



# WAR ABOVE THE TRENCHES

"The heavens are their battlefields  
They are the cavalry of the clouds  
They are the knighthood of the air"

A FEATURE DOCUMENTARY



RED ROCK  
ENTERTAINMENT  
■ Executive Producers ■





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# WAR ABOVE THE TRENCHES

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# Introduction



## 2 X 1 hour Documentaries

From the origins, the technology and the personal stories, this presenter-led two part documentary uses actuality and drama on location to reveal how Britain and France together were at the forefront of aerial combat one hundred years before their battles in the Middle East today.

War Above the Trenches is an investigation into the bitter struggle for air superiority by France and Britain against Germany on the Western Front during World War One.

Using pilots, engineering experts, historians and aviation specialists, we examine and re-create the pioneering methods developed for these new killing machines. Engineers and historians will demonstrate the secrets of early aerial fighting intercut with real personal stories of the World War One pilots involved.

We will also reveal for example, through on-screen experiments the dangerous earliest attempts of airborne synchronised machine

gun fire; revisit the first warplane companies with exclusive access to engineers from Renault in France and compare yesterday's and today's aircraft; and show through recreations how even incorporating heavy guns posed a serious threat to flight because of their sheer weight.

Using drama and CGI we revisit and examine the first air battles and reveal for the first time how the British interpretation of the French experience led to the slaughter in the skies of helpless pilots in inadequate machines during World War One.

We learn just how much French flyers from Bleriot onward pioneered the road for the dogfights in the First World War and how the French were streets ahead of the British in aviation engineering.

And how early in the war there was a steady stream of British RFC officers visiting France, eager to learn more at their factories and air bases. With the anniversary in 2018 of the birth of the British Royal Air Force, we uncover the stories of French and

British airmen with exclusive access to their actual voices, their memoirs, diaries and letters and explore their brave new world of aerial combat, aerial reconnaissance and bombing missions through the eyes of the men in the air and those fighting in the trenches below.

We will also learn about world famous French flyers like Lieutenant Roland Garros who had flown Bleriot planes and was one of the pioneers of aviation and weapon technology. His story is known in France but little known in Britain - despite the many links to the name today - from tennis to cars.

In summary, we weave through the episodes with a presenter into scripted film scenes that capture the horrors of the war. And with the recorded voices of RFC veterans from Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as readings from their and French aviators' diaries, letters and memoirs acting as narration, will re-create and inform for the first time the Franco-British relationship in aviation.



# The Look



The visual style of War Above The Trenches will vary between locations.

The aim is to juxtapose the conditions in the grimy, gritty trenches with the more comfortable surroundings in the British airbases in France.

This echoes the real feelings that those involved had during the war, the soldiers in the trenches looked up in awe and envy at the 'knights in the sky' while the pilots looked down grimly upon them as they watched lines of men extinguished in a split second.

The trenches will feel cold, bleached

and dirty with endless ordinance raining down on the lines throwing up black soil and smoke. Barbed wire and bodies strewn 'no mans land' in a graphic display of the horrific bloody mess of the trench warfare.

The Airbase parts of the story will still feel gritty and makeshift, but will feel more comfortable and casual, with Pilots sunning themselves on the grass and with ale flowing in the mess hall and warm blankets in the dorms.

However, the reality of the so-called 'privileged fliers' becomes apparent as the massive losses begin to mount. The high command setting will

be shot in grand buildings, richly decorated and feeling warm with the officers all dressed smartly in impeccable starched uniforms.

The flying sequences will be achieved using a mixture of real flying footage, greenscreen and CGI. The action in the air will feature a lot of POV shots from the aircraft to give a 1st person view for the audience in vertigo-inducing battles, however we want to avoid unrealistic aerobatics that featured in films like Flyboys (2006) and the Red Baron (2008).







# Documentary Breakdown

## Reconstruction:

The captivating pilot stories from the letters, diaries, memoirs and interviews of British RFC veterans along with French stories either from audio archive or memoirs that have been voiced; will be illustrated by dramatic reconstruction. The voices of the veterans will fade into the voices of our characters establishing the link between the real life and dramatised worlds.

Filming real flying replicas of these aircraft cut with high quality green screen compositing and VFX as well as portraying the gruesome and explosive conditions suffered in the trenches and some of the safer backdrops of high command HQ and the airfield mess halls, we will achieve a story with exceptionally high production value, paying close attention to detail in our production design.

