

Week's TV



We're talking about...

Life on the frontline

Intrepid **Stacey Dooley** joins up with Ukrainian recruits

Stacey Dooley has made some gritty documentaries, but *Ready For War?* has really hit home.

The TV presenter joins a group of Ukrainian civilians who arrive in the UK for five weeks of intensive training with the British Army to equip them to survive fighting for their country against Russia.

What has struck Stacey most is that these raw recruits never expected to be on the frontline – they include a florist, a jeweller, a welder and a car mechanic.

"It's literally like your own boyfriend or brother being asked to step up and fight the Russian army on the frontline. It's an unimaginable task," she says.

For Stacey, 36, that's what makes the BBC documentary so fascinating, as she explains,

**STACEY DOOLEY:
READY FOR WAR?**
Thursday, 10.40pm,
BBC One

"I'm genuinely curious about how you try to prepare a florist to change his entire identity, essentially, and equip him to kill the enemy. That's such a monumental shift."

Stacey admits her past documentaries have been "emotionally tricky". However, this time Stacey, who welcomed daughter Minnie with her partner Kevin Clifton in January, had a physical hurdle to overcome, too.

"At the time of filming I was jumping over fences eight months pregnant, which took a bit of navigating!" she shares.

Her empathy for the men she meets shines through. She says, "You have to imagine how you would like to be treated if it suddenly became impossible for you to live in your own home. I've always felt like this when covering those who have been forced to experience war."

It promises to be a tough watch, but Stacey says there will be moments of hope in the one-off documentary.

"There are moments where you are just hanging out with pretty cool people, who you are really in awe of," she adds.

"I also really feel the Ukrainians truly believe in what they are fighting for. Their right to live in their country. Their culture. Their kids' freedom. And that allows you to feel hopeful at times."