

3rd Battalion The Rifles (3 RIFLES)
It is with deep regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the death of Lance Corporal Daniel Cooper from 3rd Battalion The Rifles (3 RIFLES). Lance Corporal Cooper died from wounds received as a result of an explosion near Sangin, in Helmand province, during the morning of 24 January 2010.
Lance Corporal Cooper was born in Hereford on 10 March 1988. He went to Whitecross High School before enlisting and going to the Army Training Regiment in Bassingbourn in 2005 for his Phase One training. He received Phase Two training at the Infantry Training Centre in Catterick and joined 2nd Battalion The Light Infantry in Edinburgh in 2006.
Lance Corporal Cooper deployed with A Company, 3 RIFLES, to Afghanistan in October 2009 and was operating in southern Sangin. Following the injury to his section second-in-command he was promoted to Lance Corporal in the field on 21 December 2009 and stepped up to fill this role.
On 24 January 2010, he was leading a resupply patrol when an improvised explosive device detonated, critically injuring him. He later died of his wounds.
Lieutenant Colonel Nick Kitson, Commanding Officer, 3 RIFLES Battle Group, said:
"Lance Corporal Daniel Cooper was one of the great characters of the battalion; his sense of humour and zest for life were topped only by his ability and determination. The consummate soldier, he was the complete package; fit, bright and dedicated to his work. Ever cheerful and irrepressibly positive, he shone as an example to the more junior Riflemen on how to act and what to aim for."
"Lance Corporal Cooper was cruelly taken from us while doing the job he loved. He had survived numerous brushes with danger in this tough fight alongside colleagues and mates who respected, trusted and loved him. The loss of a Rifleman brimming with such talent and potential leaves a real gap in the Battle Group for the here and now and in this his battalion for the longer term."
"The thoughts and prayers of this whole Battle Group go out to his family and loved ones. We know that they, like us, will take comfort from fond memories of a man who truly loved life and made every second of it count. We shall continue with the noble task for which he laid down his life, steeled by his unhesitating sacrifice and in the certain knowledge that this is what he would expect of us."
"A proud son of Herefordshire, he will be sorely missed by us all."
Major Tim Harris, Officer Commanding A Company, said:
"Lance Corporal Cooper was something of a legend in A Company. I had the pleasure of being his Company Commander for nine months and I have been amazed at the warmth and depth of affection within the company for this modest young man. It is a testament to his quality that my platoon commanders have fought over who got to keep him in their platoon - he had such a positive impact on those around him."
"He was an excellent soldier with incredible stamina - he wanted to become a Physical Training Instructor [PTI] and at the same time wanted to do a Junior Non-Commissioned Officers' cadre for promotion to Lance Corporal. Knowing his energy and enthusiasm, I don't doubt he could have done both courses at the same time."
"I remember fitness training sessions in Edinburgh, when the company would run up into the Pentland Hills and 'Coops' would quite literally be running rings around the rest of the company in preparation for the PTI course. He had clear and unequivocal potential for a long career in The Rifles."
"I have fond personal memories of him here in Sangin, whether leading on patrol, or driving the platoon resupply quad bike. He did all of these things with utter dedication and concentration. He was one of the exceptional breed of men who volunteer to search the ground for improvised explosive devices so that their mates might be safe. If you want to know real bravery, walk a mile in their shoes. But with Coops, when the time was right, he was never far from a well-judged practical joke or two."
"Unusually for a Rifleman, he also made an

indelible mark on people outside the company and always stopped to talk to people in the battalion - a true Rifleman, with time for others.

"His passing is a sad loss to the company but this can only be a fraction of the loss felt by his beloved family and friends. I only hope they can take a crumb of comfort in the knowledge that he touched so many lives, and made so many people happy - he will live long in our memories.

"We are even more determined to follow his example of positivity and pursue our mission in the same way that he did. Rest in peace, Coops."

Lieutenant Palmer Winstanley, Officer Commanding 2 Platoon, said:
"Lance Corporal Cooper was one of the most vibrant men in the platoon. I cannot remember a single moment during the two-and-a-half years of knowing him where he was not smiling. He was the epicentre of platoon morale.

