

Kingsman Jason Dunn-Bridgeman
2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment

It is with deepest regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the death of Kingsman Jason Dunn-Bridgeman from 2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment in southern Afghanistan on 13 September 2009.

Kingsman Dunn-Bridgeman, aged 20, died after his platoon became locked in an exchange of fire with the enemy during a foot patrol in the Babaji district of Helmand province. He received a gunshot wound to the neck and, despite every endeavour made by those around him to save his life, died of his wounds.

Born on 6 December 1988 in Liverpool, Kingsman Dunn-Bridgeman joined Arnhem Company, 2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (the 'Lions of England'), in May 2008 after attending the Infantry Training School in Catterick. Despite breaking his leg during training, he made a full recovery and completed the demanding course with merit.

Having achieved the rank of Army Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major in his youth, he very quickly settled into the routine of being a soldier in barracks in the UK before moving with his battalion to Episkopi in Cyprus in August 2008.

Being part of the Resident Infantry Battalion based in the west of Cyprus, he took part in a number of challenging exercises as well as carrying out essential security duties on the island. By the spring he had begun his pre-deployment training in earnest, in preparation for the Lions' new role as Theatre Reserve Battalion - essentially a rapid reaction force which could be called forward at any time.

Following an intense period of training conducted both in the arid conditions of Cyprus and in new facilities in the UK, Kgn Dunn-Bridgeman volunteered to move across to Blenheim Company, who were the spearhead force for any possible deployment. He put himself forward, knowing well that he would be amongst the first to deploy to Afghanistan should the need arise. Just hours after he had moved his personal effects across, Blenheim Company were deployed to Helmand province to bolster The Light Dragoons Battle Group in the area of Babaji.

Kgn Dunn-Bridgeman, known almost universally as 'Dunny', was described by friends and colleagues as popular, friendly, quick-witted and selfless. He loved life and lived for new experiences, as reflected by his passionate interest in adventure training.

Whilst in Cyprus he attended courses in both parachuting and paragliding, taking as naturally to the sky as he did to the slopes of Bavaria when he was selected for the battalion skiing team. Such was his verve for outdoor pursuits he talked often of being an adventure training or skiing

instructor when he eventually left the Army.

His passion for adventure fuelled his professionalism as a soldier, which rapidly earned him the respect of his peers and his superiors.

Deploying to Afghanistan with Blenheim Company, Kgn Dunn-Bridgeman quickly found himself on a pivotal mission into the heart of Babaji, an area which experienced some of the most fearsome fighting during the summer's Operation PANCHAI PALANG offensive.

Kgn Dunn-Bridgeman's principal role within his platoon was as a member of the four-man clearance team at the forefront of every patrol. These men, using mine-detecting equipment and specialist drills, regularly put themselves in harm's way in order to find insurgent-laid improvised explosive devices (IEDs). It is a measure of the calibre of Kingsman Dunn-Bridgeman that he was selected to do this demanding job.

When there was fighting to be done as well, he was also at the fore. Between operations he raised spirits with his banter and easy humour. He fought the same way he approached life, with verve and fearlessness.

A dedicated soldier and loyal friend, Kingsman Dunn-Bridgeman will be sorely missed, not least by his mother Tracey, who has lost a treasured son.

Lieutenant Colonel Robbie Boyd, Commanding Officer of 2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, said:

"Kingsman Jason Dunn-Bridgeman was an immensely popular member of Arnhem Company who had volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan early to serve with Blenheim Company. He latterly demonstrated courage under fire several times with Blenheim Company.

"A real character who was extremely popular, he will be sadly missed by his friends who are about to deploy from Cyprus and also by his comrades whom he fought alongside in Afghanistan. England - as well as the Battalion - has lost a lion."

Lieutenant Colonel Gus Fair, Officer Commanding The Light Dragoons Battle Group to which Kgn Dunn-Bridgeman was attached, said:

"Kingsman Jason Dunn-Bridgeman's tragic death has had a profound effect on his company and the Battle Group as a whole. A young and gifted soldier, it was clear that he had a promising future ahead of him. Never one to shy away from hard work, he demonstrated a strong sense of duty and perseverance in everything he did. The ease of his adjustment to both joining the platoon and his deployment at short notice on this operational tour is testament to his character and professionalism as a devoted, loyal and trustworthy soldier.

"The loss of this remarkable and charismatic soldier has been felt poignantly throughout the Battle Group but in particular by his platoon. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and his friends at this very difficult time."

Major George Maund, Officer Commanding Blenheim Company, said:

"Kingsman Jason Dunn-Bridgeman's death on Sunday 13 September 2009 is a tragic loss to Blenheim Company.

"Dunny was a fiercely loyal and dedicated soldier and an utterly selfless person. He epitomised all characteristics of a Kingsman, and it was typical of him that he should volunteer for this deployment from another company. He was an intelligent, bright young man and a gifted soldier who loved his job.

"Blessed with a great sense of humour, he had a permanently positive outlook on life and was a great source of morale to all the lads.

"Although still in the early stages of his military career, he had shown great promise and was a natural soldier and infantryman. His life and career have been cut short but we take comfort in the knowledge that he died doing what he loved.

"We that knew him have been blessed and privileged to have served alongside him. As a friend and a comrade he will be sorely missed."

2nd Lieutenant Ben Collier, 4 Platoon Commander, said:

"Kingsman Dunn-Bridgeman was a motivated soldier with a mature attitude who took his deployment to Afghanistan at short notice in his stride. He thrived in the operational environment and was constantly eager to learn more from his seniors and commanders. His perceptive nature proved valuable on several occasions particularly in gathering intelligence whilst on patrol.

"Although new to the platoon he took no time in making friends and quickly built up a rapport with all ranks. Kingsman Dunn-Bridgeman's tragic death leaves a hole in the platoon that cannot be filled. We will all carry his memory with us as we continue our work in Afghanistan and long after our tour ends. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends."

Kingsman David Corcoran of 4 Platoon said:

"Dunny was very much one of the lads. Despite coming across from another company he settled in really quickly and we became close friends. He was a genuinely nice guy, and would do anything for you. He was the sort of bloke that you wanted to have as a mate. He was always a good laugh and had an infectious sense of humour. He helped make the difficult times more bearable and was always the one to lift spirits when they started to flag.

"We were on patrol one night when we came across a group of insurgents digging in IEDs. Dunny was the first person to see them. He pointed it out to the rest of us, but before we could get into a better position a fire-fight erupted. Dunny was straight into a fire position without a moment's hesitation, straight into it. Soon after rocket-propelled grenades started flying but that didn't deter him. At one stage my team lost sight of the enemy but Dunny saw where the tracer

rounds directed at the enemy from another position were landing and brought us onto the enemy with fire from his own weapon.

"Another time we were coming back in off a patrol, and it became apparent that the village we had just visited had a doctor, which is a fairly important thing to know. I asked Dunny if he had cottoned on to this, to which he grinned and rolled up his sleeve and said 'Yeah! I wrote his name down on my arm'. That's the sort of switched-on bloke he was. We will all miss him."