

Corporal Mark Anthony Palin from 1st Battalion The Rifles was killed in Afghanistan on 18 July 2011.

Corporal Palin deployed to Afghanistan in April 2011 with B Company, 1st Battalion The Rifles, as the second-in-command of a twelve-man multiple. He was based at Checkpoint Jeker in the Nahr-e Saraj (South) district of Helmand province, Afghanistan.

On the morning of 18 July 2011, whilst guiding a patrol, he was killed by an improvised explosive device. He was on an operation to clear and exploit a cache of nearly complete improvised explosive device components that had been discovered late the night before.

Corporal Palin was born on 12 November 1978 in Plymouth, and enlisted in the Army in 1996, joining the 1st Battalion the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment in Paderborn, with whom he went on to serve in Northern Ireland and Iraq, the latter as a mortar fire controller.

Displaying his versatility and enthusiasm for soldiering, he deployed to Afghanistan this year as part of a Rifle Company, following a posting training recruits at the Army Foundation College, Harrogate. Corporal Palin's affable and straightforward approach put those around him at great ease, and he settled into B Company immediately.

Corporal Palin was a prominent Battalion personality; nicknamed 'Maldoon' by friends, he was widely known and extremely well liked by everyone who had the pleasure of serving with him. His self deprecating humour and quick wit held him in high regard with his peers, superiors, and the Riflemen alike. In a tight spot it would be Corporal Palin's humour keeping the morale up; few men have been so highly respected and appreciated.

Corporal Palin leaves behind his loving wife, Carla and his young son Lennon. At this tragic time the thoughts of the Battlegoup are very much with them, along with his father Paul, brother Matthew and sister Louise.

Corporal Palin's family paid the following tribute:

"Mark was unique, one in a million. He was loved deeply by all his family and friends. He was a devoted family man who adored his son and was so looking forward to the birth of his daughter. He will be deeply missed by all his family, friends and everyone who knew him."

Lieutenant Colonel James de Labillière DSO MBE, Commanding Officer, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Corporal Mark Palin was a Battalion personality through and through. He thrived on the friendship of many, and was generous to a fault in the friendship he gave in return. Indeed this was the very essence of the man; always putting others first, and taking huge enjoyment in making others smile and laugh, no matter how difficult the circumstances.

"He died leading from the very front, as was his way. He had a fearless bravery with which he just made things happen. And he was always restless and eager to help. In so doing he made himself the pivotal part of the team. He was hugely respected by his Riflemen and greatly relied on by his Commanders. A more selfless man you could never meet.

"But 'Maldoon' as he was known, will always be remembered for his passions. Passion for his family, passion for his football and a passion to be with his Riflemen on operations. For his Riflemen he overcame injury through dogged determination to be with them on the tour. And their patrol base is testament to his industry; rustic furnishings made by his hand, a team who are quite evidently bound by his enthusiasm, and a small poignant memorial he made for a fallen comrade, with whom he now joins, both never to be forgotten.

"We will miss him dearly. Corporal Mark Palin was the epitome of the spirit of the Battalion; relaxed, professional, committed, brave. But our loss is nothing compared to that of his loving and close family at this most devastating time. And so to them, to whom he was so clearly devoted, our thoughts and prayers go. His spirit will live on in the Battalion for ever, as will those many happy memories that he has made."

"He was a devoted family man who adored his son and was so looking forward to the birth of his daughter. He will be deeply missed by all his family, friends and everyone who knew him." Corporal Plain's family

Major Mike Turnbull, Officer Commanding B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Corporal Palin was one of life's characters. Everybody knew him and everybody loved him. He never ceased to make people laugh - it was one of his greatest gifts. He was a team player in the truest sense. I have rarely seen a man give more for those around him, or a commander care more deeply for his men. It was never 'I', it was always 'us'. He was a good soldier: adaptable, conscientious and determined; it simply wasn't in his nature to do anything by halves. He had fought hard against injury in order to deploy to Afghanistan, and there was no question in his mind of doing otherwise. He brought with him a depth of experience that his men drew deeply on for reassurance, for he never failed them. He was a fine man, a true Rifleman, and we feel his loss deeply."

Captain Bob Atherden, Second in Command, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"I first became aware of Corporal Palin when his father helped to build an extension to my mum's house; little did I know that a few months later he would arrive in B Company as a section commander!