We aim to create an exhilarating informative experience for the audience, as well as convincing trench scenes as the ones seen in 'A Very Long Engagement' and 'The Trench' to show the gruesome reality of the conditions.

There is also the potential to access the sky above the battle fields in Northern France today and to use drones with cameras to add the latest technology to enhance the production.





# Locations



The Musée de l'air

The Musée de l'air is situated at Le Bourget Airport and is equipped with a 1916 SPAD VII aircraft by Blériot-SPAD and flown by French flying ace Georges Guynemer in World War I, a 1917 Airco DH.9 aircraft by Geoffrey de Havilland, plus The Shuttleworth Collection holds one of the largest collections of first world war aircraft both will be used as back drops to our presenters.

Access to locations and French contributors from author Mr Philippe Gorczynski. Mr Gorczynski has appeared as a contributor on television and advises both French and British film and television crews in various battles across the Somme for example BBC with presenter Jeremy Paxman on Wilfrid Owen.

We have locations and accommodation base for cast and crew in Cambrai. Fiona Graham has worked with Mr Gorczynski over the last ten years including a BBC production.

From previous British documentary connections in Cambrai (the home of Blériot), we also have potential access to historians and French engineers to document the aerial events and technology. The Renault museum in Paris.



The Shuttleworth Collection







# Director | Producer



Stephen Saunders

It is rare to find myself at the end of a project that has not involved quick decision making and living with the consequences. I am able to take the initiative and commit to a course of action when faced with unexpected situations. I work with a vision, planning to achieve my objectives.

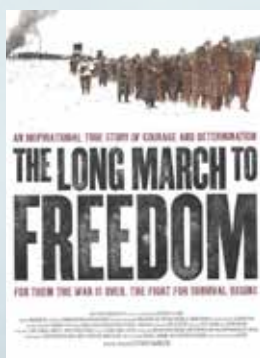
I know which shots I need and thus the crew are free to use their own expertise and skills. My experience as a film editor enables me to tell the story without the need to overshoot. My reputation is renowned for delivering on time and within budget.

During the past decade I have put my skills, as a producer and director, to great use producing several of my own TV series that has been successfully sold to two major satellite stations in the UK and many countries worldwide.

My leadership style relies on drawing upon the strengths of the team. I am clear and concise when communicating an objective that allows the team members to use their expertise whilst I supply the guidance and support to turn my vision into reality.

I treat everybody with equal respect, valuing the diversity of people's views and experiences, which allows them to voice concerns or contribute ideas. One measure of a successful project for me is that the team members have had some fun and enjoyed themselves

My basic training as a film editor and 40 years of experience has attributed to my success resulting in winning many awards including a BAFTA nomination.







Peter Hart



## Adapting from Bloody April

The War Above The Trenches is based on the book *Bloody April* by historian Peter Hart. His book, formed from real interviews taken from veterans of the Great War, describes the struggle for air superiority and the rapid advancement of engineering that became so effective, it changed the way wars were fought forever. It chronicles the highs and lows of their experiences as a new fighting force, and highlights the difference in conditions from those fighting in the trenches below.

Our adaptation to screen will consist of two 1 hour episodes conveyed in a drama-documentary format as it will more effectively transport the audience to the era, and make for a much more engaging viewing experience.

The documentary element is the backbone of the episodes, led by a presenter who will be first established in the archive rooms of the Imperial War Museum in London listening to the sound recordings of the veterans. We will also feature an interview with Peter Hart that will run through the story in a similar role to the presenter.

The drama elements take place primarily at the British airbases in France, but will also heavily

feature the trenches on the western front, and the grand offices of the High Command.

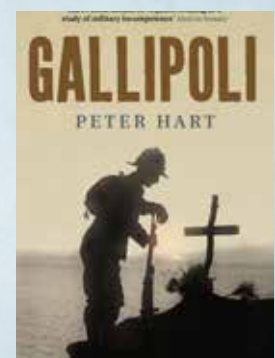
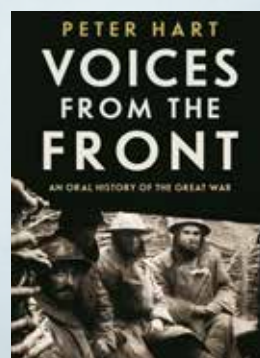
When adapting the factual book to screen, it was important to maintain the true to life experiences of the men involved, however it posed a problem when you have over a hundred characters in speaking roles. This is not only un-economical; it is very hard for the audience to become engaged with that many characters or to follow the complicated story. Therefore we have written it in such a way that maintains the most featured characters from the book and making them the most prominent in the film.

