



Billy came back from Afghanistan rather earlier than planned. A Scots Royal Marine, he was on patrol in Sangin province when his Jackal armoured car hit a roadside bomb and was blown apart. Both his legs have been badly broken, but he has been told he is not going to lose them. "I'm definitely going to enrol in the Paralympics," he joked from Selly Oak, the military hospital in Birmingham where all our serious casualties go. The reality is that months of long and painful recuperation lie ahead of him. As to the long-term mental effect, that can only be guessed at.

British soldiers killed in action – 322\* of them now, since 2001 - are returned home with full military honours. Flags fly at half-mast, and the Union Flag is draped over the coffins as they are carried in a slow march off the plane at Brize Norton.

For the war wounded, however, there is no recognition. Anyone who flies back from Kandahar is only too aware of the stretchers and the hospital equipment they carry in what would otherwise be the first-class section. The figures, in so far as they can be interpreted, suggest that the standard army calculation of seven wounded to every soldier killed is, in the case of Afghanistan, more or less accurate. Between 2006 and 2009, when 138 servicemen were killed, 573 military and civilian personnel were categorised as wounded in action. Of these, 71 were classified as "very seriously injured", which means that their lives were in danger and that they may well have lost limbs or been blinded; 94 were "seriously injured," which meant that, while there was cause for concern, there was no imminent danger to "life or reason" and what about those suffering from combat stress?

These are our heroes and need our help. Here's where you get to do your bit.

On the 18th September 2010, Nisha Jacob, a Legal Secretary from Whiteford Crocker Solicitors in Plymouth will undertake a sponsored Tandem Skydive to raise money for the charity Help for Heroes. All you need to do is sponsor her. How hard can that be compared to what our brave men and women have to do? Think - What if it was your brother, son, husband?

You can do your bit by clicking on the following link and adding your sponsorship – <http://www.bmycharity.com/whitefordcrocker> or if you wish to make a cash donation, there are sponsorship forms in our offices.

Thank you for all your help and support towards this worthy cause.

NB: Please note that of all the money raised, £200.00 will contribute towards the cost of the jump. All remaining funds will be transferred directly to Help for Heroes.

\*Statistics as at 17<sup>th</sup> July 2010

All the information and opinions are provided by the author and are not supplied by Help for Heroes.