

**Russ Roberts** (aged 49) is from Canterbury. He served in the 1st Battalion Duke of Edinburgh Royal Regiment between 1978 – 1985.



"I joined the Army because I wanted to see some of the world and become part of a team. After joining my Regiment in Germany in 1978, fitting in well and making many friends. I was promoted to Lance Corporal within 6 months and became section leader. This I found very challenging role.

In 1979 I was to undertake my first tour of duty in N Ireland stationed in Londonderry. This was quite an eventful tour with riots, ireds and the odd shooting. I also went to

Canada for a live firing exercise. I spent just over four years in Germany which I enjoyed very much.

Then in 1982 I was posted to Crossmaglen in South Armagh, known as Bandit Country. Whilst here our camp was mortared by the IRA twice and we had one of our patrols ambushed. We were lucky in that we did not lose any of our men.

In 1984 I married my wife Lesley, I then took a posting to the training depot in Crickhowell in South Wales as an adventure training instructor - teaching rock climbing, canoeing, abseiling, etc to junior soldiers. We were here for 18 months, I was told at the end of this posting that I would be going back to NI for a further two years. This I refused to do as I did not want to put my family in any danger, so I decided to leave the Army and chance my arm on Civvie street.

It took me about 7 years to settle down after leaving the Army. Even to this date I am still very regimented in everything I do (i.e. timings, appearance...things have to be just so)

I now suffer with PTSD. Also suffer with arthritis of the spine, neck, shoulders, hips and knees.

Due to my poor health I am no longer working. This has been very difficult financially, but we have pulled through what we hope have been the most difficult times.

After speaking to a friend, I approached RBL for support in 2008 and then 2009. They have given me financial support that allowed me to buy art materials as part of my therapy treatment. More recently they helped fund a replacement side door to secure my garage where I store the tools for my therapy.

The art materials supplied by the RBL enable me to escape from my dark place from time to time. The art allows me to give something back too. Having my side door replaced has settled my nerves somewhat because it was easy to get into. Now everything is safe and secure. I am very grateful for the help I have received from the RBL.

I am a family man, I have been married for almost 26 years to Lesley and we have two children (Leanne & Scott) – and we have two lovely grandchildren, Riley (3) and Hudson (8 months). Due to my condition, I do not go out much and so spend much time with my family and friends. At home I do oil painting, mainly landscapes and seascapes, and also make walking sticks.

I can not praise the RBL enough for the help and kindness they have shown me. Being a proud man I found it difficult to ask for help. Having received the help and kindness so far, I will not hesitate in recommending the Legion to other service personnel I know. They assist Service personnel in any way possible should they fall on difficult times. The help the Legion gives helps to make their lives a little more comfortable."