In some cases minor characters have been combined to allow for more screen time for that role. To allow the characters to interact and be able to show emotions of loss and

shared victory, we have taken the characters and placed them all in the same squadron, which is purposely never named.

While this deviates from the true to life story that is in the book, where the veterans were all scattered across dozens of different squadrons, it allows us to much more effectively create a representation of squadron life and convey a realistic camaraderie. However, we have stayed truthful to the fate of the men, for instance those who die in the story, really died.

Most of the dialogue in all of the scenes set in the RFC bases, High Command and Western Front has been adapted from the stories given in interviews for *Bloody April*, rewritten to the present tense and to be less expositional.



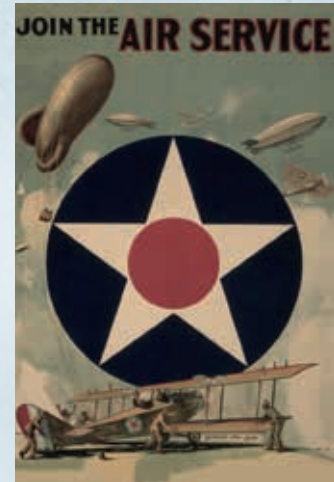




# Cinematographers



Adam Solodujin



Garath Whyte



Our experienced team of cinematographers will be in charge of all the latest cameras and technology to re-create the incredible scenes.

The flying sequences will be filmed by achieving a mixture of real flying footage, green-screen and CGI. The CGI (computer-generated imagery) is the creation of still or animated visual content. CGI is used to produce images for film special effects. The action in the air will feature a lot of POV shots from the aircraft to give a 1st person view for the audience in vertigo-inducing battles, however we want to avoid unrealistic aerobatics that featured in films like **Flyboys** (2006) and the **Red Baron** (2008).

To create this gritty look and to maintain a high production value, the scenes on the ground will be shoot on either Super 16mm or at 2K resolution on the RED camera. The flying sequences will be filmed in either 2k or High Definition on a platform that allows for lengthy takes. For the in-plane flying sequences we can mount small HD cameras called Go-Pro that were designed for extreme sports.

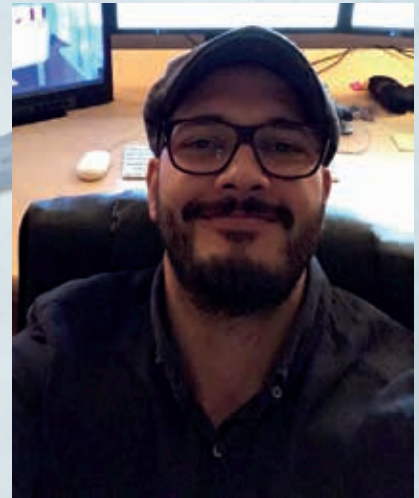


Robert Cannon





# Editor



David Arshadi



1,116  
DISTINGUISHED  
FLYING CROSSES  
AWARDED DURING  
WW1

David is one of those people who got into the industry because he loves making films. He's passionate about drama and for him the focus of the story is very much a priority.

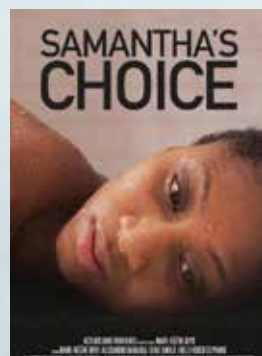
After graduating with a BA (hons) in Broadcasting, he served as a production coordinator in television, film and corporate for a short period before getting back into the area of his real passion –telling stories in the edit suite.

Having spent years cutting a mixture of factual and drama, he's developed a strong structural ability and visual style and his first two programmes as a director were award winners.

His experience in the cutting room has also made him methodical and efficient when directing on location, always able to pull off high quality visuals on any budget.

He has worked with producer Stephen Saunders for five years editing and recently directing historical documentaries. He is currently in production on a short film that is being filmed in Auckland, New Zealand.

He has just completed a feature for Bedlam Productions the producers of 'Zaytoun' and 'The King's Speech'.







