

LANCE CORPORAL PETER MICHAEL EUSTACE 2nd BATTALION THE RIFLES ATTACHED TO DELHI COMPANY 1ST BATTALION THE YORKSHIRE REGIMENT COMBINED FORCE NAHR-E-SARAJ (NORTH) (THE DANISH BATTLEGROUP)

Lance Corporal Peter Eustace of the 2nd Battalion The Rifles deployed to Afghanistan as a Mortar Fire Controller with Delhi Company of the 1st Yorkshire Regiment, attached to Combined Force Nahr-e-Saraj (North) in Helmand Province. He was killed by an improvised explosive device on 16 November 2011 while conducting a joint patrol with his Company and the Afghan National Army.

Born on 13 August 1986 and raised in Liverpool, after a brief career as a painter and decorator, Peter Eustace found his true calling when he joined the Army in late 2004. After completing his basic training at the Infantry Training Centre in Catterick he joined the 1st Battalion of the Royal Green Jackets, who subsequently became the 2nd Battalion The Rifles. Within a year and a half he was deployed to Iraq on Operation TELIC 9. He flourished on operations and showed the dependability, courage and quickness of mind for which he became known.

His rich qualities made him a natural choice to undertake a Junior NCO selection cadre, which he passed with ease in March 2009. As a newly promoted Lance Corporal he deployed to Afghanistan for the first time on Operation HERRICK 10 in April 2009, and he led his section through difficult and testing times. The Riflemen he commanded, as well as the commanders he worked, for trusted and respected his opinion and judgement. His willingness and ability to accept responsibility made him the ideal choice to become a Mortar Fire Controller and it was in this critical role that he deployed to Afghanistan in October 2011.

His experience, diligence and character undoubtedly made the difficult first weeks of Operation HERRICK 15 safer for the Riflemen and Private soldiers he served alongside. Lance Corporal Eustace (known to his friends as 'Eust') was a huge character and a bedrock of the mortar platoon he loved. He had a wicked sense of humour, optimistic nature and love of life that will make him sorely missed by all who had the privilege to know him. Our thoughts and prayers are with his mother Carole Ann, his sister Kirsty his brother Ryan and his girlfriend Aimi.

The family of Lance Corporal Peter Eustace said: "Peter was very fit and he always wanted to join the Army, he was committed to carrying out a full career there. He will be missed by his family and friends and is loved by all. Peter was a loving son and grandson and will be especially missed by his girlfriend Aimi. He will also be missed by loving dog Macey."

Lieutenant Colonel Bill Wright MBE, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion The Rifles (2 RIFLES) said: "Lance Corporal Eustace looked and was every inch the archetypal Mortarman: utterly professional; dedicated to his fellow Riflemen and blessed with a huge character that matched his size. Full of an irreverent sense of humour no one, not even the Commanding Officer, was safe from his endless banter. After two very demanding operational tours, the first fighting on the streets of Basra on Operation TELIC 9 and the latter showing nerves of steel and huge courage in the IED laden alleyways around FOB Wishtan on Operation HERRICK 10, he had nothing left to prove as a warrior. He was one of those men you can completely rely on when things get tough." "He will be sorely missed by all, particularly the Mortar Platoon and his fellow Chosen Men in the Corporals' Mess. Their parties will be far quieter without him. All our thoughts and heartfelt best wishes are with his family and friends at this tragic time. A true Rifleman - Swift and Bold."

Lieutenant Colonel Dan Bradbury, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment (1 YORKS) said: "Although only a member of Delhi Company since deployment, Lance Corporal Peter Eustace quickly settled into operational life in Khar Nikah and became a vital part of the team. As a Mortar Fire Controller, he was a key player in the Company, ensuring that the patrols could call on indirect fire as they

