



Afghan Villages

Modern warfare is no longer only fought in the fields of Europe. Recent operations have been based far afield, in environments unfamiliar to British troops. In the constant effort to ensure our soldiers are prepared as best as possible, there has been significant investment in training facilities.

On behalf of the Ministry of Defence, Landmarc built a re-creation of Helmand's operational theatre in the middle of Norfolk. We produced a level of detail in sights, sounds and smells so highly developed, its authenticity could only be rivalled by Helmand itself. With demanding deadlines, in difficult conditions, we developed a facility which ultimately saved lives on the frontline.

The challenge

The challenge was to create a spectrum of experiences, as close to those found in the unique Afghanistan environment. The facilities had to be completed to an extremely high specification, with Operational Training and Advisory Group (OPTAG) deadlines and in consideration of the areas of heathland listed as areas of scientific interest.

The solution

To achieve the customer's aims, Landmarc delivered two replica Middle Eastern villages, one rural and one urban. The function of these two sites would not only be in combat training but also in tactical training for dealing with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and building better relationships with locals.

Within the villages, we have re-created dwellings, factories, a police station, compound walls, claustrophobic alleyways, maize fields, bridges, escape tunnels, a bustling market place and a mosque with audible prayers. Alongside the accurate infrastructure we have completed the experience with Afghani 'extras' and nearly 8,000 props including the sights, sounds, smells and trappings of traditional Afghani life.

The benefits

Some of the benefits were:

- Aiding the immersive training of 30,000 troops a year, hopefully saving lives on the battlefield.
- Improving the Armed Forces' understanding of Afghani cultural customs, with the aim of achieving better relationships with locals.
- When capacity permits, the villages provide a potential film set for third party income generation.