

HIGHLANDER SCOTT MCLAREN D COMPANY THE HIGHLANDERS 4TH BATTALION, THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF SCOTLAND Highlander Scott McLaren deployed to Afghanistan on 5 April 2011 as a Rifleman in D Company, 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland. His Multiple was temporarily attached to 1st Battalion The Rifles (1 RIFLES) Battlegroup and on 3 July 2011, they were deployed to Check Point SALAANG. They were helping to hold and secure a vital bridgehead in the Northern area of Nahr-e-Saraj (South) which had been established only the month before during Operation OMID HAFT. His Multiple was working for S Company, 1 RIFLES and he was at the forefront of the Operation to secure Nahr-e-Saraj (South) from the insurgency. On the morning of the 4 July 2011 Highlander McLaren was reported missing and was found later that day after an extensive search.

Born on 31 January 1991, Highlander McLaren was from the Sighthill area of Edinburgh. Having joined the Army on 23 August 2009 he underwent his initial training at the Infantry Training Centre at Catterick. Having successfully completed his basic training he was posted to B Company, 4 SCOTS based in Bad Fallingbostal, Germany. Scott leaves behind his parents; James and Ann, sister Kirsty and brothers James and Ross. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this time.

The Family of Highlander McLaren have made the following statement: "We are deeply saddened by the news that our dear son Scott was killed in Afghanistan. We were extremely proud of Scott. He loved the Army and despite his short time in 4 SCOTS had made many friends."

"Scott was a beloved son to James and Ann and brother to Kirsty, James and Ross. His family and friends; Grandmother Evelyn, Uncle Graham, Aunty Heather and close friend Michael will miss him dreadfully. We will always be thinking of him."

"We would like to thank everybody for their support and kindness at this time."

Lieutenant Colonel Alastair Aitken MBE, Commanding Officer of Combined Force Lashkar Gah and The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Highlander Scott McLaren deployed to Afghanistan in April 2011 as part of D Company, 4 SCOTS. After an initial period of operating in support of the Afghan National Police in Patrol Base Yellow 14, he was attached to a patrol that was sent to reinforce the 1 RIFLES Battlegroup at Check Point SALAANG. His Patrol had played a key part in bringing security to this crucial area of Helmand over the past month; including being responsible for a major find of bomb making equipment and Improvised Explosive Device (IED) components. "Scott McLaren, from Edinburgh, joined the Army in August 2009 and after completing his training he was posted to The Highlanders, 4th Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland in Germany where he completed a demanding year of training for Afghanistan. "Fit and an extremely accomplished runner, he quickly became the most reliable and conscientious member of his platoon, always happy to take on extra work and always the first to volunteer for any task. Known to his friends in the Battalion as "F1", he was a man with a big heart and a true friend to many, whether it be taking on extra work or going the extra mile to help his friends in their time of need, he was trusted by all and genuinely had a heart of gold. Whether on exercise, on operations or just on a night out with his friends he was a man who put 100 percent in to everything he did with a real sense of dedication to both work and colleagues. Quiet and reserved, he had the true grit and determination of a traditional Highlander; when the times got tougher it was always "F1" who was still standing at the end. "He leaves a gap in his Platoon, his Company and the Battalion and he will be sorely missed by all. Our thoughts and prayers are with his parents; James and Ann and also with Kirsty, James and Ross."

Lieutenant Colonel James de Labillié DSO MBE, Commanding Officer of Combined Force Nahr-e-Saraj (South) and 1st Battalion, The Rifles said: "Highlander McLaren had been attached to 1 RIFLES Battle Group for

