



**Five Pump  
Court Chambers**

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Tel: 020 7353 2532

## Matthew Bolt

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Barrister

Call: 2012

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### Practice overview

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"*.

Matthew also practices from [Cornwall Street Barristers](#).

### 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.

### **Notable Cases**

***R v H (Swindon)*** – Defended a soldier involved with 7 others in smuggling cigarettes from Afghanistan via the military mail for onward sale

***R v U (Birmingham)*** – Successfully defended a man accused of rape and affray during a lockdown breaking house party

***R v H & Others (Gloucester)*** – Successfully defended a 17 year old charged with 10 others with involvement in county lines drug dealing.

***R v M & Others (Maidstone)*** – Successfully defended woman charged with aiding the violent robbery of local drug dealer by an armed gang.

***R v E (Bristol)*** – Led junior in the successful defence of a 17 year old accused of murdering a “professional robber of drug dealers”.

***R v I (CCC)*** – Led junior defending a man accused of the manslaughter and rape of a woman. Matthew was involved from the pre-charge stage.

***R v P (Isleworth)*** – Represented a man intercepted whilst importing over 50kgs of cannabis

***R v W (Oxford)*** – Represented a man accused of attempting to murder his mother in law

## **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**

*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-LHB* 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. AGA167 proceedings were subsequently defeated and no sanction imposed.

## 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 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](#)).

## Memberships

- 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