

*Identify Yourself***1ST PLACE:** **Sergeant Steven Durham**  
7/15/2010 (Diabetes)  
Royal Corps of Signals

I have been a member of the British Army, Royal Corps of Signals, for 9 years and have suffered from type I Diabetes for eight of them, although the condition restricts me in some areas, with motivation and determination I have managed to sustain a successful career but not without its mishaps.

A few years ago, a friend told me about Universal Medical ID and persuaded me to look at the medical tags they did. I tried several variations many years ago but didn't like any of them. It is very sensible to advertise your medical conditions and it does save your life as your about to find out however, the bracelets I tried previously were uncomfortable, metal and nonmilitary. They just didn't feel or look right and as such I started to "forget" to wear them.

Many years ago I was participating in some adventurous training in the Harz mountains in Germany, I was alone and trekking 20 – 30 kilometers a day for 6 days. On the third day with little sleep and even less food I found myself getting very lethargic, hot, dizzy and uncomfortable. Before long I had collapsed and when I regained consciousness I telephoned for medical assistance. When the Ambulance finally arrived I was drifting in and out of consciousness and was unable to explain to the medical team my situation. When I woke up in hospital the German Doctor explained to me that they eventually discovered I had Diabetes but took them quite a while and I was in a critical state for a longer period of time than I should have been because I had no medical ID to aid in their diagnosis.

After this incident my friend directed me to the Universal Medical ID website and I found that the metal, solid, uncomfortable bracelets were only a small portion of what was on offer. I found a very military fabric, woven, disruptive pattern material (DPM) design and had to have it, I also personalized the plate to say :- STEVEN DURHAM – TYPE I DIABETIC – NEED SUGAR.

This was the message I wanted to get across to my potential life savers, having high blood sugar at my age is not that harmful but having low blood sugar is very worrying and its in this state that we suffer unconsciousness and coma so the necessity for sugar is very important. Because of this particular design I was happy and proud to wear the medical ID and because of the vast array of designs there really is something there for everyone.

On a live firing exercise last year I was one of an eight man team undertaking pre-deployment training prior to Afghanistan. We started to patrol with our array of weapons heading towards our intended target. All of a sudden we were under attack and we returned fire onto the enemy, this was the third such exercise of the day and it was still only 0945hrs. I had eaten well but had also exercised well. As we advanced onto the enemy one of the instructors shouted "man down". This was the indication that one of our team had been hit within the scenario and we needed to evacuate him out of fire and start battlefield first aid whilst at the same time continue to fight the enemy. As me and a friend dragged the injured soldier to safety I felt myself becoming very weak and hot. When we reached safety and started first aid my colleague could tell there was something wrong and remembered seeing my medical ID. He asked me what was wrong but all I could reply was garbled gibberish. He lifted my sleeve and read the medical ID, he pushed some glucose tablets down my neck, (we all carry them, just in case we need a energy boost). As he finished first aid on the injured soldier I had recovered and we promptly joined the rest of our team and defeated the enemy.

Wearing the Universal Medical ID gives me the confidence to do everything I want to do without worrying to much about the consequences, knowing that if it does go wrong, with the information on the ID and cards I can concentrate on being a soldier and not on my medical problems.