nearly a month, based in Check Point SALAANG in the KOPAK area of Nahr-e-Saraj (South). His multiple had been tasked with some of the most demanding work, both tackling the insurgency in the area and also turning round a population which, up until their arrival, had yet to declare their support to the Afghan led security efforts. "He and his team had made an immediate impact. Within three days of arriving they had spotted and arrested a local insurgent commander. They subsequently were responsible for the search of a compound that revealed one of the biggest IED factories in the area to date. And then, on a routine patrol, they found an IED that had been laid to injure or kill ISAF forces. The majority of the local population trusted Highlander McLaren and his team, seeking them out specifically to pass on observations and tippers as to insurgent activity. These types of success do not come by chance, and came about largely through the innovation, determination and Scottish good humour of the team in which Highlander McLaren was such an essential member. "He will be sorely missed. What is completely clear is his lasting and positive contribution to the campaign, and the reflective and determined way in which he made it. The thoughts of every member of the Battle Group, who tried so desperately hard to save his life, rest now with his immediate family." Major James Cross, Officer Commanding D Company, The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Highlander McLaren's death has come as a huge blow to all of us who have had the privilege of serving alongside him. As an individual, he was a man who always saw the best in people and never had a bad word to say about anybody; whatever the circumstances. As a soldier he consistently strove to excel in whatever task he undertook. This dedication to his craft earned him the respect he deserved from all ranks within the Company. His death has tragically deprived D Company of a valued team member and friend. At this difficult time our thoughts and deepest condolences are with his family and loved ones. Highlander McLaren will be sorely missed, but happily remembered by all of those fortunate enough to have known him." Major Justin Barry, Officer Commanding B Company, The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Highlander Scott McLaren had been a member of B Company during the training leading up to deploying on Operation HERRICK. He will be remembered as the quiet, yet fiercely dedicated and loyal member of the Company who would think nothing of putting himself at a disadvantage as long as it benefited someone else. Generous to almost a fault with his money, expertise or just willingness to listen to an issue or concern whatever the time of day, he was the team member who revelled in the camaraderie that life in the Army offers, and was the one you could rely on to complete a job without complaint or hesitation. Ferociously fit, he was always seen at the front of Company runs, looking almost surprised to find himself there. The thoughts of the Company are with his family at this tragic time." Captain Angus Steele, Regimental Career Management Officer, The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Highlander Scott McLaren was a young soldier who had just entered a new life within The Highlanders. Fit and a keen sportsman he was always willing to learn. He conducted successful pre-deployment training with his Company prior to deployment on HERRICK 14 and potential for a full career within The Royal Regiment of Scotland has been tragically cut short on operations. The loss to his Multiple, Platoon and 4 SCOTS is nothing compared to the loss suffered by his Family; our thoughts and prayers are with them at this time." Captain Callum MacLeod, Officer Commanding Fire Support Group and Multiple Commander, D Company, The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Highlander McLaren was the perfect example of what makes a Scottish soldier great. The stalwart backbone of the Multiple, he was cool under pressure and unrelenting in the face of the enemy. The Multiple has been robbed of a friend, and the Battalion of a talent that was only just

beginning to shine. We will continue to contest the insurgency on the ground and remember him not only by our words but by our actions, upholding the high professional standards that he embodied. Our thoughts are with his family at this time." Lieutenant Simon Taylor, Officer Commanding 7 Platoon, D Company, The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "I was fortunate enough to have served with Highlander McLaren since he joined the Battalion. A genuine, likeable character, who was always eager to please. A shining star for the future. Consistently professional and dedicated, he approached his job with enthusiasm and commitment and was always ready for the task ahead. Highlander McLaren will always be remembered for being a real match for the rest of the Company when it came to Physical Training. He would always push himself to his limits to be the fittest and the fastest, driven by the desire to be the best soldier that he could be. A calm and cool individual, who was near enough horizontal; consequently allowing those around him to feel at ease whatever the situation. I will always remember the time when I was sat next to him on a hill in the pouring rain and he couldn't stop talking about how much he was looking forward to the future, the pinnacle being his upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. He truly was a loyal and dedicated soldier. "It is a tragic end for such a promising individual. At this difficult time all the thoughts of 7 Platoon are with his family. It is a privilege to have had such a soldier like Highlander McLaren as a member of the platoon. He will be sadly missed but happily remembered." Warrant Officer Class 1 Euan Philbin, Regimental Sergeant Major, The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Highlander Scott McLaren was a hard working and reliable soldier who had a genuine love for the Army; he thrived in the field and excelled in physical training. He was a talented runner who had a real competitive streak. He had a promising future ahead and was earmarked as having real potential. I feel honoured to have met and served with Highlander McLaren. He will be sorely missed by his friends and family and my thoughts are with them during this time." Sergeant Gary Waugh, Platoon Sergeant 7 Platoon, D Company, The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Highlander McLaren was a big part of 7 Platoon. Although quiet and at times unassuming, he was a very strong minded individual. Amongst his peers he also showed his dry sense of humour. At other times, when Jocks would complain about being worked hard or doing an extra stag duty, McLaren remained utterly professional, never moaning and just got on with the job. It was very rare to see McLaren without a smile on his face; that was just the way he was. His loss is felt throughout the Platoon; we have been devastated by this tragic event. Highlander McLaren wouldn't want us to let our heads fall. There is still a job to be done and the Platoon will always remember our colleague and his memory. Gone, but definitely not forgotten." Sergeant Ruaridh Tauch, Platoon Sergeant 2 Platoon, B Company, The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Highlander McLaren was quiet to most who didn't know him, but those who knew him knew he could let his hair down as good as anyone. A heart of gold, someone his mates would look to help them out. He was as fit as they come; it seemed he could run forever and then look like he'd not even broken a sweat. A real pleasure to have within the Platoon and will be missed by all." Corporal 'Watty' Watson, Section Commander, 7 Platoon, D Company, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "I had the privilege of working with Scotty when I first joined B Company. An extremely polite and quiet young man, he was a character amongst the Platoon and was much liked by all who knew him and worked with him. Scotty was a grafter and rarely needed to be told twice. On Physical Training he was nigh untouchable. He will be missed by all. Goodbye brother." Corporal Andy Maclennan, 7 Platoon, D Company, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said:

