

School Podcast

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Paddy: I went in the Navy – 1975 – probably before most of your parents were born, you didn't have to laugh then! [Laughter]. Right, this was back in the old days, nowadays you've all got Health and Safety stuff, laws and things you can do, things you've got to do, back in them days we used to make it up as we went along, so you jumped in by the skin of your teeth. I lot of the people I served with fought in World War 2, because it wasn't that long after World War 2 - they had come to the end of their big military career, they had done about 30 years at this stage, to us as young lads, I mean, I joined when I was 15, these old boys to us they were just a joke, they were covered in medals, they couldn't move, they couldn't run very fast, and now I'm in the position that they were – I can't run very fast, all the rest of it. But we used to rag them all the time. We didn't really appreciate them for what they were and the history they had behind them. I mean we had guys, they were Japanese and the stories they used to pass onto us - it was all pretty horrific although it doesn't prepare you for what is to come.

My training – I was an engineer, although they call it a stoker. Although there is no going down boiler rooms and stuff nowadays with shovels and shovelling coal because it is gas turbines – it's push button starts. I am also a combat medic; I've got a lot of experience for that. Gunshot wounds, people treading on IEDs, people with bits missing. That sort of thing doesn't faze me out. Being an engineer when you are on a ship alongside there's not much use for people working down boiler rooms and engine rooms so we used to find ourselves attached to army units, especially in Germany, so we had a lot of experience in what the army does, but the thing that sticks in my mind mostly about that is the army food. Navy food, obviously, you've got chefs, you've got proper chefs. Although everyone rags them and says what horrible food it all is, but never, it is really good quality food, they really look after you. They hang you on the back of the army section for a couple of weeks and you're eating out of little silver sachets. There's about 6,000 to 7,000 calories a day in a compo, a box of compo and you've got enough food for a main meal to fill your hand – that's all you get. It doesn't fill up but it's got lots of energy in it. We didn't understand all this and we're eating about six or seven boxes of this a day, you've got all this energy and you don't know where it's coming from so you get back on board ship and you can't fit through the hatches, you can't get down below.

But most of it what it was about was teamwork, absolute team work. It's really difficult to explain the depth of teamwork and friendship and comradary, all the different words for it. You will know a stranger; the minute a stranger joins you know that person might be responsible for

looking after your life, your health and safety, your very existence so there's an automatic acceptance of everyone that comes to join you. Ideally once you've got out of basic training there's no more picking on people for being too slow, you've proved yourself and you've got through training, you're part of the team, you're expected to do your job. If you're the sort of person that takes on [unintelligible 0:02:58.5] job, *no I can do it easily I'll just ignore it*, you will let the side down. Would you be doing the same thing in a combat situation where people are really relying on you? It might only be dragging a couple of boxes of ammunition a few hundred yards to some slip trench, you might think, *that's a big dangerous I'll do that tomorrow, it might be quieter then*. Some people will have that attitude. They're generally the people that get weeded out in basic training; basic training is massively rough, especially for this purpose. It's not designed to finish you off as a person; it's designed to reconstruct what's inside your head to take away the civilian person that you are to a military person.

For instance, if there's two ambulances, or two big vehicles outside crashed and one of them veers towards this way you're sense of self preservation will want you to get out of the way, your head might say stay here and help, your body will go that way and you will follow it before you know what's happened. Your military training takes that away from you. You've got to go to it. In a situation you are your own police force, you are your own doctors, your own fire fighters, you are everything, and you have to be prepared to do lots of different jobs. Like I say I'm a marine engineer, a combat medic, signals, you do lots of different jobs so you can help out other people in times of stress. You might lose all your signallers and you need other people there ready trained up ready to go.

The basic training they try and make it as near to war situations as they can. They don't...well they do actually shoot at you, not directly at the body but you will have live firing areas where you will be crawling underneath rounds being fired over you. On TV, you've seen the war films, that's no real reflection of what it's like because a round can go pass you and it's a real sharp click, but it's a click that hurts your ears, you know what's gone over. You hear the bang of the weapon as the bullet is discharged, a crack as it goes by your head and a thump as it hits, what it's aimed at, although you have to understand if you hear bang, crack, thump it's aimed at you. You can't take it personally, it's just the situation.

