

28 April 2009

Lance Sergeant Tobie Fasfous

1st Battalion Welsh Guards

Lance Sergeant Tobie Fasfous was killed on 28th April 2009 whilst on patrol outside Forward Operating Base (FOB) KEENAN, in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He was part of the Mortar Platoon of 1st Battalion Welsh Guards.

Tobie was a specialist Mortarman, responsible for directing and controlling the mortar fire used to support friendly troops. This is essential in suppressing the insurgents trying to attack British patrols, enabling the Afghan National Police and Army to bring stability to the region. He was killed by an explosion when on patrol with the Afghan National Army in the Green Zone near Gereshk.

Tobie was born on 4th February 1980. Having joined the Army, he completed his training in Guards Training Company, Catterick in 2001 and joined 1st Battalion Welsh Guards when they were based in Aldershot. He qualified as a sniper, and served with distinction in Bosnia and Iraq,

where his grasp of local customs and language quickly endeared him to the local community. His partner, Kelly, lives in Bridgend and his mother works in the Middle East.

Tobie was a bright, popular individual who proved his flexibility in Operational Theatres as far apart as Bosnia, Iraq, and, most recently, Afghanistan. Each time, he showed himself undaunted by unfamiliar environments, and quickly demonstrated the compassion, understanding and

professionalism of the British soldier on operations. He had intended to continue his career in the Army, and was interested in attempting Pilot Selection with the Army Air Corps to fly helicopters.

His Platoon Commander, Captain Tom Anderson, 1st Battalion Welsh Guards, said: "Lance Sergeant Fasfous was a soldier who maintained the highest standards at all times, was utterly dependable and universally popular. There can be no doubt that the Battalion has lost a fine soldier, a loyal comrade, and a close friend. He was killed on patrol doing a job at which he excelled and his loss will be sorely felt amongst all those who served alongside him. As an individual, he generated respect and friendship throughout the Welsh Guards, and our thoughts are with his family and friends."

Major Sam J Plant, Officer Commanding FOB KEENAN, Light Dragoons, said: "Lance Sergeant Fasfous was employed as a Mortar Fire Controller, working out of FOB KEENAN in the Upper Gereshk Valley in Helmand Province. In the short period of time that the FOB KEENAN troops had worked together, Fas had become a very special member of the team. He possessed charisma in abundance and an infectious sense of humour that endeared him to all those who had the privilege of working with him. He was widely regarded as a 'star' of the FOB in every respect. On the professional front, he displayed leadership, drive and a real determination to contribute to the security of Afghanistan. His understanding of the ISAF mission was thorough, as was his part within it, and the safety his fellow soldiers on the ground was always uppermost in his mind. There is no doubt that Fas had a very bright future ahead of him and he was looking forward to realising his dream of becoming an Apache pilot when he returned from this deployment.

"Fas will be enormously missed by all of his colleagues and our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends during these difficult times. "

Sgt Harper, LSgt Cunningham, LCpl Liversey, LCpl George, Gdsm Walters, Gdsm Evans, Gdsm McMail, Gdsm Richards, Gdsm Rowlands, and Gdsm Jones, of 3 Section, 1st Battalion Welsh Guards Mortar Platoon, paid tribute to LSgt Fasfous: "Lance Sergeant Tobie Fasfous, or "Fas" as he was known to his friends, was more than just a work colleague. He was a close friend and an inspiration to us all. Throughout the time he spent in Afghanistan he conducted himself in a professional manner and had a lot of pride in the work he accomplished. Fas has been and always will be a brother to his comrades, and he will be truly missed but not forgotten. Our memories of him will be with us forever."

"Fas, thank you for everything you have done and taught us. Our promise to you is that your professionalism and pride will carry on in us until the day we meet again. So, goodbye for now to our friend and brother."

His Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel R S M Thorneloe MBE, 1st Battalion Welsh Guards, said: "Lance Sergeant Fasfous was a superb soldier - one of the best of his generation. He was also a great character and a thoroughly decent man. His loss has been an enormous blow to his many friends in the Welsh Guards. He was one of the Battalion's great characters and just about everybody knew him, liked him and respected him. Our loss is huge but it isgb nothing compared to the devastation that his family and his partner - to whom he was devoted - must now be feeling. Our hearts go out to them at this extremely distressing time. Lance Sergeant Fasfous was an intelligent and thoughtful man who fully understood that by serving in Afghanistan he was putting his own life at risk to make people back at home safer. His tragic loss touches us all but we are resolved to steel ourselves to our task and to try to live up to the exceptionally high professional and personal standards that he set throughout his life. That is the best tribute that we can offer to the wonderful memories that we now have of this outstanding Welsh Guardsman."