

STACEY DOOLEY: READY FOR WAR?

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Stacey Dooley's latest documentary is an emotional watch, witnessing first-hand the emotional and physical challenges recruits go through as they learn survival skills and fighting strategies. With exclusive access to the British Army's training mission, Stacey meets a group of Ukrainian civilians putting their lives on the line to help their country win the war against Russia, arriving in the UK to begin five weeks of intensive army training. Among them is florist Mykola, and Pasha - a welder who fears going into battle means never seeing his parents again. Just awful.



9

5 MINUTES WITH...

Documentary maker Stacey Dooley, 36, following a group of Ukrainian civilians as they arrive in the UK to begin intensive army training...

Tell us about this documentary...

For me, what makes it fascinating is the fact that these men we follow are civilian individuals with no prior experience in terms of military life or war. It's literally like your own boyfriend or brother being asked to step up and fight the Russian army on the frontline - an unimaginable task.

What did you struggle with most?

You always feel daft saying what you've struggled with while making a doc - it's nothing compared to what these guys are going home to. But I suppose it's emotionally tricky when you establish a genuine rapport with these men, and you know that some of them just won't make it. Also, at the time of filming I was jumping over fences eight months pregnant, which took a bit of navigating! [Stacey is now mum to baby Minnie, with her partner Kevin Clifton].

Did anything surprise you?

The fact that they are only given this comparatively short - though incredibly intense -

training to prepare for war is really very sobering.

What do you hope viewers will take away from it?

I hope people will realise that, honestly, none of us are completely guaranteed a safe life - or know what the future holds, and you have to imagine how you would like to be treated if you're forced to experience war and it suddenly became impossible for you to live in your own home, through no fault of your own.



Putting on a brave face

FACTFILE

Stacey had to have "uncomfortable conversations" ahead of filming, saying, "We had to ask, 'If they die before we broadcast, how would they like us to respond?'"

