

Now the London 2012 Paralympics are truly underway, messages of support are flooding in for the military athletes who are competing in the Games. Report by Lorraine McBride.

The Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir David Richards, members of the Armed Forces serving in Afghanistan, and staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham and the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court have all taken time to compose encouraging and rousing messages of support for Team GB military Paralympians Captain Nick Beighton, Lance Corporal Netra Rana and Private Derek Derenalagi.

The story of our military Paralympians is extraordinary and reflects their remarkable achievements following trauma and their ability to succeed at the highest pinnacle of their chosen sports.

Kicking off the support, General Richards said: "I wish the very best of luck to all our athletes as they compete in the greatest ever Paralympic Games. I especially want to hail the achievements of those servicemen and women who have been injured during their duty and have come back to attain the highest level of their chosen sport. Their commitment and hard work should inspire us all."

Professor Sir Keith Porter, Head of Traumatology at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, said: "Hi guys, it's my pleasure to be asked to speak to you. We're delighted here at the RCDM [Royal Centre for Defence Medicine], particularly from the civilian side of the hospital, that you are partaking in the Paralympics. We're proud of you in terms of your recovery and equally proud that you're going to step forward into the Games and we wish you all the best."

Colonel Kevin Beaton, Officer Commanding Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham (QEHB), said: "I can't tell you what an inspiration you are to our guys up on the wards, some of them are in a really low place. God bless you. Keep up the good work and best of luck, especially the servicemen and women among you."

Major John Harker, Officer Commanding Patient Support Services, added: "Guys, I know a lot of people have been through here. Just want to wish you all the best for the Paralympics. I know you'll do your best for Team GB and do your best for the guys. Well done."

To bring some much needed cheer to injured personnel undergoing treatment at QEHB, Kath Ryan provides homemade cakes through the charity 'Cakes 4 Casualties'.

Ms Ryan said: "Hi, Kath 'the cake lady' here. Just wishing you all well for the Paralympics. It's a real privilege to know you all. I'm sending you all my love and blessings and hope that you have a fabulous time."

From the doctors at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine, QEHB: "Hi guys, good luck from all the doctors at RCDM."

And the nurses: "On behalf of all the team of 412 Ward at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, the NHS and military staff, we'd like to say 'go for it Team GB and our Paralympians!'"

Other staff at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine, QEHB, concluded: "From the staff at RCDM, good luck to all our Paralympic team. Go Team GB!"

At Camp Bastion in Afghanistan, the medical teams were keen to express their pride in the military Paralympians.

The Critical Care Air Support Team said: "A massive hello from Camp Bastion. We're involved in taking all the seriously injured personnel back to the UK. We just wanted to say a massive good luck to everyone taking part in the Paralympics. Come on Team GB!"

The nursing team said: "Hello, we're the nursing team who work on the ward in Camp Bastion. We look after the wounded soldiers and civilians. We just want to say good luck. Go Team GB!"

Staff in the Role 3 Hospital said: "Hi, this is the Role 3 Hospital in Camp Bastion in Afghanistan and we're wishing all those serving and ex-serving personnel all the very best in the Paralympic Games."

Members of the Medical Emergency Response Team said:

</>"Hello, we're the Medical Emergency Response Team based here in Camp Bastion in Afghanistan. We're responsible for picking up casualties at point of wounding and extracting them back to the field hospital here. We'd just like to wish all current serving and ex-serving military personnel in the Paralympics good luck."

Back in the UK, staff and patients of the Services' premier rehabilitation facility, Headley Court, also wished the athletes luck.

The nurses said:

"Good luck to Team GB from physios and occupational therapists at Headley Court."

Physiotherapist Helen Saunders said:

"Good luck Team GB, go get lots of gold medals, we are all behind you, especially everyone at Headley Court."

Captain Luke Sinnott, 33 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Good luck Nick and Derek, good luck with the Paralympics guys, you're a bit of an inspiration for all the guys here. Do remember, if you don't win, don't bother coming back!"

Sapper Jack Cummings, 101 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Hi Nick, just want to wish you the best for the Games. Do us engineers proud and bring back the golds. All the best."

Lieutenant Alistair Spearing, 28 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Hi Nick, I followed you to Germany and followed you to Headley Court and I'll be following you all the way through the Paralympics. Good luck mate, I know that you and the whole GB team will do us proud."

Occupational therapist Michaela McCann said:

"Good luck guys, now is your time, good luck, make it count and do us proud. Go Team GB!"

Physiotherapist Kate Sherman said:

"I just want to say good luck to the whole of Team GB, especially some of the guys I've worked with. You've all done really well and I'm really looking forward to seeing you compete so good luck all of you."

There were also messages of support for our athletes from their commanding officers.

For Captain Nick Beighton who is competing in the Mixed Double Sculls, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Fernandes, Commanding Officer of 3 Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME) Regiment, said:

"On behalf of all ranks in 3 RSME Regiment I would like to express all of our best wishes to Captain Nick Beighton as he starts his final preparations for the Paralympic Games. Nick has been on a long journey over the past two-and-a-half years, recovering from his life-changing injuries at record-breaking speed and then going on to build his fitness to the point where he was able to secure a place in the British Paralympic Rowing Team.

"His positive outlook throughout what have been the most challenging and testing of circumstances has been nothing short of truly inspirational. We are all very proud of him and will be shouting as loud as any when race-time comes. Go Nick, your country and regiment is willing you on to a medal."

For Lance Corporal Netra Rana who is hoping to secure a gold for Team GB in the Sitting Volleyball, Lieutenant Colonel David Robinson, Commanding Officer of the Royal Gurkha Rifles, said:

"The Royal Gurkha Rifles is extremely proud of Lance Corporal Netra Rana and all wish the Team GB Sitting Volleyball Team the very best of luck at the 2012 Paralympics. Lance Corporal Netra has dedicated himself to this goal and has very much proved, despite being severely injured in Afghanistan, that he has not lost his strong competitive character or will to succeed and win for which Gurkhas are renowned. We are all right behind him in this endeavour and will be cheering him all the way. Good luck!"

And finally, for Private Derek Derenalagi who is competing in the F57 Discus, Lieutenant Colonel Shove Gilby, Commanding Officer of 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment, who served with Private Derenalagi in 2007, said:

"Derek, the soldiers and officers of the Mercian Regiment wish you the very best of luck for the Paralympic Games. I know that your professionalism, faith and bravery as a soldier will allow you to take the fight to the opposition and be victorious. Stand Firm, Strike Hard young man. The boys are behind you and will be cheering you all the

way."

For more messages of support see the YouTube videos at Related Links.</p>