# Presenter



**Saul David**



## Telling the story

Weaving seamlessly to and fro between the drama and documentary elements is very important to the flow of the programmes. Aside from visual transitions, a device that we will use from the very first scene is to fade the voices of young actors into those of the elderly veterans that feature on the archive recordings.

This is not only a dramatic effect, but it also allows for the audience to understand that the character we are watching is based on the real veteran we can hear establishing the connection, and from then on, we can combine the two as we come in and out of our drama world.

The style of the presenter is very important for keeping the audience engaged in the action. For a drama-documentary it is important to have a presenter who can carry the dramatic tone.

### Presenter:

Saul David is an historian, broadcaster and the author of several critically-acclaimed works of fiction and non-fiction. Saul has presented and appeared in history programmes for

all the major TV channels and is a regular on Radio 4. Saul David was born in Monmouth in 1966 and educated at Ampleforth College and Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities (History MA and PhD).

He began writing his first history book when he was twenty-five and has now completed twelve (one edited). They include: *The Homicidal Earl: The Life of Lord Cardigan* (1997), a critically-acclaimed biography of the man who led the Charge of the Light Brigade; *The Indian Mutiny: 1857* (2002), shortlisted for the Westminster Medal for Military Literature; *Zulu: The Heroism and Tragedy of the Zulu War of 1879* (2004), a Waterstone's Military History Book of the Year; *Victoria's Wars: The Rise of Empire* (2006); *All the King's Men: The British Redcoat in the Era of Sword and Musket* (2012); and *100 Days to Victory: How the Great War was Fought and Won, 1914-1918* (2013).

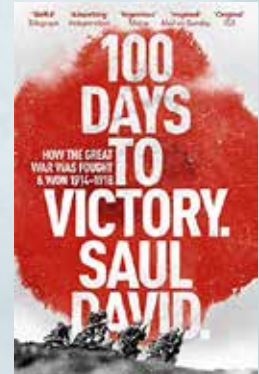
He has also written two historical novels set in the late Victorian period. *The Times* described the first, *Zulu Hart* (2009), as a 'rattling good yarn' with 'a compelling, sexy hero who could give Cornwell's Sharpe a run for his money'. His latest history

– *Operation Thunderbolt: Flight 139 and the Raid on Entebbe* – was published in the UK and US in 2015 to considerable critical acclaim.

An experienced broadcaster, Saul appears often on British radio and television. His TV presenting credits include the *Escape From...* series for Five (2004), Sky One's genealogy series *So You Think You're Royal?* (2007) and three programmes for the BBC's flagship history series *Timewatch*: *The Queen's Lover* (2001), *The Greatest Knight* (2008) and *The Queen Elizabeth's Lost Guns* (February 2009). He was an on-screen expert on BBC2's virtual battle series *Time Commanders* (2004) and is a regular contributor to history programmes on all channels.

Two of his books – *Mutiny at Salerno* and *Zulu* – have been made into documentaries. More recently he presented *Filton's Fabulous Flying Machines* for BBC1 (June 2010) and *How The Rest Got Home*, a 70th anniversary programme about the British soldiers who escaped from France after Dunkirk, for Radio 4 (June 2010). His 3 x 1 hour series on the history of military logistics – *Bullets, Boots and Bandages: How Wars are Really Won* – was aired on





BBC4 in February 2012. In 2014 he presented a documentary on World War One horses for BBC4 and appeared in a Channel 5 film on The First Great Escape and two episodes of BBC2's The Birth of Empire.

In 2015, he featured in programmes on the Spanish Armada, the Duke of Wellington, the Battle of Waterloo, the history of Spain and the secret rescue of Ethiopia's Jews. In 2106, he presented World War Two: A Timewatch Guide and Russia: A Timewatch Guide, and appeared in a six-part series on Adolf Hitler.

Saul gives frequent talks about military history and has spoken at all the major literary festivals. He has also lectured at the Security Service (MI5), the National Army Museum and the Imperial War Museum. He has led history tours to India and the Crimea, and has appeared as a guest speaker on The World ship.

Saul is Professor of Military History at the University of Buckingham and Programme Director for Buckingham's London-based MPhil in Military History.