"Highlander McLaren was one of the nicest guys I had ever met. He never had a bad thing to say about anyone and would always go out of his way to help the other boys out. My thoughts go out to his family and friends. He will be missed." Lance Corporal Robert Banks, 7 Platoon, D Company, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Scotty was the quiet guy in the Platoon but was always having his mischievous moments. Playing 'Call of Duty' online, he would always come through to my room with a big grin on his face as he beat me again and again. Scotty was a funny guy who often had us in stitches. Taking the guys on in Physical Training, Scotty being of a small build would often surprise. Never complaining, he was always happy to go that little bit further. He has been a close friend since we met, Scotty will be sorely and deeply missed within the Platoon." Lance Corporal Rab McLaughlin and Lance Corporal Peter Stewart, 7 Platoon, D Company, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "A great lad and a good friend. Will always be missed and remembered." Lance Corporal Paul Nicholson, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Scott McLaren was one of the more quiet lads in the Company, however when he got to know us all, he came out of his shell. There is not a bad word that could be said about him; he was a hard worker and an excellent soldier always with a cheeky smile on his face. A terrible loss. My thoughts are with his family and friends at this hard time." Highlander Jamal John, 7 Platoon, D Company, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Me and Scotty shared a room for the 7 months prior to deployment. He was a very quiet guy to start with, but once you got to know him he was a fun person to be with. I will always remember him falling asleep with his laptop on him at nights or his legs or arms off to one-side of the bed, which was a funny sight. On mornings he was always the first one up, his alarm was set at least 15 minutes before we were meant to be up. Scott was a fit guy as well; whenever we had a tab (march) he would always go over the weight needed saying, 'you will never know what extra weight you will have to carry on operations'. Finally, I'd like to say I will miss you throwing your Irn-bru bottles in my bed space Scott." Highlander Ryan Gilpin, 7 Platoon, D Company, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Scotty McLaren was one of the nicest, quietest guys I have ever met. I am never going to forget the laughs we had together, you shall be sorely missed Scotty boy." Highlander Dale Watson, 7 Platoon, D Company, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "A true gentleman; always gave 100% and never complained. Was always there if you needed someone to talk to. Am gonna miss you mate." Highlander Michael McGowan, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "Scott McLaren will be missed by everyone he knew. Those who did not know Highlander 'F1' McLaren might have thought he was a shy and quiet young lad. But for those people who did know him, he was a young, keen lad who was willing to do anything he was told to do. He got on with things without complaining and he was also a lad who would do anything to help the other lads out if they needed something or anything done. I myself owe him one when it came down to the weekends as he was always "the man with the plan". When it came to going out with him and me, we always had the best of times. The funniest thing that happened to us was after a night out we fell asleep in some thorn bushes. It was sore the next day but all we could do was laugh about it over and over. Scott was a young, bright lad that would do anything to get the job done. He was a good laugh with me and the boys. For all those people who never got to meet him he would have been one of the best lads to get on with no matter who you were. "Scott RiP, my heart goes out to his family and close friends he will be missed loads. "Mate here pal, Highlander McGowan" Highlander Stewart Gray, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The

Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "I have known Highlander Scott McLaren since training at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick. He was a great character and one of the nicest guys I have ever met. One of my fondest memories of him was meeting up for drinks in Edinburgh during leave as we only live 5 minutes apart from each other. He will be sorely missed by all, but never forgotten." Highlander Iain MacInnes, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "To those who never knew him, Scott McLaren would strike them as a shy and retired person. Although he was quiet he was far from shy; he would try his hand at anything. He would go out of his way to do someone a favour. He was always up for a laugh. For those who knew him he will be sorely missed." Highlander Kurt Findlay, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "To the McLaren family: Our hearts are filled with sorrow and pain knowing that a good friend, soldier and son has fallen into God's hands. He was filled with laughter and always the life of the party. His memory will keep us smiling and he will always be close to our hearts. God bless you Scott." Highlander Scott McLaren 28, The Highlanders, The 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said: "The loss of Highlander McLaren has caused deep shock to us all; to have a friend taken from us struck deeply and painfully. Scott was a friend to all and will be sorely missed." Highlander McLaren's Multiple from Check Point SALAANG said: "Highlander McLaren was a good friend to us all. He had a quiet cheekiness which kept our spirits high. A reliable and fit team member; we trusted him with our lives. We are greatly saddened that his full potential not will now be realised and our thoughts are with his family at this time." From all those at Check Point Loy Mandeh: "A cheeky wee man, with a cheeky wee grin and great wee Soldier, but a big loss and will never be forgotten."