"Corporal Palin was usually the first man I saw as I got up in Check Point Jeker due to his unusual habit of sleeping outside the front of his tent with little in the way of clothing. There were many things that made Corporal Mark Palin memorable, but I think I shall always remember him for his passion for football which extended even to finding veterans indoor matches on British Forces Broadcasting Service entertaining, something which the rest of us found difficult to understand.

"My thoughts go out to his family at what must be a very difficult time. Our brother Rifleman will be forever in our hearts. Swift and Bold!"

Warrant Officer Class 2 Peter North, B Company Serjeant Major, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Corporal Mark Palin, also known as Maldoon, joined B Company on return from two years at Army Foundation Collage Harrogate as an instructor. He was a very popular member of the Battalion and Company. He was the type of man who spoke up and loved to be involved in debates and discussions, especially about football. Football was his passion, and he played in the Battalion team and supported Tottenham Hotspur. Corporal Palin gained the respect of his Riflemen because he always placed them first. He was a good, hard working soldier, good friend and he will be sorely missed. Our thoughts are with his wife and family at this very difficult time."

Colour Serjeant Richie Brown, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Corporal Mark 'Maldoon' Palin was without a doubt the untidiest Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) I have ever served with, but a first rate Rifleman and NCO. He was my right hand man and I learnt a great deal from him. He propped me and the rest of the Multiple up when things were tough. I will miss his banter and jokes, but most of all his friendship. God speed."

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Serjeant Chris Wainwright, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Maldoon was one of the most well known and well liked blokes in the Battalion. A genuinely nice guy who was instantly likable. He leaves a huge void not only in the company but in The Rifles."

Cpl Wayne Fairnington, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Rest in Peace my bestest friend. You will be remembered always by those who loved you and knew you. We all miss you so much already. You were always there to help everyone and that's why we all loved you, (except for when Gary and Scott needed a lift back from Newport! We just sat there eating bacon sarnies!).

"I will miss all the laughs we would have! I have so many good loving memories of you Mark and I will treasure them till the day I die. I will never forget you, no-one will.

"Thoughts are with all your family and friends, especially Carla and Lennon.

"We will always be there, so don't worry. Sleep tight my friend, My hero. Love Fadge."

Corporal Dan Cartwright, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"'Maldoon', 'Stig', Mark. Words can't describe the gap you have left in all of our lives, a loving husband to Carla, a caring father to Lennon, and, most of all, my best mate. From all that knew you from years gone by, a true 'legend', the king of banter can rest easy now Son! There was and only ever will be one Maldoon!"

Corporal James Eastwood, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Maldoon - You have left a gigantic hole in our lives. I don't know where to start and definitely don't know where to finish.

"We could start with your dancing while under the influence of alcohol in the community centre, Ballykinler, or we could start at the in depth conversations about your beloved Tottenham Hotspur FC or football in general. I loved your football brain, but more than most, loved the way, when you were around, how you could make us all laugh at you and of course with you.

"To serve under Corporal Palin was a privilege and an honour. He brought the morale to the table and provided us with much entertainment. He was an awesome leader who looked out for us." Rifleman Ian Turner, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles

"The banter was always (most of the time) good and there are so many memories that we will all remember.

"My sincere thoughts are with all the family, in particular Carla and Lennon at this time. You are with your mum and Thomo now, who will watch out for you. Make sure the Stella is cold for when I arrive!

"Rest in Peace pal, Easty."

Corporal Dean Barnett, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Maldoon was an inspiration to all that met him and was someone you could look up to. He was without doubt the source of all banter and there wasn't a day that went by where he didn't make me laugh. He will be sorely missed by all."

Corporal Nick Fowler, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Corporal Palin was a top bloke who could dish out and take some serious banter. He will be sorely missed, Rest in Peace mate."

Rifleman Ian Turner, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles said:

"To serve under Corporal Palin was a privilege and an honour. He brought the morale to the table and provided us with much entertainment. He was an awesome leader who looked out for us. He will be sadly missed but never forgotten."

Rifleman Chris Sheekey, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Maldoon was one of the top blokes in Battalion and is going to be sorely missed."

Rifleman Alex Ollerenshaw, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Maldoon, what a guy, a true legend and a genuinely nice and fun guy to be around. He will be missed throughout not just the First Battalion but the whole of the RIFLES too. Rest in Peace Maldoon."

Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Liam Fox MP, said:

"It was with great sadness that I heard of the death of Corporal Mark Palin. The tributes paid by his colleagues and commanders speak volumes about the kind of soldier he was - a valued comrade and a trusted friend to many. My thoughts and sympathies lie with his loved ones at this most difficult of times."