patrolled their area of operations. As part of a small team, he worked hard to ensure that the mortar line could react quickly and effectively when tasked. Within days of joining the Company and he demonstrated the true grit and spirit of a Rifleman. At this difficult time, we think of his family back home, his close friends in the Company and his parent unit, 2 RIFLES; all of whom will ensure that his legacy is not forgotten. We will remember you." Major Bobby Bryan, Officer Commanding I Company 2 RIFLES said: "Lance Corporal Eustace was the backbone of the Mortar Platoon and was a huge physical and social presence. Simply being in Lance Corporal Eustace's company would raise morale as his unwaveringly optimistic and genial character would brighten our communal outlook on life regardless of the situation. If I was in need of the 'real story' I always know that Lance Corporal Eustace would have no hesitation to tell me exactly what he thought and exactly what he would do about it. Regardless of the message it was always delivered with a scouse charm that would disarm and charm you into his way of thinking." "He took his soldiering very seriously, he mastered the skill of a Mortar Fire Controller and was relishing the opportunity of plying his trade in Afghanistan. His professionalism and experience in training and when deployed was essential to making the lives of those in his company and command safer. " "It will be his depth of character, selflessness and cheerful disposition for which he will be most sorely missed. Across I Company our thoughts are with his family and close friends at home, we share in your grief and we will remember Lance Corporal Eustace always." Major Spiro Marcandonatos, Officer Commanding D (DELHI) Company, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment (1 YORKS) said: "Lance Corporal Eustace was attached to my Company Group in Forward Operating Base (FOB) Khar Nikar. I first met him on our flight to Afghanistan from Germany after which we then conducted our training package together. He served under my command in FOB Khar Nikah for 5 weeks but it was enough to confirm my first impressions of him being an upstanding and fiercely loyal individual who was enormously proud to be a Rifleman. He got huge satisfaction from his job and being part of a closely-knit team." "A lively character, he served us extremely well from the moment we were first introduced and his experience was vital to the company hitting the ground running and taking the fight to the Taliban. He will be sorely missed." Captain Mark Endersby, Second in Command, I Company 2 RIFLES said: "Lance Corporal Pete "Eust" Eustace was a Mortarman to the core. He was a giant in personality and character. It was on these broad shoulders that he carried the weight of responsibility for protecting his comrades with the mortar fire he could so accurately deliver. It is a testament to the man that all around him, including members of the Afghan Army whose trust he had quickly won, were deeply hurt by his loss." "I will never forget walking in to the mortar control area in FOB Khar Nikah a few weeks ago and running into the torrent of friendly scouse abuse that anyone, regardless of rank, had to face if they crossed the Mortar Platoon threshold! I found Lance Corporal Eustace reclining in a leopard print chair sipping on a brew behind the control desk. After talking through the finer details of his trade, I left bamboozled but wholly confident that the level of professional knowledge and pride he had would keep our Riflemen protected. I have no doubt that he will continue to watch over us until we are safe and back in Ballykinler. "Once a Rifleman, Always a Rifleman" Rest in Peace." Captain Neil Watson, Officer Commanding Machine Gun Platoon, I Company 2 RIFLES, (based at FOB Khar Nikah) said: "Lance Corporal Eustace was the epitome of a thinking Rifleman. An outstanding Mortar Fire Controller, his first concern was the safety of his troops on the ground. Positive, professional and always good humoured I relied on his opinion and good judgement during our patrols. His loss is a great blow to 2 RIFLES and the Mortar Platoon but an even greater loss to his beloved family and girlfriend Aimi. Rest in peace Eust you will never be forgotten - Swift and bold."

Warrant Officer Class 2 (CSM) Ashley Curson, 1 Company 2 RIFLES said: "Lance Corporal Peter Eustace was huge character in my Company. Everything he did (even if he shouldn't have been doing it!) he did with a smile paired with his wicked Liverpoolian sense of humour. His loss will leave a big hole within the hearts of everyone who knew him. Rest in Peace fella, it was a pleasure and privilege to have served with you and although gone you will never be forgotten. Our thoughts and prayers are with your family at this the saddest of times. Swift and Bold."

Warrant Officer Class 2 Keith Evans, Mortar Platoon, 1 Company 2 RIFLES said, "I have known Lance Corporal Eustace for a number of years now. He was an old school Mortarman through and through. You would normally bump into his bulging belly before you actually came face to face with him. Throughout the time that I knew him he was always the fountain of laughter. He would walk into work in the mornings and have this big cheesy grin on his face as though he was up to no good and had done something wrong. But that is just the way he was, happy all of the time." "I will miss him, not just as a soldier under my command over the years but also as a friend and as a genuinely nice bloke to have around and know. My deepest thoughts go straight to his family and friends. We are all feeling a loss here so I cannot imagine what they must be feeling at home. Eust, you will always be remembered. Swift & Bold."

Bugle Major James Davies, Second in Command of the Machine Gun Platoon, 1 Company, 2 RIFLES, based in FOB KAR NIKAH said: "A constant source of fun and high jinks although thoroughly professional in his job and a great friend. I will miss him, God bless the Chosen Man." Captain Rob Hilliard and Serjeant Stuart Sandison, Intelligence Officer and Intelligence Serjeant, 2 RIFLES said: "We had the pleasure of working with Lance Corporal Eustace on Operation HERRICK 10 in Sangin. In FOB Wishtan he worked tirelessly on his mortar line, in the ops room and on anything he turned his hand to. His strength, positive personality and courage were critical on many difficult days and he was always one of the first to step up and volunteer to take a place on a patrol through the dangerous alleys. Whether on operations or back in Ballykinler his sense of humour and wry smile will be missed. Our prayers and condolences are with his mother Carole Ann and family."

Serjeant Andrew Benbow, Mortar Platoon, 1 Company 2 RIFLES said: "Lance Corporal Eustace was an absolute rock within my Platoon. Newly qualified in his role he took everything in his stride and was an inspiration to all who knew him. Utterly dependable and selfless, everything he did was done with a smile both in work and on organised (and frequent un-organised) social events. " "Your loss has left us devastated but you will continue to live on in our hearts forever. Our thoughts and prayers are with your family at this tragic time. Rest In Peace brother. Swift and Bold."

