Matthew Bolt

Door Tenant
CALLED 2012



A criminal and military law specialist with deep common law roots, Matthew combines a deep knowledge of the law and procedure with extensive advocacy experience in the Crown Court, Court Martial and the appellate courts.

Matthew is steeped in the Service Justice System and regularly advises members of the Armed Forces in relation to professional matters (Major Admin Action, Service Complaints and CDT fails) as well as representing them in the Court Martial.

Instructed at the very outset of cases, he is a specialist in Pre Charge Engagement, a seasoned trial advocate and has a particular interest in appellate work.

Described as "*hands on, easy to work with*", and someone who "quickly gets to the heart of a case and adds value". He is a "*high calibre advocate*" who is "*an oracle of all things technical*".

- Hon Society of the Middle Temple – Member
- Criminal Bar Association – Member
- South Eastern Circuit – Member

- Midlands Circuit - Member
- Association of Military Court Advocates – Hon. Secretary
- Service Court Rules Review Committee – Member

Crime

Matthew is an experienced advocate, prosecuting and defending serious crime. Regularly instructed to defend those charged with serious sexual offences and professionals facing potentially career ending allegations. He builds strong teams and ensures no stone is left unturned in their defence.

Matthew provides advice from the earliest stages, working closely with solicitors as part of pre charge engagement advising on defence evidence, lines of inquiry and drafting representations against charge. He provides tactical acumen and practical suggestions to support clients from the very beginning. Regularly instructed to represent professional clients including police and members of the Armed Forces, Matthew well understands the particular challenges involved in defending those who will face regulatory proceedings as well.

An experienced appellate advocate, beyond his call, he provides second opinions and advice to those seeking to overturn their convictions or reduce their sentences.

Military Law

The Service Courts

Matthew is an experienced Service Courts practitioner who has successfully represented defendants charged with a wide variety of criminal offences. Recognised as one of the leading experts in Service law in the UK, Matthew defends at all levels in the Service Justice System.

He has a particular flair for appellate work, being involved in some of the most consequential appeals of recent years. he appeared for the successful appellants in the leading case of *R v SH [2019] EWCA Crim 1863* which established that defendants in the Court Martial had the right to apply to have cases against them dismissed. Prior to this it had been thought that no such power existed in the Service Justice System following the Armed Forces Act 2006. He represented the Director of the Military Court Service in the recent case of *R v Bhoyroo [2023] EWCA Crim 1625*.

Other advisory work

In addition to his defence practice Matthew regularly advises in relation to professional matters (Major Admin Action, Service Complaints and CDT fails). Highly experienced in advising Service personnel as well as drafting representations on their behalf. He also advises the Judge Advocate General in relation to sentencing and matters of procedure, and the

Director of the Military Court Service in relation to modernisation of the Service Justice System.

He is a leading proponent of Pre Charge Engagement. He provides advice from the earliest stages, working closely with solicitors, clients and assisting officers advising on defence evidence, lines of inquiry and drafting representations against charge. Ever mindful of the professional and pension consequences of cases, he provides tactical acumen and practical suggestions to support clients from the very beginning.

Notable Cases

Advisory Work

R v LCpl B

Defended a soldier charged with sexual assault having won a contested s.41 application on the issue of the manner of consent. B was acquitted.

R v LCpl

H Represented a soldier charged with GBH where Service injuries had led to memory loss of the incident concerned. H was acquitted.

R v Ex-LH B

The JAG was persuaded to stay as an abuse of process a prosecution brought for a Service offence as a device to avoid breaching SPA policy relating to prosecuting summary only matters.

R v FO D

Successfully defended a pilot accused of ABH having deliberately struck the testicles of a colleague during “Mess Games”.

R v Maj L

Represented an officer at sentence charged with conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline following a serious injury to one of his soldiers on exercise.

R v Pte Murphy [2020] EWCA Crim 1898

Instructed after conviction. M’s conviction for administering a noxious substance was quashed after

failures in the judge advocate's summing up were identified.

R v Ex-Maj Heslop [2021] EWCA Crim 1464

A compensation order was quashed on the basis that a close reading of the relevant JSP showed the MoD had in fact suffered no loss.

R v Ex-Pte Kida, 2025

Following submissions CMAC reduced Pte K's sentence by 50% permitting his immediate release.