You get a massive buzz of adrenalin and some of the really rough situations I got in when I was only about 16/17. Whose the oldest here pupil wise? What sort of age range are we talking about? 14, yeah. So in my situation another year if I was you I would be inside, I would be here, and six months time I would be getting shot at. Would you feel prepared for that now? If they were to say right you're in now No.? And that's how they get you, but it's your basic training, they make you want to be part of a team and it's that wanting to be part of the

team that helps with the comradary. Those that don't want to be part of the team they're not particularly interested, they are just in there for the job, for the money, that's why you don't really want situations like National Service because you've got people being funnelled into the military, they don't want to be there. No matter how dangerous the situation is going to be when you've got a bunch of people supposed to be looking after your back, they don't care; they don't want to be there. In times of unemployment, as well, people join it just for the job. So you haven't got people actually wanting to be in the military situation, you either are the sort of person that can do the military side of life or your not. There's nothing wrong with not being able to, I mean I couldn't survive in an office, not for 30 seconds. I'm really serious, that would be a big bowl of tears in the corner. Dyslexia hadn't got that much to do with it, I just don't like paperwork – I wasn't especially good at school, so the military suited me but you can't necessarily use it as an excuse. I didn't get anything exam, let's go in the military it's an easy option, it isn't. Because once you've joined and you've done your basic training you've got a military head forever. The rest of your life although you might be 105 years old, you're still a military person inside your head. It's the programming that takes away your civilian side, they train you to be a military person but they don't train you not to be, they don't train you to be a civilian afterwards. So you're used to going away a couple of months at a time, you come back with the lads, you go out for a few beers but you know you're going to be away for six months with no alcohol at all. As a civilian you come out and you form up around a pint and plan what you are going to do with your life and a lot of times that's when squaddies fall over is they stay around that pub table. Alcohol – it was the thing when I was leaving school, I couldn't wait to get to a pub to have a beer, what a waste of life, what an absolute waste of life, people just drink their lives away. It's a horrible thing it really is. I mean I don't touch the stuff anymore. I've seen really good friends come by get into the drink because that's what they used to do, that's what they've been trained for. And the military do certainly encourage it, really follow in on like that, but breaking certain habits.

You will travel a lot in the military and as a military person you will go around the world although it won't be a holiday. You will be getting off some plane and starting work. There's no acclimatisation, no time to buy postcards, you're getting out and getting on with the kit, but Richard knows and he will be telling you in a bit – thinking he's going to have some acclimatisation time, no, straight off the plane, spanners, the lot. So I've told you enough. I'll pass you over to Richard now, an engineer.

Richard: Hi guys my name is Richard. I joined the army about seven years ago, that was in 2005 and I joined in Birmingham as well. I used to live in Coventry at that time and my experience in the army is quite vast because I joined the Royal Engineers. With the Royal Engineers it is like combat, jack of all trades. You are not just an engineer or a

combat soldier, or a medic you are involved with a whole lot of things all together as well.

My experience within the army has been something I have enjoyed as well. As Paddy just rightly said the army is the most biggest society of work environment you can ever get and there is a vast range of jobs for everybody within the army. He was talking about the fact that he didn't want to be in the office, he wanted to be [unintelligible 0:09:26.4] and it looks like a lot of you are in midstream at the moment, so it might be that the army is not for me, that is not a real thing. The army is for everybody as well. You could be in the army and do anything kind of thing that you want to be. You could be in the army to be an accountant, engineer and any sort of profession that you are aspiring to be in the army as well. I joined the army a little bit more mature because I was in my mid 20s when I joined so I knew what was in the world before joining the Army, unlike Paddy who joined straight from school sort of thing. After my basic training, when I was in basic training it was everything about teamwork, group and I was not fazed. I cannot imagine somebody doing something wrong in this class with the whole class being punished for it, that is not like in the army. Here the single person will get punished but in the army everybody gets punished for it, and why it's just a [unintelligible 0:10:29.9] of unity and not to discard individuality as well so that you watch out for what your colleague is also doing, because if he is going to mess up and you're going to get punished you are going to tell him, you have to stop before you get noticed or anything I saw, that was one of the biggest training you ever get. Here, everybody would like to be in his own room, you know, be on his own phone or Play Station, sort of thing, in the army you are in a form of dormitory system, you know, and whatever everybody, you get used to people, but when you join basic training you are with a group for six months of your life. You don't go home or you usually go home usually once during that six months, so these are the people, maybe 20 guys or ladies, that you will be with throughout that six months and can you imagine being with somebody, you know, even being with your mum and dad for a continuous six months is like I've had enough, let alone people you've just met within the last minute and you're going to be with them for that period of time. And it takes a lot of commitment to be within that environment.