## Broadcasting Credits

- Russia: A Timewatch Guide, BBC4, 22 November 2016
- World War Two: A Timewatch Guide, BBC4, 25 February 2016
- The Equine Army, BBC1 and BBC4, 2 June and 30 September 2014
- 'Clifton House', Britain's Secret Homes, Episode 4, ITV1, 28 June 2013
- 'The Taunton Cannon', Britain's Secret Treasures, Episode 1, ITV1, 16 July 2012
- Bullets, Boots and Bandages: How Wars are Really Won (3 x 1 hour), BBC4, 2, 9 and 16 February 2012
- Filton's Fabulous Flying Machines, BBC1, 26 July
- 'Queen Elizabeth's Lost Guns', Timewatch, BBC2, 21 February 2009 (see below for details)
- 'The Greatest Knight', Timewatch, BBC2, 19 January 2008 (see inset picture)
- 'So You Think You're Royal?' (8 x 1 hour), Sky One, May-July 2007
- 'Escape From...' (7 x 30 mins), Channel Five, May-June 2004
- 'The Queen and her Lover', Timewatch, BBC2, 15 February 2001

PETER HART (Interview contributor) is a British military historian.

Hart grew up in Stanhope and Barton under Needwood. He attended school in Chesterfield (1967-73) and Liverpool University (1973-76). He then did a post-graduate teaching course at Crewe & Alsager College (1976-77), and lastly a post-graduate librarianship at Liverpool Polytechnic (1979-80). He has been an oral historian at the Sound Archive of Imperial War Museum in London since 1981.

Hart has written mainly on British participation in the First World War. His books include; The Somme, Jutland 1916, Bloody April on the air war in 1917, Passchendaele, Aces Falling (on the air war in 1918), 1918 A Very British Victory and Gallipoli. He has also written about the Anglo-Irish War.





# Production Company



Film & Television Producers

ASA Productions is an established independent TV and Film Production Company that prides itself in creating quality programmes. Since our beginnings in 2004, we have produced programmes for Sky's History Channel and 'Yesterday' Channel. Our latest production 'The Long March to Freedom', part financed by a UKTV commission, has been particularly successful across the whole of Europe because of the sensitive approach to the content and the uniqueness of the production.

When producing programmes we aim to employ a diverse skill set of experienced production crews and technicians from across Europe, ensuring that we keep abreast of new talent and technologies including social media. ASA's obligation is to seek new approaches as part of its routine and creative activities to create high-end TV programmes. We pride ourselves in making programmes with and for people of all ages with varying motivations, abilities, and aspirations with the aim of informing and educating.

ASA Productions (UK) was formed over ten years ago, commencing back in 2004. The management team

comprised of Stephen Saunders who is the Managing Director and who is the driving force behind this small, but key player in television production. Fiona Graham producer and is a modern history and politics graduate with specialism in both first and second world war.

She is a journalist and programme maker with research skills and the ability to lead a team of researchers transferring knowledge to assist the production.

Stephen Saunders has a strong track record in the television industry starting as an editor at London Weekend Television and Thames as well as working as a freelancer for the BBC. His editing experience, working on news shows such as 'The London Programme', has given him the abilities, in his directing and producing career, to produce cultural emotive programmes that are not only entertaining, but are also educational.

This has been sustained in the quality of work his production company has produced for television and which is purchased across Europe on a continuing basis. Stephen's directing

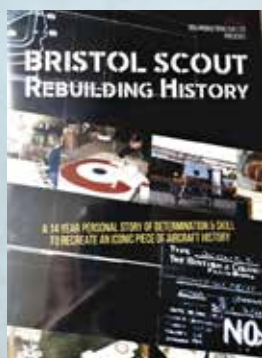
skills have won him numerous awards.

In 2011 Stephen won a gold award at the World Media Fest in Hamburg for his educational programme 'Art & Design' produced for BBC Learning.

That same year his programme 'Lancaster at War' won silver at the same venue. He was also nominated for a BAFTA for an educational series for Channel 4 entitled 'Energy from Nature' - a three-part series giving an insight to a young audience of how nature can supply us with power from natural resources.

Stephen has a vast knowledge of the industry and has seen many changes, adapting and using new technologies, tailoring his company's programmes to the new and challenging audiences of today.

He also teaches part time at two major media universities, Ravensbourne College in London and Staffordshire University, where he lectures on production content, production techniques and research, helping students to develop their story making abilities in both fictional and factual programming





# Executive Producers



Red Rock Entertainment is a film-finance company, based at the world-famous Elstree Studios, home to some of the biggest TV shows on UK television and the studio of choice for many successful British filmmakers.

Working in conjunction with many of the UK's top production companies to raise equity for film, TV content and film distribution, Red Rock

Entertainment offers a number of tax-efficient opportunities to investors.

