

What can today's soldiers learn from WW1?

[SOLDIER]

Right, turn.

[DR JONATHAN BOFF]

The British Army is on a mission. But not the sort of mission you might expect. A hundred years on from the beginning of the First World War, soldiers have been back to the Western Front but this time not to fight, but to learn.

Alongside soldiers from France and Germany, British troops are learning about the sacrifice men like them made a century ago from a group of carefully selected experts...and me.

As a historian I have devoted much of my professional life to examining the Great War.

It's a fascinating war which still arouses strong passions, even today: about why it started, how it was fought, about why it finished and about the effects that it has had. The methods of fighting developed between 1914 and 1918 set the template for warfare ever since. And it's simply impossible to understand the Second World War – or even the invasion of Iraq in 2003 – without understanding the Great War first.

I've come to Salisbury Plain to find out what lessons, if any, the First World War can offer them.