

INTRODUCTION

Deployment can be stressful for both those in the military and their families. Often this stress leads to serious difficulties in marriage and family life—rates of separation are higher in the armed forces than in other walks of life. The horrors of war are very real and it can take time to come to terms with the effect these experiences have upon us.

This booklet has been written to help those who are suffering with such difficulties, whether they are currently serving or have served in the armed forces, and their families. It is my story—an honest, personal story, written to show that there is life after deployment, when even mental illness and problems with drug and alcohol can be resolved. With the help of God, nothing is impossible!

This story unfolds the life of an individual—me—but it could be anyone's story. Many of the issues I have had to deal with are common to all members of

the armed forces. Everyone's experience is different, but there are also many similarities. Stress and mental health issues can come in many forms: delusions, nightmares, depression, hallucinations, and a number of other ways.

This booklet looks at my life in the military on a day-to-day basis, giving examples of some of the hardships that I encountered. Military personnel face many temptations, such as drugs, alcohol and immorality; and yielding to these is deemed to be totally acceptable. We cannot, however, live like this without facing the consequences. Many lives have, like mine, spiralled out of control and have led to complete breakdown.

That does not need to be the end, though—as I discovered. With the right kind of treatment people can be given back their lives. There is much help, both medical and practical, for forces personnel these days. The problem is often that the sufferer doesn't come forward to receive the help on offer.

The Lord God Almighty is by far the biggest help I have found for myself and his ways have completely turned my life around. Anyone who is willing to count the cost of being a Christian and who wholeheartedly comes to God can receive his help. He will not turn away anyone who comes to get life. The Bible says,

*Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow.*

(Isaiah 1:18)

It doesn't matter what has gone before, how far down we have gone or what we have done; God can and does rescue us for himself and his glory. God is a God of miracles, and often it takes a miracle to turn our lives around. We may feel that all is lost and there can be no getting out of our predicament; but although we may feel helpless and hopeless, God is not. I can wholeheartedly say that God is the friend of sinners and welcomes them! We are all in the same boat, whoever we are, and we need God's help. My story is proof of the amazing fact that he will help and deliver where we can't!