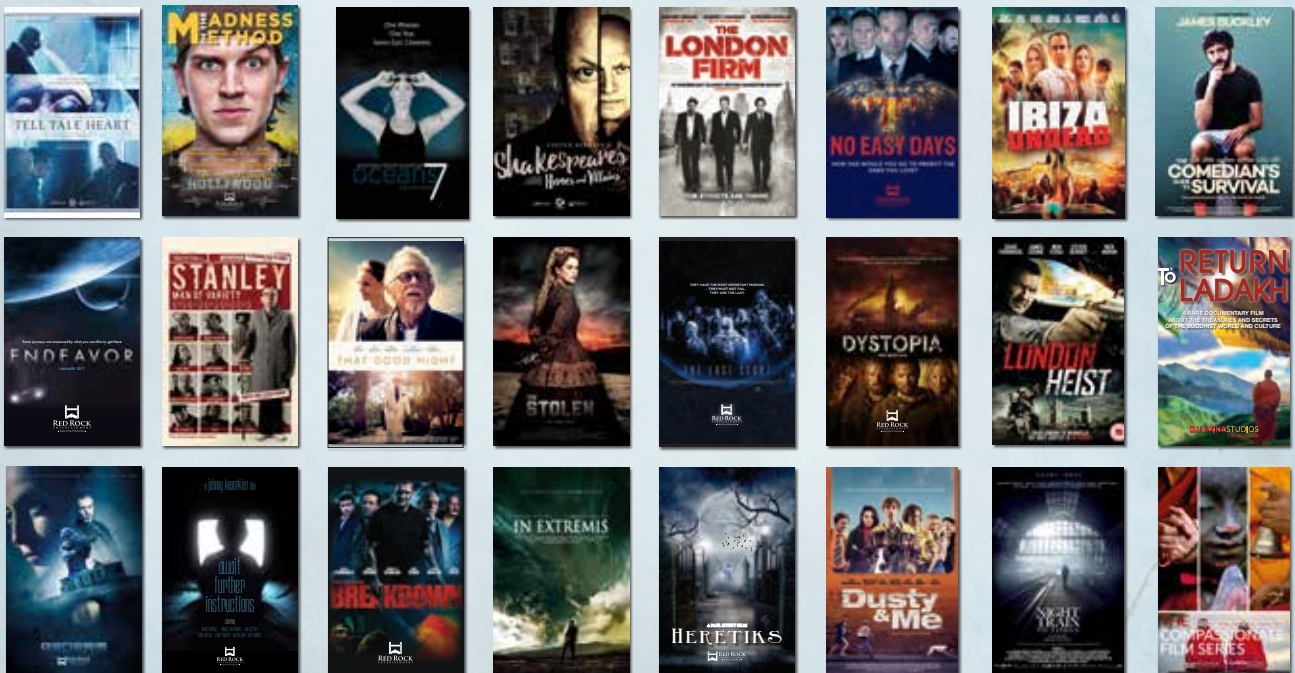
It primarily works on projects that are at an advanced stage and are looking for the final tranche of financing.

Its focus is on film and TV projects that have commercial appeal, an identifiable audience, controllable costs and a sound financial structure.

As an executive producer, Red

Rock Entertainment can arrange for investors to visit sets during filming, appear as extras and attend private screenings.

It also regularly arranges seminars at Elstree Studios, at which high-profile corporate and financial specialists offer advice and insight into the various tax advantages of investing in the UK film industry.