After basic training I've been to interesting places, I've been to hot places, I've been to cold places and imagine moving from being on exercise in Canada with a temperature of minus 40 working outdoors, not indoors, [unintelligible 0:12:07.7] the weather it is cold in the UK but it is really warm in here, it is really warm in the UK compared to now or maybe during February time in Canada. Minus 40 working outdoors you need to get a job done. It builds up that sort of momentum within you that whatever the situation is around you, you don't need to concentrate around you but you need to concentrate on what you need to do in that sense.

Moving from there I did a couple of societies in exercises in Canada for three months, went to Afghan for six months, it was really interesting. You get to Afghan and when I got there and what my trade was I was [unintelligible 0:12:49.5] for 24-hours then straight into the fore, or straight into the front line that you just need to go in and fire and it was more about not fighting for your life but fighting for your colleagues as well, you understand, it was also about your colleagues and it was about people that are sitting next to you or somebody who you know that well as well. That sort of development really is straight into a deep sea. Because you don't really know how to swim and you are just thrown into a deep sea and it's like could he just come up sort of thing and it was really interesting. There is a lot of learning that you get out of it and there is a lot of experience that you may not like to experience anymore. Whilst you are there but as soon as you come back to the UK and its like, ah, *it's boring here, I want to get back sort of thing.*

[unintelligible 0:13:46.2] situations and some of them may be scary, some of them interesting and all those sort of things that you may have to experience to be quite dramatic and the interesting thing I was just mentioning with our colleagues this morning was that when you are in that sort of situation little things become so important to you, you know, even the reading of a magazine, you know, it's really interesting and it's like I don't image how many of you will receive a letter through the post and you will be really eager to open that letter and see what is in there, you know, but when you are in that sort of situation a letter from a friend, family or Mrs or boy friend, girl friend or whatever it is, is like...you open that letter with a spark of life and just want to see what is in there, you know, Yorkie bars and snacks and all sorts of things that you may just walk down the stairs and just grab one was like something you used to have...it's just like Christmas. To have a Mars bar is just like Christmas because you normally don't have it sort of thing and the eagerness just to come back to the UK and just maybe have some McDonald's or JFK was something so interesting. If all these build you in life to the standard you can do without and you can't do with as well was just really interesting.

Coming from there and moving back to the UK and the experience was quite dramatic, a big change, got back from the airport Sunday afternoon, Monday morning I was down waking in the shops and all those sorts of things, you get all these feelings around you, every little sound sounds so strange to you, you know, everything that sounds around you affects what you are thinking is that a friendly thing or is that something that isn't. The only thing I would like to share that was a bit dramatic was the fact that when I came back I couldn't sit in one position for five minutes because we had a five minute rule. If you sit in one position for five minutes and you might be the next casualty so it was like moving position all the time and in my own living room I used to sit down be watching a film and I would move about five, ten

positions before the film ends or whatever I am doing ends. Some people get over it; some people live with it for a life which is really dramatic to experience as well.

Talking about going into battle or going away and all those sorts of things, a latter part of my career, the last four years of my career it was a flash. For example, I joined my specialist unit, engineering unit, in January, came back from holidays, generic holidays, came back the first week in February walking to the office I had a warm welcome from my new colleagues and team and then a staffie just walked in. *Oh yeah, I've just come back from holiday. Are you Ritchie? Yeah, I'm Richie. Oh nice meeting you. Are you ready for us to move? Where? We're going to Afghan on Wednesday* – this was on Monday. And it's that sort of life that you have to be ready at every time. Every point of time in your life you will be moving somewhere and you are not going with that sort of anger [unintelligible 0:17:28.4] because what happened is that as soon as you know that you are going out there your movements to Afghanistan or to any part of the front is like saving a life for somebody else and on the other hand you have to be that prepared for any eventuality that may happen as well. Probably you've already had, maybe, an appointment with your [unintelligible 0:17:52.9] or I'll take you down to the playground on the weekend, don't worry, but that weekend you may not be in the UK to experience that experience with him which is quite interesting.

