



Suzi Smith - *Endurance*

“ With an injection of my *resilience* and *strength* he was reminded of better times ”

The news that Suzi's son, Dan, was to be medically discharged twinned with the nightmares and lack of sleep, threw him into the dark depths of depression. He would not leave the security of his home due to anxiety and the inability to walk or protect himself. He had thoughts he was being targeted and this really took its toll not only on him but his nearest and dearest too.

“Seeing my boy, a broken man both physically and mentally, was poles apart from the quick-witted joker we all knew and loved, and my quest to rebuild that was underway!”

After joining the Army from school, Suzi's son served for eighteen years with the Royal Engineers including tours in Kosovo, Kenya, Canada, Iraq, Afghanistan, Brunei, the Falklands and Germany. Whilst serving in Afghanistan in 2012, he was involved in a situation where two of his colleagues were shot and killed by a rogue Afghan soldier. After returning home and trying to block out the events of that day he threw himself into a fitness regime.

Sadly, Dan suffered a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in his left leg from his ankle to his kidneys. He was left incapacitated and sat at home unable to stand, let alone walk. Feeling removed from his Unit and vulnerable, he became stuck in a re-run of that catastrophic attack in 2012. Having nothing but time on his hands, he would dissect the events.

He tortured himself wondering if there was anything that he could have done differently that would have saved the lives of his men.

Months passed and the constant pain from the DVT injury didn't improve. His physical and mental health were left in tatters. The medical procedure to treat the severe blockage was time sensitive for it to have been effective but he was not given the option in time by the treating hospital. His condition is now permanent and as a result he was medically discharged from Service.

Suzi, who lives in Cumbria remembers driving to Wiltshire to force an intervention. “I refused to see my boy destroyed. I made him get into my car and showed him what he had achieved. We drove on tick-over (I didn't know a car could do that) with the windows down, fresh air in his face, and crawled down the road that my son had designed and built on the Salisbury Plain training area.

“Where there is a will there is a way, and with a little injection of my resilience and strength he was reminded of better times and the achievements he had made throughout his time in the Forces.”

Suzi explains she joined Help for Heroes Band of Sisters, because when the batteries are down and the tank empty, we all need a little boost. Having that camaraderie this group gives helps Suzi to help her son.



Suzi named her bouquet 'Endurance' in praise of her daughter-in-law, Clare. “Clare is an amazing daughter-in-law who supports my son to the nth degree; not always easy. She is selfless and just carries on putting her family and my son's needs above her own. She also holds down an important job, caring for severely disabled and autistic children. Her energy and ability to just'Endure' is amazing. And her house is always tidy! If anyone deserves recognition it is her.”