22 of the previous year, and Smith was later sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court on April 3.

The chase began when police officers were stationary at traffic lights on Birmingham New Road, near its junction with Ivyhouse Lane. Prosecutor Chris Cullen reported that officers observed Smith's BMW 3 Series speeding past them, in blatant disregard of the 40mph speed limit. Officers quickly turned and activated their lights and sirens in an attempt to apprehend him. Smith then embarked on a reckless drive characterised by swerving in and out of traffic, undertaking and overtaking other vehicles, and running a red light on Mason Street, before accelerating along Sedgley Road West, where the speed limit was set at 30mph.

During the pursuit, Smith's actions became increasingly hazardous; at one point, he was reported to have been on the incorrect side of the road while overtaking multiple vehicles, all while police were travelling at approximately 80mph in their bid to catch up with him. Ultimately, police lost sight of Smith's vehicle, but they soon found that he had crashed into a wall, a lamp post, and a bus stop sign. Reports indicated that airbags in the car had deployed and that Smith had fled the scene, leaving behind his passengers who informed police that he was the driver but could not provide his last name.

Authorities managed to trace Smith to Shrubbery Avenue with the assistance of a police helicopter shortly after the crash, where he was detained. In court, an army sergeant testified to Smith's promising future in the military and outlined the consequences he faced within the army, noting that a custodial sentence could lead to his dismissal. The sergeant further explained that although Smith would not be reduced in rank, he might face delays in promotion.

In defence, solicitor Tariq Khan elaborated on the ongoing military disciplinary actions against Smith, asserting that the experience had profoundly impacted his client. He also highlighted the financial implications of confiscating the vehicle, which had been purchased by Smith’s father for £15,000. However, Judge John Edwards ruled that Smith would indeed lose the car due to his reckless actions.

In his sentencing remarks, Judge Edwards expressed his disbelief that a trained army driver like Smith could engage in such dangerous driving. He warned Smith that he had narrowly avoided jail and emphasized the severe risks associated with his behaviour. Smith ultimately received a 15-month prison sentence, suspended for two years, alongside 150 hours of unpaid work, as well as a driving ban for 18 months. He was also ordered to pay £1,000 in costs and faced a deprivation order for his vehicle.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news> - Could potentially provide news updates on high-speed chases and legal proceedings in the UK.
* <https://www.judiciary.uk> - Offers information on British legal proceedings, including sentencing guidelines and judicial decisions.
* <https://www.gov.uk/coroners-service> - Provides insights into legal procedures, although not directly related to this specific case, it covers general legal processes in the UK.
* <https://www.west-midlands.police.uk> - Might have reports on high-speed chases in the West Midlands area, including Coseley.
* <https://www.mod.uk> - Could offer details about military disciplinary actions and the potential consequences for soldiers involved in serious incidents.