



Daniel's dream day as an Army man!

Five-year-old Daniel Warne from Reepham near Norwich recently had his dearest wish to be an Army man for a day granted by Starlight Children's Foundation, the UK's leading wish granting charity for children with serious and terminal illnesses.

Daniel, or Dan as he is known to his family and friends, was first diagnosed with a recurrent optic glioma, a form of brain tumour, when he was just 11 months old. He has now been battling the condition for five years, since November 2008. During this time, Daniel has had to endure gruelling chemotherapy treatments, a brain operation and many hospital stays, all of which he has faced with great resilience, fortitude and bravery.

Daniel is a very determined young man, who knows what he likes and what he doesn't. He also has a fabulous sense of humour and Mr Bean is a firm favourite. Daniel has always loved the idea of the Army and its brave soldiers but this admiration was reinforced by a visit to Bovington Tank Museum in Dorset. When Daniel is at home he loves to dress up in combat gear and run around the garden with his dad, pretending to be chasing the enemy! Daniel's parents, Nikki and Steve, have even painted the garden shed in camouflage colours so that it can act as Daniel's Army HQ!

Nikki, Daniel's mum, heard about Starlight's wish granting programme and decided to put Daniel forward for a wish. He has suffered a huge amount as a result of his illness and she thought that he would really benefit from a special Starlight treat! The charity's wish granters said they would be delighted to grant Daniel a wish and it wasn't hard for Army-loving Daniel to decide what his wish would be ... to be an Army man for a day!

On Thursday 31st October, Daniel's Starlight wish came true when he spent the day with the British Army's Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) at Merville Barracks in Colchester. The team had all been made aware of Daniel's special visit and no effort was spared to make sure that Daniel and his family had the most brilliant day.

On arrival, Daniel was taken by army truck into the barracks, which was a very exciting way to arrive for this would-be-soldier! Daniel and his parents Nikki and Steve and his older sister Jasmine, aged 12, followed him in and together they were invited on a tour of all the army vehicles that the REME are currently working on, including trucks, vans and a Jackal. Daniel loved getting to see all the big vehicles and he even got to sit in a few!

Watched by his family, Daniel was then shown how to hold and fire some of the weapons. As Daniel wasn't able to fire a real gun, he enjoyed target practice using a nerf gun and a smiley face target! Then the family was taken into the woods for a simulated camp experience. The team showed Daniel how they carry all the gear needed for a 24 hour period, including sleeping bags, rations and canopy, and how they build a fire to cook their dinner and make a cuppa. Jasmine loved the Spaghetti Bolognese that the soliders prepared, from their food pack, on the camp fire!

This was followed by an amazing treasure hunt around the woods, with each clue leading Daniel to new army toys, including toy tanks, helicopters and guns. To complete his special day, Daniel was presented with his own army outfit and maroon beret with the REME badge on the front.

After the wish, Daniel's dad Steve said, *"We had the most fabulous time, and we are so appreciative to Starlight for organising this. The trip to the Barracks was just fantastic and soldiers so generous with their time. Thank you to everyone who made Daniel's wish happen!"*

Information

To refer a child for a wish or to make a donation, please go online at www.starlight.org.uk. For every £1 you donate, 92p goes towards helping Starlight's very ill children.

For more information, please contact Henny Vere Nicoll at henny@starlight.org.uk / 020 7262 2881 # 231.

Starlight grants once-in-a-lifetime wishes for seriously and terminally ill children, restoring the magic and fun of childhood and giving the whole family happy memories to share, whatever the future holds. Starlight also creates entertainment in every hospital and hospice throughout the UK.

Sick children go to Starlight parties, laugh their way through pantomimes, go out on Starlight Escapes, play games and watch films on the Starlight Fun Centre, and enjoy the toys and puzzles of the Starlight Distraction Box. Happy children respond better to treatment and Starlight helps children to forget about their illness and simply have a bit of fun.