

## Army medic prepares for lifesaving appointment in America

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By Tina Robins



FORMER combat medic Katrina Brown, whose battle for lifesaving treatment is being backed by Standard readers, is set to fly out to the USA in March.

Katrina, is around £25,000 short of her £90,000 target, but money has come in so fast over the past three months that she has high hopes of meeting it before she heads off for a pioneering stem cell procedure.

“It’s so exciting,” she told the Standard. “I’m actually getting a bit nervous now.”

After discovering last week how much money had been raised she took the plunge and contacted the hospital in Chicago.

Katrina, 31, who is now an army wife based at South Cerney, was exposed to depleted uranium while serving in Iraq. She was diagnosed with systemic sclerosis nearly five years ago and was told there was no treatment available in the UK on the NHS.

The terminal condition attacks her organs, skin and joints, hardening them. Last year she discovered expert Dr Richard Burt was treating patients successfully using their own stem cells and launched long term a bid to find £110,000 to pay for it.

But after raising almost £20,000 and spending a week in a Chicago hospital undergoing gruelling tests, Dr Burt told her she needed the procedure within weeks if it was to have any chance of success because her heart had already been damaged by the disease.

It was a huge amount to raise in such a short time. But thanks to readers, supporters and friends all over the country who have staged event and sent donations, the target is almost within reach.

Now she is hoping a final burst of fundraising will see it achieved in the next two months.

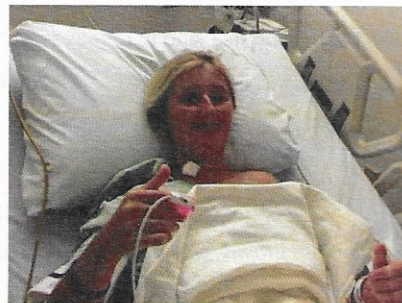
“I didn’t think we were anywhere near. It was only because I was talking to the Standard that I did the calculations,” she said.

“There was so much to raise before Christmas and it just seems to have made a massive jump.”

Just this week she learned her appeal had won a £1,000 grant from the Phoenix Charitable Trust in Cirencester and she is currently waiting to hear that the appeal has been given an official number from the Charity Commission.

As the appointment approaches she is also planning a pop up shop in the town. “I am literally going to sell everything I own,” she said.

Donations are being made through [katrinasfuture.org](http://katrinasfuture.org) while cash and cheques for Katrina’s Stem Cell Fund are still coming into the Standard office in Dyer Street.



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