

**TOTAL  
RAISED:  
£21,579**

**David Wilkins, 60, explains  
how PTSD Resolution helped  
him cope with his experiences  
in the armed forces**



***“I now have a  
future to look  
forward to”***

**W**hen David Wilkins thinks about the future, he is able to do so with a sense of hope. Yet just five years ago, looking forward to anything would have felt impossible. “It didn’t matter how good or bad something was, everything seemed meaningless,” recalls David.

He first started feeling detached from the world during his service in the army, which was from 1972 to 1976. “I joined the infantry when I was 18 and served in the UK, Germany and Belfast. It was while we were touring Northern Ireland that one particular incident really affected me – we were ambushed by two gunmen and my friend got shot right next to me. He died a few days later and I felt as though I was a failure, that if I had done something differently then he wouldn’t be dead.”

Although David tried to push this memory to the back of his mind, he found himself haunted by it. “I became

paranoid,” he says. “I went on leave but would imagine weird things, like gunmen on the roof. I went back to my unit but I couldn’t see the sense in anything. I started drinking heavily first thing to try to numb my feelings, which was something I’d never done before.”

David eventually bought himself out of the army and tried to forget all about it. “I tried to put it in a box and bury it. However, I’d get daily flashbacks to the ambush and I was always struggling to clear these thoughts from my mind. There was a constant dark cloud over me and I felt detached from the world.”

It wasn’t until more than 30 years later that things came to a head when David suffered a breakdown in 2009. “I found myself in the supermarket, extremely upset but with no idea how I got there. Someone got me to the doctors and I just started talking about all these things I’d been keeping buried inside. I completely

fell apart after that and couldn't function normally any more. I couldn't sleep, I was either constantly pacing up and down or sitting in tears each day."

David was referred to a psychiatrist where he was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – an anxiety disorder caused by frightening or distressing events. "I was glad in a way when I got the diagnosis," says David. "It was a relief to find there was a reason I'd been this way."

Shortly after his diagnosis, David moved into housing provided by the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation – a charity providing housing and support to vulnerable and disabled ex-Service men and women – where he learnt about PTSD Resolution. "They have monthly drop-ins at Sir Oswald Stoll and someone from PTSD Resolution gave me their number. I had six counselling sessions with them and it was like a weight being lifted off my shoulders. There was no pressure to go over old ground. Instead, they helped me deal with my problems. I'm now going back for another six sessions and I feel confident I'll be able to get rid of the PTSD for good."

Since discovering PTSD Resolution, David has already noticed the positive changes. "It was upsetting to learn I hadn't been the dad I thought I was, and that my PTSD was a major reason for me parting from my wife. However, since getting help, I've developed a great relationship with my three children and ex-wife. My youngest daughter has also seen PTSD Resolution about her problems with me, and she has really benefited from their services."

David's flashbacks are now reduced and he feels more positive about life. "When you're depressed, everything's black and white – things are either brilliant or they're awful – but now when I'm feeling like that, I can stop those thoughts and focus on the things that are good in my life.

"Before I received help, all I could see in my future was a gravestone, but now there's things I want to do – like go to Australia – and I've got stuck into work and enjoy playing music again. Thanks to PTSD Resolution, I can say that I do have a future, which is something I didn't feel I had before."

## PTSD Resolution

THE FACTS

- PTSD Resolution is a charity that offers counselling with a 78 per cent success rate to UK armed forces, TA and Regular Reserves and dependents.
- The charity aims to relieve mental health problems resulting from military service and to ease reintegration into a normal work and family life.
- Its national outreach programme has more than 200 counsellors who are trained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (TFCBT).
- Counselling is brief and effective – an average of five one-hour sessions. No referral is needed, thus reducing any sense of stigma.



David can now finally indulge his love of music again

The Candis Big Give

UPDATE

The £21,579 PTSD Resolution raised in The Candis Big Give will go towards the treatment of 50 veterans who need help for PTSD, which causes flashbacks, depression and can lead to violence, job loss and suicide. A course of treatment costs £400 and usually involves five sessions with a counsellor.