Serjeant Tom Rowley Signals Platoon, Headquarters Company, 2 RIFLES said: "I had the pleasure of serving with him in FOB Gibraltar and FOB Wishtan during a very hard fought HERRICK 10. Lance Corporal Eustace was a larger than life character within 2 RIFLES with his big booming scouse accent he was never far from the fun in the Corporals' Mess and within Mortar Platoon. He will be sadly missed by all that knew him and his big smile and cheeky character. My thoughts go out to his family at this very sad time. Swift and Bold my friend. Gone but never be forgotten."

Corporal Luke Hare, Mortar Platoon, 1 Company 2 RIFLES said: "Eust was a larger than life character - known to everyone in 2 RIFLES. Always smiling he was never fazed and was the first to get on with the job no matter what it was. We had many epic nights out together and I even convinced him to come to London twice, where he discovered he could indulge his love of Chelsea Football Club. Rest in Peace."

Corporal David Warrilow Mortar Platoon, 1 Company 2 RIFLES said: "Lance Corporal Pete Eustace was larger than life and always up for a laugh. I will always remember one Saturday you shouting a well known Keith Lemon phrase with a poor accent in a busy HMV

shop in central Belfast, the place went silent as we left rather quickly! You weren't the fastest runner but would tab for miles. Eust, you will be sorely missed by all who knew you. It was a pleasure and an honour to have served with you and to have counted you as a friend." Corporal Steven Nichols, Mortar Platoon, I Company 2 RIFLES said: "Eust and I formed the basis of our mortar line for HERRICK 15 using our experience won on Operation HERRICK 10. Hard working and diligent he knew when to work hard and when to play. Always quick witted he never missed an opportunity for a laugh. Having worked hard to become a Mortar Fire Controller he had fulfilled his first ambition and was looking forward to the next; a holiday to Mexico with his girlfriend Aimi. Rest in peace." Lance Corporal Bruce Perfect, Machine Gun Platoon, I Company, 2 RIFLES said: "Lance Corporal Eustace was a much valued member of Support Company. A big brother within the tight-knit and superior Mortar Platoon family. Eust was one of the best mortar-men I have ever had the privilege to encounter. During Operation HERRICK 10 Eust provided Rifleman with critical, skilled and accurate mortar fire support, much to their appreciation." "He was a great friend, and a better mortarman there has never been. He will be sorely missed and never forgotten. Swift & Bold" Lance Corporal Craig Holyoake, Mortar Platoon, I Company 2 RIFLES said: "'Peter' as he was known to me was a larger than life character. He was always there to help me when I needed him. He will never be replaced - see you at the final re-org." Lance Corporal Neumi Camaiwaqa Mortar Platoon, I Company, 2 RIFLES said: "Thank you, Eust, for being such a good friend and for making our work together so much fun. I will always remember you. God bless all your family and friends. Goodbye." Lance Corporal Darren Miles, Mortar Platoon, I Company 2 RIFLES said: "Eust was the first person to welcome me back to Mortars after my promotion to Lance Corporal. Despite being newly qualified himself he went out of his way to make sure I was ready to pass my Mortar Controller Course so that I could work along side him as an MFC on our next tour. Rest in peace - Swift and Bold." Lance Corporal Jope Tikoisuva Machine Gun Platoon, I Company, 2 RIFLES said: "I spent a couple of years with Lance Corporal Eustace in Mortar Platoon 2 RIFLES. He was a funny guy who was always smiling and making others do the same. He used to call me "fatty"; even though he was fatter than me! Rest in Peace my dear friend, I will always remember you. "Once a Rifleman, Always a Rifleman"." Rifleman Daniel Wood, Rifleman Simon Taylor, Lance Corporal Jamie Cank and Rifleman Shaun Richardson, Mortar Platoon, I Company 2 RIFLES said: "We will always remember Eustace as our "Big Scouse Bear". Always professional, he could see the humour in any situation and was at the heart of any activity - be it fun or difficult. There are no words that need to be spoken except that we loved him dearly and there will always be a big space in the Platoon that can never be filled. Friend, Brother and Rifleman." Rifleman Mark Smith, Mortar Platoon, I Company, 2 RIFLES said: "Eust looked after me when I came to Mortars, he taught me to cook and we used to spend most days together. He was an outstanding friend and mentor and an even better Rifleman." Rifleman Saula Vavaitamana and Rifleman Inoke Tikoisuva, Mortar Platoon, I Company, 2 RIFLES said: "Even though you knew the risks you swiftly volunteered and you boldly marched out to war and laid down you life for the cause. You are the bravest of them all and a true professional. It was an honour to have known and served with you. Rest in Peace, Eust."</p>