

Lance Corporal Michael Foley, Adjutant General's Corps (Staff and Personnel Support), was killed in Afghanistan on Monday 26th March 2012 by an Afghan National Army soldier. He was serving as part of Task Force Helmand when he was shot and killed at the main entrance to Lashkar Gah Main Operating Base in Helmand province.

Lance Corporal Michael Foley was born on 10 October 1986 in Burnley, Lancashire. He enlisted into the Army on the 12 September 2003, joining the Royal Logistic Corps six months later. His first two postings were with 4 Logistic Support Regiment and 3 Logistic Support Regiment, both next door to each other in Abingdon.

It was during his second posting when he decided to re-trade to become a Combat Human Resources Specialist and after completing his trade training, he was posted to 9 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps in his new role as a military administrator. He arrived in Sennelager, Germany in December 2010 on posting to the Headquarters of 20th Armoured Brigade who at that time were preparing to undergo training for deployment to Afghanistan in September 2011.

Lance Corporal Foley deployed to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 15 on 25 September 2011 as a key member of the Task Force Helmand Headquarters Information Hub team. He regularly provided close administrative support to the Task Force Commander and was a key enabler of the efforts of the Headquarters' staff. On 26 March 2012, he was manning the front gate as part of the guard force for Main Operating Base, Lashkar Gah, when he and Sergeant Luke Taylor, of the Royal Marines, were killed by a rogue member of the Afghan National Army.

He leaves behind his beloved wife, Sophie, and three young children, Calum, Warren and Jake; as well as parents, Craig and Debbie, sister, Lisa and brother, Jordan. The thoughts and prayers of all those who had the privilege to know Michael are with his family at this tragic time.

Lance Corporal Foley's family have paid the following tribute:

"Michael passed away while on operational duty in Afghanistan where he was very proud to be serving his country in support of our combined forces in this theatre of operations. He will be sorely missed by his family and friends and everyone privileged to serve with him both on his last tour and during his military career."

Major BJ Cattermole, Scots Dragoon Guards, Chief of Staff, Headquarters 20th Armoured Brigade, said:

"Lance Corporal Foley died protecting his comrades - his final gift of service to the Army and his country, and the ultimate sacrifice by a young commander who epitomised selfless service and dedication throughout his Army career. Since his arrival in the Headquarters the year before deployment, Lance Corporal Foley's infectious enthusiasm, absolute dedication and boundless energy shone through."

"An ambassador for his Corps and the Army, he served the Brigade and Task Force tirelessly, never failing to deliver the highest of standards as a soldier and junior commander. His cheeky wit, constant smiles amid adversity and indomitable spirit leave a hole in the whole Headquarters here in Helmand, and in our Rear Operations Group in Germany. Our thoughts and prayers are with his beloved wife and children, whom he worshipped above all else. Loyal friend, loving husband, devoted and proud father, we will never forget you."

Major AJ Smith, Royal Corps of Signals, Deputy Chief of Staff, Headquarters 20th Armoured Brigade, said:

"Lance Corporal Foley ♦ A superb soldier, a first class Combat Human Resources Specialist and an utterly dedicated family man. He was one of those people you meet and like immediately; friendly, cheeky, reliable and an all-round good bloke. I cannot recall seeing him when he was not smiling - indeed my banter with him was a daily highlight! He will be sorely missed by us all. Our thoughts and prayers are with Sophie, his wife - whom he utterly adored, and his three boys of whom he spoke whenever the chance came. We will remember him."

Major Olivia Madders, Staff Officer Grade 2 Medical, Headquarters 20th Armoured Brigade, said:

Lance Corporal Foley was a fantastic soldier. No matter how large or small the task given to him he would look up with his cheeky grin, say 'No problem, Ma'am' and set to with a professionalism that belied his years. He was fit; loved his PT [Physical Training] and we would often have a bit of a natter on our early morning PT sessions or a nod of the head if he was pushing out some massive weights. Most of all Lance Corporal Foley had an ease about him that made him comfortable with every rank and every background; these traits made him ideal for his job in a multi-national headquarters. I was meant to be flying home with Lance Corporal Foley at the end of tour and I know that when I have my glass of wine in Cyprus, he'll be toasting alongside me as we often said we would. My thoughts go out to Sophie, Calum, Warren and Jake at this terrible time. Rest in Peace, Lance Corporal Foley."

