

# Murray Bridge man shows Spirit

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Fighting Spirit: Graeme is the first ever para-athlete to take part in the Spartan Sprint obstacle race in Sydney on Sunday. . .

by Dani Brown

Graeme is the first para athlete person to take on - and complete the Spartan Sprint obstacle race.

The 25-year-old flew to Sydney to take part in the 7-Km race on Sunday, which featured 20 obstacles such as stairs, rope and 9ft wall climbs and mud crawls.

"It was as hard as I thought it would be, and some," he said.

Graeme spent five 12-hour days in his shed last year, building a modified wheelchair to use in obstacle challenges with the first one being the Langhorne Creek Tough Mudder.

He received donations and materials from local businesses and community members to build the specialised wheelchair.

He said after training for 16 weeks for the Tough Mudder challenge he was hospitalised the night before the race. He said not being able to participate in the event made him hungrier to finish the Sydney race.

"After missing out last time, there's no way I was missing out this time," he said.

He said although he was covered in bruises, taking part in the event was worth it, completing the race in 3 hours and 22 minutes.

"Just before the finish line, you had to do a 50-kilogram sled push, then drag it 20 metres up a hill," he said.

"A heap of people had gone past me during the race and waited at the end to shake my hand and say "well done"."

Graeme said he could not have done the race without his trainer Gary Gillies, who completed the course with him.

"I've done Spartan - why don't you?" he said.

"It was all sort of difficult, but we got through it."

"It was a really good feeling, especially with the other people waiting, and knowing you're the first person in a wheelchair to do it."

Graeme said he was looking forward to taking part in the next 2 Spartan races - the 14km, 25-obstacle Melbourne Super in 3 weeks time, and the 21km, 35-obstacle Brisbane Beast in May with his team, Damaged Goods.