Re. Sgt H

Drafted written representations resulting in the overturning of the decision to terminate a soldier's service.

Re. PO B

Successfully argued that a sailor who failed a CDT should be retained in the Royal Navy.

Re. Lt Col M

Accused of negligent performance of a duty. Pre Charge representations led to M not being charged. AGAI67 proceedings were subsequently defeated and no sanction imposed.

Civil

Kemsheds Trust

Successfully represented Northampton County Council against developers attempting to claim ownership via inheritance of a village car park based on disputed epitome of title.

G v G

Acted for the Claimant in a complex mortgage possession matter relying on the Mercantile Law Amendment Act 1856.

M v M

Successfully resisted an application to enforce a building scheme by way of injunctions requiring the destruction of an extension.

S v C

Advised in an application for provision from deceased estate for foreign holidays on the basis they were a requirement for her health. Publications and other projects.

Drugs

R v G

Successfully defended as junior alone in a multi-handed three week county lines PWITS case. Matthew's client was the only defendant to be acquitted.

Maidstone Crown Court

Drugs

General Crime

R v H

Defended a soldier involved with 7 others in smuggling cigarettes from Afghanistan via the military mail for onward sale.

Swindon

R v U

Successfully defended a man accused of rape and affray during a lockdown breaking house party.

Birmingham

R v H and Others

Successfully defended a 17 year old charged with 10 others with involvement in county lines drug dealing.

Gloucester

R v M and Others

Successfully defended woman charged with aiding the violent robbery of local drug dealer by an

armed gang.

Maidstone

R v E

Led junior in the successful defence of a 17 year old accused of murdering a “professional robber of drug dealers”.

Bristol

R v I

Led junior defending a man accused of the manslaughter and rape of a woman. Matthew was involved from the pre-charge stage.

CCC

R v P

Represented a man intercepted whilst importing over 50kgs of cannabis.

Isleworth

R v W

Represented a man accused of attempting to murder his mother in law.

Oxford

R v B

Prosecuted a dangerous dogs case where a dog had been used as a weapon whilst dangerously under control.

Canterbury Crown Court

R v M

Successfully defended as junior alone in an seven handed armed robbery matter lasting a total of 62 days.

Maidstone Crown Court

Crime

Military

R v D

Successfully defended a soldier accused of abusing recruits under his command.

R v B

Successfully defended a soldier charged with sexual assault having won a contested s.41 application on the issue of the manner of consent.

R v H

Successfully defended a soldier in a case of GBH, where service injuries had led to memory loss of the incident concerned.

R v E

Successfully defended a soldier charged with fraud.

R v L

Represented an officer at sentence charged with conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline following a serious injury to one of his soldiers on exercise.

R v M

Successfully secured the quashing of a soldier's conviction for administering a noxious substance having identified failures in the judge advocate's summing up.

Re. H

Drafted written representations resulting in the overturning of the decision to terminate a soldier's service.

Re. B

Successfully argued that a sailor who failed a CDT should be retained in the Royal Navy.

R v W

Currently instructed to defend in an eight handed cross border conspiracy to evade duty involving the military postal system.

Swindon Crown Court

Military

Violence

R v H

Successfully defended a man charged with GBH.

Gloucester Crown Court

Violence

Achievements

Memberships

- Association of Military Court Advocates – Hon Secretary
- Hon Society of the Middle Temple – Member
- Criminal Appeals Lawyers Association – Member
- Criminal Bar Association – Member
- South Eastern Circuit – Member
- Midlands Circuit - Member

Appointments

- CPS General Crime Panel - Grade 3
- CPS Serious Crime Panel - Grade 2
- Attorney General's Civil C Panel
- Service Court Rules Review Committee - Member

Publications

- Matthew is a contributor to the Global Military Justice Blog, an international collaboration run by Prof. Fidell of Yale University.
- Matthew is the co-author of Forces Legal Resources, a blog which which provides legal guidance to members of the Armed Forces (here)
- Bolt, M & Wallis G: Court martial hearings, fairness and the dismissal of charges – Cov. L.J. 2019, 24(2), 116-117 (available from Westlaw here)

Education

- A(Hons): History – University of Southampton 2009
- LLB (Accelerated) - University of Southampton 2011
- BPTC - 2012