Warrant Officer Class 1 (Staff Sergeant Major) Paul Phillips, Superintendent Clerk, Headquarters 20th Armoured Brigade, said:

"I first met Lance Corporal 'Axel' Foley when he joined the Brigade in December 2010. He was the epitome of all that you would want and expect in a good Junior Non Commissioned Officer. Bright, intelligent and extremely fit, he was one of those men to whom you turn to when you want something done quickly and to the highest standard. Always cheerful, polite and full of fun, he was a true gentleman who I valued deeply."

"He was massively respected by all ranks within the Headquarters and will be sorely missed. A true professional with a genuine love of the Army, he thrived in the operational environment and was immensely effective. He was quite simply, the heart and soul of his detachment, a good friend to the men who loved him, and a dedicated family man. My deepest sympathy goes to his wife, Sophie, and his three beloved boys ♦ Calum, Warren and Jake. He will be sadly missed but happily remembered."

"His cheeky wit, constant smiles amid adversity and indomitable spirit leave a hole in the whole Headquarters here in Helmand, and in our Rear Operations Group in Germany."

Major BJ Cattermole

Staff Sergeant Anthony Howley, Chief Clerk, Headquarters 20th Armoured Brigade, said:

"I have known Axel a little over 12 months, a fellow proud northerner from Lancashire! Axel was an absolute star, a person I held in huge regard, a dedicated husband, father and soldier. Nothing was ever too much trouble, never a complainer; the zeal and energy for life he possessed is rare, backed up with a cracking sense of humour."

"An affable character, he made his mark within Headquarters 20th Armoured Brigade immediately, an instant volunteer to deploy on operations and the consummate professional throughout. Whilst diminutive in size, he was a giant amongst men."

"Axel was a truly inspirational young man whom I will miss hugely; it feels like I've lost a family member. My thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Sophie, and the kids. I feel honoured to have known him."

Sergeant Richard Dawson-Jones, Information Hub Manager, Headquarters 20th Armoured Brigade, said:

"Lance Corporal 'Axel' Foley was a top, top bloke. Any task no matter how big or small, he was your man. He was utterly dependable and was never fazed by anything. He always did exactly what was asked of him, and more. He may have been short in stature, but he was huge in personality, and would always be in the middle of any department mischief. If it was his turn to receive the banter- he took it with his customary smile, all in good nature."

"Axle used to give me lifts home after exhausting PT sessions, and then he would make me climb all over his childrens' car seats, refusing to take them out in case he needed to take them anywhere. It was simple, his kids came first."

"Axel, you will be sorely missed; our thoughts and prayers are with Sophie, Calum, Warren and Jake."

Sergeant Steve White, Application Specialist, Headquarters 20th Armoured Brigade, said:

"I first met Lance Corporal 'Axel' Foley on the training exercises prior to deployment and then shared the

accommodation space next to him for the past six months. He would always have a smile, even at 6am he would offer me a cheerful 'Good Morning' in his Lancashire drawl. Nothing was too much trouble; he was always quick to help out with the applications when we were all busy. We were a team and Axel will be sorely missed.

"Axel, I will always remember your cheeky grin and your willingness to help. The Headquarters has lost a valued member and the office is not the same without you."

On behalf of the Application Specialist Team I pass on our deepest condolences to Axel's wife and three children, our thoughts are with you all.

Corporal Craig Thompson, Information Hub Junior Non Commissioned Officer, Headquarters 20th Armoured Brigade, said:

"Lance Corporal 'Axel' Foley was always willing to do any task given to him with pleasure. He would never back down from a challenge. He loved his family very much and was very proud of his three boys and wife Sophie. He decorated his desk with pictures of his family and called it his "morale corner." In military terms, he will always be a "Legend." He was massively popular with everyone and would always bring morale wherever he went. I will never forget his bright smile and cheerful laughter. He was an excellent Non Commissioned Officer and the best of friends, and he made my job so much easier.

"Axel had an obsession for fitness and even in his limited rest time he still managed to go bursting with energy to the gym. He was an idol and everybody loved him. He will be greatly missed. My condolences go out to his wife and family at this difficult time."

Lance Corporal Bradley Drake, Information Hub Junior Non Commissioned Officer, Headquarters 20th Armoured Brigade, said:

"Axel you were a small man with a big heart. You were always putting me at ease when I first arrived in Afghanistan, showing me the ropes and always saying 'don't worry about it mate'. You always did everything in a relaxed and efficient way, always smiling no matter what we were doing. You were the one that got me to go to the gym, convincing me that it would be good to get out the HQ for a couple of hours. Professionally you were always very proactive and hardworking, and would always go out of your way to get things done. Even though you were younger than me, you were someone to look up to. My thoughts are with your wife and young family at this most difficult time."