It is quite a fascinating environment, something so big and full of different activities, different experiences, there is no single experience that everybody may have had within the army, everybody's experiences are quite different and as much as you guys are carrying on with your course and learning about what the army is about, what experiences come out of the army it would be quite interesting to maybe have questions for us guys later on during the class so I will now pass you onto Mike.

Mike: Hi, I'm Mike. I served in the Royal Artillery for nine years – Royal Artillery, all the big weaponry. Right, I joined as a junior leader so I was actually in basic training two weeks before my 16th birthday, so basically I was one of my youngest in my year at school because I was born in July. so I ended up quite young and straight into basic training with the army which was something I was really proud to do and something I wanted to do because it's always been in my family, you know, my great grandfather, my grandfather, my father, all soldiers and I felt quite honoured to carry on that tradition. Anyway, I served a year in training and learning a skill, gunnery, signals and all the rest of it and I actually attended a military college as well to get education promotion certificates, so your school work doesn't stop here even if you join, it's true, horses for course I believe knowledge is.

I served a great deal of...well I've done several tours of Bosnia – anyone heard about Bosnia, the conflicts. The slightly older ones,

obviously. No. Richard. It's something that is pretty much on our own doorstep, you know, it's Europeans, horrific, truly horrific, but as Richard was saying it's the little things, the little things that make things better. I was asked to share a bit of a story with you. I was actually posted out into Bosnia and it was quite rough when I was out there, I was one of the first out and nobody had any mail in about two months because where we were posted out in an outpost, you know, we couldn't get into the main area of operations because it was too dangerous, they couldn't fly anything out to us so we were pretty much living off our backs, the lads were at their lowest points, no news from home, no communication whatsoever, just blotted out and doing our job. So, I took it upon myself to make everybody's day. I got a Land Rover, I got my body armour on, weapon, helmet, everything I needed and I got more body armour and I wedged it down the side panels of the Land Rover and I just went for it, straight into [unintelligible 0:21:24.3], and outward through sniper country, the lot. And I got there and I go that mail, I got everybody's letter for them, crammed it all in, shut it all down and just hammered it back, you know, didn't stop for anything, nothing, as fast as I could, and as I approached our camp gate everyone came running out going, *are you all right? Are you all right? Are you all right?* I'm thinking I cannot see anything, I'm just there with a pair of goggles and I looked like something off Mad Max, and I get out of the Land Rover and it is pepper potted, seriously, gun shots all over it. I got myself into a bit of trouble for that one but it was worth it because at the end of the day it isn't...in the military scene, especially in the army there's no individual, everybody is a team, it's about the man stood next to you, you know, how can you get on with your job if you couldn't trust him. Seriously, that's the way it's bred into you from basic training, you know, the individual has gone, Rambo wouldn't last five minutes in the British army, seriously, not a chance, he's not a team player.

But as for the basic training you eat as a team and you sleep as team, you work as a team, you fight as a team, everything is orientated around the team, you are even punished as a team. If one person does something wrong everybody is punished. So if somebody forgets to do something well you can bet your bottom dollar everybody is out on a five mile run wearing nothing but a respirator! Seriously.

But, no, getting back to the artillery I worked on all the aspect of artillery. I started off on the field guns, actually, big guns, and throughout my career I've progressed and I was actually running around the front line like an idiot guiding artillery fire to take out tactical installations even behind enemy lines when needed, so I got to see quite a lot and I did enjoy my job and I was proud to have served. Yeah, all right guys. Right, I'll pass you onto Alec from Help for Heroes.

Alec: Right, first of all I'm not one of these guys, I'm not ex-military I'm actually an ex-convict but don't let on! But my main connection is that

all three of my children served in the services. I've still got one daughter who is still serving in the Royal Artillery and my eldest son was in the signals over at Bramcote, [unintelligible 0:24:20.0] and my other son was in the RAF and he was one of the guys who last year was trying to get these guys aeroplanes to fly backwards and forwards from Afghan and Bosnia. So I've [unintelligible 0:24:31.9] as far as I am concerned but my daughter got me into this 'Help for Heroes as a casualty volunteer. I work with Help for Heroes. I'm a volunteer, I don't get paid but I'm like an ambassador for Help for Heroes.

