

Bowman Award – Paul Burns

Nominated by:



Paul was born on the 25 March 1961 in Farnborough, Hampshire, where he now lives with a 3 legged dog called Fudge!

Newly recruited to the Parachute Regiment (2nd Bat 2), Paul was on duty in Northern Ireland when a four-ton truck in which he was travelling was destroyed by an IRA bomb. Eighteen of his friends and colleagues were killed in the Warrenpoint blast — the biggest single loss of life during the Troubles.

Paul barely survived. His body was broken; his left leg was amputated below the knee and his skin was burned down to the bone. Those who saw him wondered if it might not be kinder to let him die. But Paul refused to be beaten. He had made a promise to himself that he would make up for the loss of his friends' lives by living his own life to the full.

Since then, Paul has sailed around the world, obtained his RYA Yachtmaster qualification with the help of the Gwennili Trust and BLESMA – The Limbless Veterans, and accrued over 1,000 skydiving jumps. Paul is an ambassador for BLESMA's work and has over time helped scores of new amputees to re-engage with sports by leading BLESMA's sailing and ski-biking rehabilitation activities.

Paul has undertaken acting roles in well known dramas, written a book and served as a motivational speaker.

Paul's injuries did not put a stop to his



career. He continued to serve, working as a Project Engineer within Research & Development and was also part of the Red Devils Display Team.

Over the years, Paul continued to battle his injuries and put up with an incredible amount of pain. Finally, the decision was taken to amputate his right leg as well. Life as a double amputee is very different to a single amputee, yet Paul has embraced his new situation and is not only skydiving with the BLESMA Trans4mers, but is also planning on tackling many more challenges in the future.

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