

Royal Marine receives six-figure payment after witnessing death of friends and colleagues

A Royal Marine who suffers from severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder has been awarded a six-figure compensation payment.

Alan Sessions from Deal was a Sergeant Bugler in the Royal Marines when he witnessed the bombing of the Deal Barracks School of Music by the IRA in September 1989.

Sessions, who was 33 at the time, was standing just metres away when the bomb went off and immediately helped rescue his friends and colleagues from the carnage. He helped extract and identify dead bodies, many severely mutilated, and was called on to attend the post mortem examinations and give evidence at the inquests. Later he played at the Memorial Service held to commemorate the victims.

Sessions was awarded a nominal payment in 1992 for psychological damage but his condition became progressively worse until he suffered a complete mental breakdown in 1996. During this time he was unable to sleep and suffered from recurrent panic attacks and flashbacks.

His personality changed so dramatically that he became alienated from his friends and even went missing from the home he shared with his wife.

Sessions was entitled to apply for voluntary redundancy from the Royal Marines in 1996 but forfeited a £40,000 redundancy payment by leaving early because he simply couldn't cope any longer. He has been unable to work since.

Solicitor Martin Coyne from Manchester law firm Ralli, said:

"I am delighted that we have secured this substantial settlement for Alan. It has been an extremely difficult case, not least because we had to re-open the original case and overturn the award given at that time.

“His life has been left in ruins and he has suffered enormously as a result of this wanton act of terrorism. Everybody hears about the victims who die but these atrocious acts also leave a lasting legacy in the form of people like Alan, whose life will never be the same again.

“The six-figure settlement we secured will go some way towards compensating him for the pain, suffering, loss of amenity and loss of earnings he has suffered. It will also help towards his future care.

“Although it may seem like a large sum, it is nothing compared to the ruination of this poor man’s life.”

Sessions adds:

“I lost my friends back in 1989. I also lost me. Had it not been for the support of my wife and family, who have been through so much stress, I don’t think I would still be here. I’m pleased that the legal stuff has come to an end so that I can try to get on with rebuilding the rest of my life.”