Help for Hero's charity started in 2007. It came as a chance visit to the Solihull Hospital in Birmingham by Bryn and Emma Parry and they went to see a son of one of their friends and were quite horrified to find a ward full of very, very seriously injured men and women. You've probably all read and these guys will probably tell you that not only is there a threat from gunfire, grenades etc but one of the biggest threats that the army faces every year now is the IED, the improvised exposed device. They always give it a silly name, don't they – it's a homemade bomb! Indiscriminate, and these guys never know where their next footfall is going to be, their last footfall of whether their foot is going to be there when they have finished it. It causes a lot of deaths but for every death there is also a large number of injured. Some are physically, some are not physically injured, they have apparently got away with it but they are all injured to some extent, and its these people that come back to this country...you've got to understand that these days that the medical training that our guys like these have had and our medics that we've got out in the field are so brilliant these days they are saving lives that ten years would never have survived, they are bringing the guys back with no limbs which is unbelievable.

The evacuation team, the casualty evacuation team, you see the Chinook helicopters flying in, it's like an emergency helicopter like no other and the experience on those keeps these guys alive and then come here. A wonderful hospital and [unintelligible 0:26:19.5] in many respects. A lot didn't get through Camp Bastion and they get flown back within 48-hours into Birmingham. You've seen the Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham, it's now moved to the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital there. They're dedicating a military wing for both civilian and military personnel. Again, the work they give there is remarkable. I should think it's probably the world leader in trauma recovery. [unintelligible 0:26:46.7] at that time that they saw these guys and they said we've got to have some help them. Okay, they didn't want help in the future they wanted to help them now while they're recovering and so set out to raise some money. And the first budget they looked round to do was how can we spend this money and their whole aim was to spend it now – not after they had recovered, not when they had left the military but to help them while they were recovering, while they're in this state, [unintelligible 0:27:13.7] what can we do now.

The first thing they asked for by the head of the military there, was to build a swimming pool at Headley Court. Now, Headley Court is a defence rehabilitation unit where the majority of the injured go after they have been through the hospital system. It's rehabilitation and it gets them back their esthetics, all manner of medical help they get down there to get them back on their feet or back into normal living.

With the number of injuries involved in the loss of limbs hydrotherapy is actually a brilliant form of exercise – it actually levels people out. A non-swimmer and a swimmer can be levelled out in a swimming pool. But they have a small hydrotherapy pool down there which is just insufficient for the number of injured they've got down there. They were actually using a local bath unfortunately the locals there complained about these guys coming in there – these very badly injured guys going in there and the look of them, they didn't like the look of them using the public baths with everybody else and they actually complained to the local papers. The national press gave them such a hard time but, but it was not only embarrassing for the...I mean they're in public bath but think about the guys themselves that were going in there how embarrassed they were to walk out the first time being been a six foot two strapping individual to being shuffling on a stick and maybe in a wheelchair. It was embarrassing to them, so they wanted a swimming pool they built a brand new swimming pool and gym complex down Headley Court which they can now all go and do the hydrotherapy.

Now, Help for Heroes [unintelligible 0:28:47.7] give it to everybody – it's a hell of an experience but there are lots of charities and organisations out there that have got the experience and have been doing it for years. So what Help for Heroes has done is give out grants - grants for specific projects, not just to go into funds, not to top the funds up, if you've got a project you can help our guys with now you will get a grant for it. And this is quite impressive of all the charities that they've been given out to. I've got a list here now and it's running well over £100,000,000 gone out to all these...and it's all gone to help the family because these guys are all part of the family and how you can help them through to get them back. Some will go back to military life with problems, but the majority of the guys who have been very badly injured will never ever go back into the military no matter what world our leaders have got there, we're putting down, we're drawing down, we're making people redundant but there is no room now for an injured serviceman no matter how much we should look after them they've got to go back to civilian life but how do they go back to civilian life without the help and experience of all the other charities.

