NHS Nightingale hospital brings twins Phill and Paul Moxey together on the front line

[Lucy Fisher](), Defence Editor, Neil Johnston Saturday April 11 2020, 12.01am, The Times

Lieutenant-Colonel Phill Moxey and Paul have crossed paths professionally for the first time

Twin brothers, one a senior army officer and the other a surgeon, have been brought together at the NHS Nightingale field hospital.

One of the 42-year-old Suffolk-born men was involved in building the 4,000-bed centre at the ExCel centre in London, while the other will help to save lives there.

Lieutenant-Colonel Phill Moxey, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, the Royal Anglian Regiment, led a team engaged in the nine-day conversion of the exhibition halls into hospital wards. His brother Paul, a vascular surgeon at St George's Hospital in south London, is on call to assist the medical team at the Nightingale, which received its first patients on Tuesday.

It is the first time the brothers' paths have crossed professionally.

Paul said: "I think the Nightingale is a triumph for NHS England and the army team that have put it together so quickly. It shows what we can do as a country when we put our minds to it and has taught the NHS a lot about breaking out of the silos we all work in and collaborating with other teams to achieve a common goal. Long may it continue after Covid is defeated."

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Phill has served in Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan. More recently his troops have been among the 200 military personnel helping to construct the Nightingale. Soldiers in the Royal Anglians, known as the Vikings, will continue to support NHS workers at the site.

Highlighting the similarities between the army and his brother's profession, Phill said: "Both have required a degree of sacrifice, patience and tolerance on the home front. Both roles require calmness under pressure, leadership and constant education."

The operation that has used the brothers' expertise began as a separate large-scale nationwide effort between the military and the health service.