

Guardsman James 'Jimmy' Major
First Battalion Grenadier Guards

Guardsman James 'Jimmy' Major, was killed in Afghanistan on 3 November 2009 in an incident at a police checkpoint in Nad e-Ali.

He was part of a mixed team of soldiers from the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards and the Royal Military Police. The team had been tasked with mentoring a number of members of the Afghan National Police at the checkpoint.

The Grenadier Guards Battle Group had identified the need for increased mentoring of the Afghan National Police within its area of operations.

Guardsman James Major, known as Jimmy to his family, friends and colleagues, was employed as a top cover gunner within the Commanding Officer's Tactical Group (TAC).

Guardsman James Major had only recently joined the TAC Group and was in the early stages of getting to know his new team. The TAC Group had been tasked with mentoring a number of Afghan National Police (ANP) at a local Check Point.

The Grenadier Guards Battle Group had identified the need for increased mentoring of the ANP within its area of operations. Guardsman Major was part of a 16 man team who were sent to a Police Check Point approximately one and a half kilometers from the main Battle Group location.

The Check Point was of vital importance as it was on the main road into the bazaar of Nad-e'Ali where the Battle Group Forward Operating Base was located. This provided protection not only to the base but to the local inhabitants of the village itself.

Guardsman Major was born in Grimsby on 12 November 1990. On 16 November 2008, he completed his training at the Infantry Training School Catterick. His first posting was to Nijmegen Company, Grenadier Guards, for a period of five months. With Nijmegen Company he conducted numerous State Ceremonial and Public Duty engagements.

In April 2009 Guardsman Major was posted to the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards and joined them in their pre deployment training. Six months after arriving in the 1st Battalion, Guardsman Major deployed to Southern Afghanistan on OP HERRICK 11.

Despite his short time spent with the TAC group Guardsman Major had already made a strong impression. His character and humour had begun to shine through his naturally quiet demeanour. It is clear that this was a tragic and abrupt end to such a short career.

Guardman Major leaves behind his mother Kim, father Adrian, brothers Lewis and Daniel, sister Paige and grandparents Harry and Pat Gilliatt and June and Fred Major.

Lieutenant Colonel Roly Walker, Commanding Officer, First Battalion Grenadier Guards, said:

"Guardsman James Major died alongside others with whom he was working to mentor Afghan police and, through them, bring security and hope to a small dusty village in southern Afghanistan.

"He died from the hands of a man he was there to help. It was a tragic and cowardly attack. It was so at odds with the amazing results the men had achieved with the police and villagers in a short time.

"Jimmy Major had not been with us long. But in the short time he had served with the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, he had impressed us with his enthusiasm and soldierly talents. He was always the first to volunteer for a patrol, and wanted to be at the front.

"He resented being left behind in the base to man the radio or the sentry positions, even though it was his turn. He was a really good young soldier, and he kept spirits high amongst the team with a great sense of humour, positive energy, and remarkable culinary skills.

"He died young, as soldiers tend to in war. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, to whom he has begun his final journey. He leaves an immensely strong impression for one who was with us for such short time, and we are especially proud he was a Grenadier."

WO2 Miles, Company Sergeant Major Headquarter Company, First Battalion Grenadier Guards, said:

"Guardsman James Major was an extremely personable young man I had only known for a short time as his Company Sergeant Major. During that time he impressed me with his outright enthusiasm in his work in Barracks and incredible courage in the face of the enemy.

"Always praised by his Platoon Sergeant for his constant drive to succeed, he died doing the job he loved. He was a quiet man who was well respected by his peers and this is evident in the fond words spoken in his memory.

"James was without doubt a credit to himself and his family whom I know he loved so dearly and I am proud to say that I knew him. My sincerest and heartfelt thoughts are with his family and friends in this very difficult time."

Lance Sergeant Peter Baily, Signaller, Commanding Officer's Tactical Command Group, said:

"Guardsman Major was posted into the Commanding Officer's TAC group just before the tour. He immediately came across as a very intelligent and motivated soldier.

"For the few short weeks Guardsman Jimmy Major was with the TAC group he became an

integral part of an already close-knit team. He was a hard worker and always carried out any job to his fullest potential.

"A quiet soldier at first but he came out of his shell quickly and showed a rare comical side that kept the rest of the TAC group in high spirits.

"Guardsman Major was 18 years old and had been ready to celebrate his birthday next week. He had shown a keen interest in boxing although he had never competed, but had aspirations of taking it up on return to the UK."

Guardsman Daniel Harvey, a close friend, said:

"Jimmy was a friendly and caring person who tended to look after the people around him. He was a quiet man who came into his own with his drive to succeed within the Battalion.

"He was employed in the Sergeants' Mess but strived to be sent to a Rifle Company as he felt he could achieve greater and better things. Although Jimmy was a quiet man he liked nothing else but to go out and have a few beers with his mates. He had one of the funniest funny streaks I have ever seen.

"Jimmy was very family orientated and made no secret that he loved them all very much, in particular his Mum. Jimmy will be missed by all the people around him and without knowing it he has made an impact on me and on all others in his circle of friends."

Guardsman Martin Nelson, a close friend, said:

"Jimmy, or Major as we called him, was a great mate. He was always there when you needed someone to lend a hand or to go for a drink with. He was never far away when you were down and he always knew what to say to help you out.

"He took me under his wing from the very first time I met him; we first met in Nijmegen Company and he was the one to show me how to do my kit properly before a Queen's Guard.

"It only seems like the other day when we both chatted in Wellington Barracks and he was asking about my son. He was a brilliant lad; someone who will never be forgotten. My thoughts go out to his family and we are all thinking about them in their time of need. Major, you were a great mate, loved by all of us and will be never forgotten."

Guardsman Alexander Bone, a close friend, said:

"Guardsman James 'Jimmy' Major was recruited from Cleethorpes by Sgt Telford, he enjoyed most sports especially boxing and football. He was a very keen supporter of Manchester United Football Club.

"He was very proud to be selected for his very important job in the Commanding Officer's TAC group. For a small man he had a longer than life personality with a presence and loving/sharing

nature which made him stand out amongst his peers.

"A character full of spirit and laughter, which will be missed by all that knew him."