You've heard about Paddy here, he goes in at 15. A lot of the guys now are going in at 15, they're going in at 18 and joining now and they're going down the recruiting office quite regularly because they're starting down, there's a good friend of mine and 16, 17, or just a few years older than you, they're going and joining up. They've got no

experience of life when they go out there. Paddy had no experience of life when he went out there. He went into the army family and he said the team work was there. Suddenly you come back, with a bit of luck you've got some ability, with a bit of luck you've got your brains and no matter how beaten up you are legs and arms etc, dangly bits down there, inside there there's still a different person and that person has now suddenly to go outside with his injuries, with his disabilities and find out what civilian life is about and civilian life is hard for them. So all the money at the moment is going towards the rehabilitation and training, the military defence recovery capability, another big long words, basically can we help these guys go back into civilian life and key to that at the moment are personnel recovery centres. Four centres built in various garrison towns where the guys can be given training, inspiration and help to see where they can go on in the future. The flagship house at the moment is called Tedworth House down in Tidworth, very close to where to Help for Heroes started. It was a Georgian mansion which the Ministry of Defence then mothballed for about £900,000 a year and Help for Heroes said I want that building. It's a beautiful place, it's been done up inside, it used to be mess, a military mess – I don't know if you've ever seen a military mess, all Captain [unintelligible 0:31:52.4] and everybody on the wall and the majors and such like, it has been stripped and updated, it's a nice healthy, nice light place where people can go in there and [unintelligible 0:31:58.5].

It's not only given them the training they need but it's also a hub for all the other charities and the charities are moving in there so they've all got a place with a big room where they can move into, it's a one stop shop. If anybody needs help for housing, SAFA, Royal British Legion, it's there, a one stop there, so we haven't anybody trawling round – they can find all the help they need.

It's not just the guys as well it's the families. [unintelligible 0:32:27.8] volunteers. The families they're the conscripts and it's the families that very often have to pick up the pieces or help pick up the pieces so they need help as well, so that again is one of the aims of these recovery centres.

Now talking about the names [unintelligible 0:32:44.0] they are an absolute inspiration, but what about the ones that walked, the ones that didn't get injured. One of the first projects of Help for Heroes was asked to help for was another charity called Combat Stress. Combat Stress started in 1919 after the First World War. It was then called hell shock, nowadays it is called PTSD and the numbers now that are coming through from Afghanistan and from Bosnia and from Iraq and before there was putting quite a stretch on the charity and [unintelligible 0:33:20.6] this is just an idea of what Combat Stress is dealing with at the moment. Last year it received 1,443 new referrals. Currently it has a case load of 4,800 people on their books, including 228 Afghanistan veterans and 589 Iraq veterans. So you see it's a

huge, huge problem. It's one, I think, which the guys here would say would mainly kept under the carpet a lot until two or three years ago, it was never acknowledged, it didn't want to be acknowledge and if you acknowledged it you had PTSD you were [unintelligible 0:33:57.9] around, you weren't there, it has now become positive and they're now looking out for it and I would like to think that the media coverage and acknowledgement that we are now getting the fact that guys are suffering a lot, they are suffering, it is men and women by the way, there are a lot of women who have been very, very badly injured is now being acknowledged and now starting to give some credence giving this help. And as I said they built a new wing to their house, [unintelligible 0:34:23.8] to Combat Stress and gave £3 million towards their 'Through the Enemy Appeal' which is hoped to include more case workers and get more out there and give the help and support they need. So, that's the charities that we are looking at.

What's the future for these people? Well, it's bleak in many respects and every bit of money that has been raised for Help for Heroes, it's a civilian charity, it's all three services as well. The RAF have had money, the marines and also the navy have all had grants to improve their facilities that way. The future for these people, some of these 18, 20 years old now and they're going to go on for 50/60 years and they're still going to be quite [unintelligible 0:35:20.8] all the way through there. One of their newest intervention awards, projects that they've got going to help the wounded involved dogs. A lot of guys that is getting help from PTSD, a lot are getting help to get their ability again but there are some who, unfortunately, will never ever be other than dependent for the rest of their lives either from brain injuries, severe back injury or severe trauma and they're always going to need help. Those that are a little bit more mobile can live a semi independent life but we've just teamed up with a thing called Canine Partners, it's dogs for the disabled basically that sort of thing and we've got seven dogs in training, three dogs out, seven dogs in training which are helping the guys to live their own in lives - so they empty the washing machines, they answer the door, these dogs are amazing but not only are they amazing they are also brilliant comradeship for them and they're their soul mates. I was looking at a young lad over at Crufts recently and was very badly beaten up and he's in a wheelchair, he can do a certain amount of ability but not a lot but this dog, Kissy, is his soul mate and is probably more help for him mentally as he is physically.

[End of recorded material]