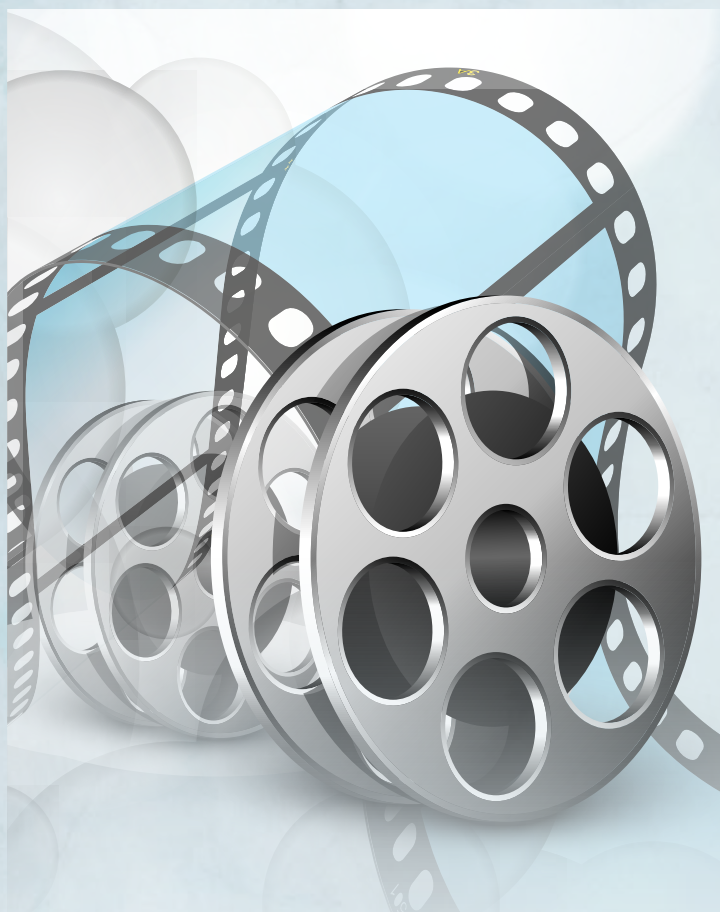


# WAR ABOVE THE TRENCHES





# SEIS



## Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme

has become one of the most revered government backed schemes ever created.

### Some of the most important points to consider are:

The Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) offers great tax efficient benefits to investors in return for investment in small and early stage start-up businesses in the UK.

SEIS was designed to boost economic growth in the UK by promoting new enterprise and entrepreneurship.

The scheme was introduced in the Chancellor George Osborne's 2011 Autumn Statement which heralded a big shake up of tax incentives for investors, with the Enterprise Investment Schemes and Venture Capital Trusts also being revamped.

- SEIS investors can place a maximum of £100,000 in a single tax year, which can be spread over a number of companies.
- A company can raise no more than £150,000 in total via investment.
- Investors cannot control the company receiving their capital, and must not hold more than a 30% stake in the company in which they invest.
- The company seeking investment must be based in the UK, and have a permanent establishment in the British Isles.
- The company must have fewer than 25 employees. If the company is the parent company of a group, that figure applies to the whole group.
- The company must be no more than two years old, and have assets of less than £200,000.
- 50% Tax Relief for current or previous Tax Year (from date of Share Certificate).
- 50% Capital Gains write off from current Tax Year No Inheritance Tax after 2 years.
- No Income Tax or Capital Gains on any Profits.
- Loss Relief on any monies lost at your current tax rate.
- Monies must remain in the company for 3 years to benefit from the above.





# Perks & Benefits of Film Investment



## RED CARPET EVENTS



A red-carpet premiere is the highpoint of a film's release. Attended by its stars, alongside A-list celebrities, industry moguls and the media, they epitomise the Hollywood dream.

When one of our films premieres, our investors are invited to join us on the red carpet, and experience the glitz and glamour of showbiz for themselves.

## PHOTOS WITH THE STARS



## APPEARING AS AN EXTRA

Patience is a virtue — and never more so than on a film set. Pick your moment to approach an actor carefully: it's never a good idea to disturb talent when they are shooting a scene, or preparing to shoot one.

So be prepared to wait for the right moment to take a picture or ask for an autograph. You will probably be assigned with a 'runner' from the production company, whose job it will be to look after you and let you know what's going on.



## FILM SET VISITS

Being an investor also gives you the opportunity to be cast as a background actor, or extra.

This is a performer in a film or television show who appears in a non-speaking capacity, usually in the background to the central action — as an audience member, for example, or a passer-by in the street.

Punctuality, reliability and the ability to take direction are important if you want to experience the thrill of appearing in front of the camera.

## PRIVATE SCREENINGS

Private film screenings form part of a film's production and release cycle. To show off the film to its best advantage, special preview screenings are routinely held in low seat-count theatres offering high-quality projection and sound equipment.

These events, which are usually accompanied by food and drink, also feature commentary from the film's producers, writers or actors. The guest list for a private screening typically includes VIP media personalities, investors, and key marketing and distribution executives.



## NAME IN THE CREDITS







# WAR ABOVE THE TRENCHES

"The heavens are their battlefields  
They are the cavalry of the clouds  
They are the knighthood of the air"



**RED ROCK**  
ENTERTAINMENT

■ Executive Producers ■

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