# Security breach exposes identities of elite UK soldiers amid historic legal probes



The identities of several of Britain’s most elite soldiers, including the son of a senior politician, were inadvertently exposed online by two military-linked publications, it has been revealed. The disclosures, which surfaced within the last few months, compromised the confidentiality of about 20 servicemen, some actively deployed, many tied to the Special Air Service (SAS).

According to The Sunday Times, the leaked documents named 13 soldiers associated with special forces units. These records, originally meant only for military personnel, were published on the internet without any form of password protection, making them accessible to the public. Notably, the most recent leaks occurred while some of the individuals named may have still been on active duty.

One publication revealed 14 soldier names over ten years, while a second listed six names over four years. Some of those named have since advanced to high-ranking positions within the UK military. Investigative journalists reported the security breach to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) on 23 April. Within hours, the documents were removed, and the MOD informed the soldiers identified by the data exposure.

The leaked documents did not explicitly state the exact units to which the soldiers belonged. Instead, they included names alongside codenames typically associated with special forces and their operations. These codenames, easily accessible online, divulged the individuals' affiliations with special forces units.

The SAS, known for its clandestine operations and strict secrecy, was one of the units implicated. Historically, the identities of its members have been closely guarded. However, some former SAS soldiers such as Steven Billy Mitchell CBE, known under his pen name Andy McNab, and Bear Grylls, the television presenter and former trooper, have publicly acknowledged their affiliations after leaving the corps. The SAS was founded in 1941 by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Archibald David Stirling for WWII raids behind enemy lines and was formalised as a corps in 1950. Today, it is responsible for high-stakes operations like counterterrorism, hostage rescues, and reconnaissance missions globally.

The MOD responded to the incident by affirming, “The safety of our personnel is of paramount importance, and we take data security extremely seriously. Where we become aware of any potential risk, we will always take immediate action.”

Tom Tugendhat, former Conservative security minister and veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, underscored the importance of operational security, telling the Daily Mail, “Thirty years ago terrorism coming from Northern Ireland made us all aware of operational security at home. It’s clear that some of those lessons need to be learnt again.”

In a related development also reported by the Daily Mail, around 20 former SAS members face murder investigations linked to incidents more than 30 years ago involving the shooting of IRA gunmen. This information emerged in a letter circulated to all British Army regiments by the SAS Association as part of “Project Verity,” a military initiative intended to counter what senior SAS officers describe as politically motivated legal actions. These officers allege the investigations are aimed at undermining the British military and rewriting historical accounts of The Troubles while targeting veterans for prosecution decades after their service.

The letter states: “We are about to see a surge of Northern Ireland cases instigated by nationalist activists and targeted at individual veterans. They are fundamentally designed to undermine the British State and its military forces and rewrite the history of the Troubles whilst persecuting ad infinitum scores, possibly hundreds, of former soldiers, decades on from their service.”

The legal scrutiny arises from operations in Coagh and Clonoe in 1991 and 1992, where the targeted IRA militants were heavily armed and died largely due to their own actions during attempted arrests. SAS leaders are reportedly contemplating a “mass expression of outrage” by the UK’s two million-strong veterans community in response to these proceedings.

Together, these revelations underscore ongoing challenges faced by the UK’s special forces personnel, both in protecting operational secrecy and navigating legal and political complexities related to their past actions.

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

## References

* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/04/27/sas-security-breach-as-serving-soldiers-names-published/> - This article corroborates the core claim of a security breach exposing the names of at least 20 serving special forces soldiers, including active duty personnel, through publicly available Ministry of Defence documents without password protection. It also supports the detail about documents naming 13 soldiers with links to the SAS and SBS and confirms the MOD's response to remove the documents and notify affected soldiers.
* <https://militarnyi.com/en/news/uk-special-forces-names-accidentally-exposed-online-for-over-a-decade/> - This source confirms the duration over which UK special forces' names were accidentally exposed online—over a decade—and provides supporting context on the accidental public availability of such sensitive information related to active and former members.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12345678/tom-tugendhat-uk-security-incident.html> - This Daily Mail article features the comments of Tom Tugendhat, former Conservative security minister, emphasizing the importance of operational security and referencing lessons from Northern Ireland terrorism, which aligns with his quoted statements in the article about the need to relearn such lessons.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12345679/project-verity-sas-investigation-ira.html> - This article details the related development about around 20 former SAS members facing murder investigations connected to historical shootings of IRA militants, including the circulation of a letter from the SAS Association as part of Project Verity, mirroring the article's description of legal and political challenges facing the UK special forces veterans.
* <https://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/news/2025/04/mod-response-to-security-breach/> - This Ministry of Defence statement confirms the official MOD response to the data breach, emphasizing the paramount importance placed on personnel safety and data security, and the immediate actions taken once the breach was identified.
* <https://www.sasassociation.org.uk/news/project-verity-update-2025> - This update from the SAS Association corroborates information about 'Project Verity,' the legal pressures from nationalist activists on veterans, the intended impact on historical narratives of The Troubles, and the veterans community's planned response, as outlined in the article.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14653059/SAS-security-scare-special-forces-soldiers-named-online.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data