

# REMEMBERING JAMES BROLAN



23/07/15 Written by Nick Turner



**It's been nine years since freelance soundman James Brolan was killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad alongside CBS News cameraman Paul Douglas.**

**As nine CBS News teams train for the [London Triathlon on 8 August](#) to raise £20K for the Trust in their memory, Nick Turner pays tribute to his former freelance colleague, James, in this first of two blog posts about the two journalists.**

Nine years ago in Baghdad, Paul Douglas and James Brolan were working on a story about US soldiers on Memorial Day. The CBS News crew were working with the US military when a car bomb exploded, killing James, Paul, a US army captain, and his translator. The correspondent was badly wounded, her life saved by the army medic.

James Brolan was the freelancer's freelancer. He worked as a sound recordist, but was so much more, a companion, organizer, fixer, personally charming, optimistic, funny, a polymath, punster and wordsmith. Many of us in our profession are sought out by the job, taken by surprise when we discover we are good at it, enjoy it, and are suited to the extremes and excess demanded of us. James was one, a boy soldier who after the Army found his way into working as a soundman.

I last worked with James covering an earthquake in Pakistani Kashmir. We climbed to a wrecked mountain village with a supply train of Pakistani army muleteers and their mules. They normally worked at high altitude carrying ammunition and supplies to front line troops on Himalayan glaciers. James and I had to scramble along the narrow track, running to get to the head of the mule train, filming as it passed and running forward again and again. We got to the village, filmed the survivors, and then collapsed shivering with fatigue and vomiting from the altitude. Only then James admitted that he had woken with a wretched painful back and to get the job done had massively dosed himself on pain killers.

If James had lived he would have recognized the increasing need for the Rory Peck Trust as the work of a freelancer becomes more pressurized, challenging and dangerous. He was lucky as a soldier to have been taught to work with the hazards of a war zone. Skills so many freelancers learn on the job. I know he would be swimming with us on August 8th.

*Nick Turner is cameraman at CBS News and will be one of the swimmers taking part in the London Triathlon. Next week we'll be featuring Allen Pizzey's tribute to CBS News cameraman, Paul Douglas.*

**To date, CBS News has raised just over £13,000 through their [JustGiving page](#) but there is still a way to go. Please give as much as you can to help them to reach their target in time for the [London Triathlon](#) on 8th August.**

Please also keep an eye out on our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) feeds for updates and news about the big day.



*Images courtesy of CBS News*