

Tuesday 7th June, 2022 (*For immediate release*)

EDINBURGH VETERAN SCOOPS SILVER MEDAL AT INTERNATIONAL GAMES

Former Scots Guard Fraser Rowand (CORR) said he was “completely shocked” to win the silver medal in the cross-fit event at the Veteran Games in Israel.

Fraser, 41, has returned to Edinburgh after the “inspiring” event last week (SUN 29th MAY- FRI 3rd JUNE) which brought together wounded, injured and sick veterans from across the UK and Israel.

The former Lance Corporal from Granton took up exercise to help recover from post-traumatic stress disorder after serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. He struggled after leaving the Armed Forces in 2013 but started to turn his life around with help from Poppyscotland. He now works in Lady Haig’s Poppy Factory in Edinburgh.

Fraser joined a team of 60 from across the UK and competed in the swimming and cross-fit events. He was also reunited with his former platoon commander, Leo Docherty, Minister for Defence People and Veterans, who supported the Games.

Fraser said that the competition had motivated him to continue training and pursue his dream of qualifying as a personal trainer.

He said: “I was completely shocked to win the silver medal. I just went in and hoped for the best. I managed to complete all the tasks and thought it went well.

“The whole experience was unreal. Everyone was so welcoming, and we were treated like VIPs every day. There was a wonderful atmosphere, especially with support from all the families.

“It was truly inspiring to meet other veterans and humbling to learn about their experiences. Everyone had different abilities – there were people in wheelchairs, those who were blind or had other disabilities. But there was a real sense of pride in what they were doing, and they all refused to give up.

“I felt that the swimming event on Tuesday went badly and that knocked my confidence a little. But then the next day I had a fresh start in the cross-fit. It really shows what you can achieve when you put your mind to it.

“Although it was a competition, there was a real sense of camaraderie, and we were in it together. We also met professors from both countries who were there to discuss the physical and mental health aspects. There was no divide between us, and we’d all sit down together to have dinner each night. I’ve made some great friends and we’ll stay in touch.

“It’s hard to explain the powerful impact that this event had. I think it’s going to take me a few weeks to come back down from it. But it has really motivated me to move forward and continue to work at becoming a personal trainer.”

Fraser, a father-of-five, travelled to Israel with his wife Susan, as well as other competitors and their families. The families also enjoyed a range of cultural excursions around Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in between events.

He also laid a wreath at the Commonwealth War Graves in Jerusalem.

Charlie Pelling, manager of Lady Haig's Poppy Factory, said: "Congratulations to Fraser on this fantastic achievement. His commitment and motivation are truly inspiring, and this is thoroughly well deserved.

"The Veteran Games are a wonderful event that recognises the power of sport and comradeship in supporting veterans' mental and physical health. I hope that Fraser's story will inspire other veterans who are facing similar challenges."

The Veteran Games were organised by Beit Halochem UK, a national charity devoted to raising awareness and funds for Israel's wounded veterans and victims of terror. The event recognises the fundamental role played by sport and family in supporting veterans' recovery after physical and psychological challenges.

Participants competed in a wide range of sports, while also learning how their respective countries provide care for former servicemen and women who are wounded, sick and injured. The conference also saw internationally renowned academics and mental health experts from both countries meet to discuss veterans' health, recovery, and welfare issues.

The Games are entirely funded by philanthropic donations, with Poppyscotland providing support with travel expenses for five Scottish competitors.

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Notes to Editors

- For further information and all media enquiries, please contact Hazel Mollison, PR Manager at Poppyscotland, on 07512 791 737, or email at h.mollison@poppyscotland.org.uk.
- Poppyscotland provides life-changing support to the Armed Forces community. Money raised from the Scottish Poppy Appeal and Poppyscotland's year-round fundraising enables them to deliver support to members of the Armed Forces community in Scotland by providing tailored funding and assistance. The charity also funds services in advice, employment, housing, mental health, mobility and respite. Please note that we are known as "Poppyscotland", and not "PoppyScotland" or "Poppy Scotland". For more information, please visit us at: www.poppyscotland.org.uk.
- For more information on the Veteran Games and Conference please visit: bhuk.org Beit Halochem is the only official organisation in Israel to meet the needs of the 51,000 wounded soldiers and victims of terror by offering them support for the rest of their lives. The four Beit Halochem Centres in Israel, provide a blend of exceptional rehabilitative services including physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and chiropractic treatments conducted along-side social and specialised sport options, educational programmes and a vast range of creative activities.