"Unlike many men, he wore his heart on his sleeve. I remember when he had cleared with his metal detector past an improvised explosive device which a local Afghan later pointed out to him. Despite the fact that it was nowhere near the route he had cleared, I found him hours later worrying about having let his mates down. That was the kind of thoughtful man he was, more concerned for his mates' safety than his own.

"In the end, Coops died clearing a safe path through what we knew to be a dangerous area. He had enough heart and courage to share around the whole platoon, even during the most desperate of times. The platoon has had its bad days but he was always there in the centre of things. I had the privilege of talking to him at length the night before he died; we discussed his future plans and his life in general. I am honoured that he shared with me his hopes, dreams and aspirations.

"Coops was a fiercely loyal man who loved his mates. But this love for his mates was exceeded only by his love for his family, about whom he spoke regularly and with deep affection. My heart goes out to his mother, father and sister; my thoughts and prayers are with you.

"Rest in peace, Coops, you were a legend and a friend to everyone whose life you touched."

Second Lieutenant Connor Maxwell, Officer Commanding 1 Platoon, said:
"Lance Corporal Daniel Cooper was a young, energetic and extremely entertaining man who would always have something positive to say. Even when the chips were down, Coops would always know what to say to get the others going again. He was a true source of morale for his friends, peers and myself.

"The last conversation I had with him was joking about a local man, who probably under the influence of some intoxicant, found Coops to be fascinating, and sat down next to him, refusing to budge (despite Coops' protests!).

"Although he was definitely a joker, he was an excellent soldier who took pride in what he did. Although young, others looked up to him and he often set the example for how the Riflemen should behave. The qualities he had are rare; he was a shining star and it is cruel that he is no longer with us.

"We miss him terribly and our thoughts go out to his friends and family he has left behind. I only hope they can take some comfort from knowing what an outstanding individual he was and what he meant to those of us privileged to have served with him."

Serjeant Dean Holgate, 2 Platoon Serjeant said:
"I first met Coops 4 years ago when A Company were deploying to Iraq ; Coops was in my team and I spent six months with him. I was then lucky enough to have Coops sent to join 2 Platoon at Patrol Base Almas.

"He was such a hard working lad; funny, eternally happy and a top, top Rifleman. He was an exceptionally fit lad ♦ all he wanted to do was be a Physical Training Instructor in the Army. He was never far from a football, showing off his skills and going on about his beloved Hereford . Coops was one of the best: he will be sorely missed."

Serjeant 'Smudge' Smith, 1 Platoon Serjeant said:
"Lance Corporal Cooper, or Coops as he was known, was an honest, hard working Rifleman who had a promising Army career ahead of him. He was one of the lads I

would always give jobs to, which I am sure annoyed him at times. But I did this because I knew I could depend on him to do the job to the best of his ability and without complaint.

"When the Boss and I wrote up our Platoon order of battle before coming to Afghanistan, I greedily snapped him up as my 51mm mortar man. But it soon became apparent that out here, our very best Riflemen were needed to carry out the demanding and dangerous job of being the lead men who would use a metal detector to find improvised explosive devices. So Coops was an automatic choice for the heavy responsibility of finding IEDs to protect the troops on the ground. He did this without a murmur of complaint, and got on with the job with the utmost professionalism which we have come to expect from him.

"I've known Coops since he joined A Company on our Iraq tour of 2006 and then through a tour of Kosovo and now Afghanistan. He would often give me lifts home as we were both from Herefordshire, and they were journeys I won't ever forget. Perhaps driving like a mad man was his way of getting his Platoon Serjeant back for all the jobs I made him do during the week!

"He will be missed by all members of 1 Platoon, and my thoughts are with his family. He has done his county of Herefordshire proud."

Corporal Frankie Mason, Section Commander 1 Platoon said:

"I have known Coops for a few years, since he arrived in Battalion. I will always remember him for his sense of humour and his enthusiasm, which never faltered.

"In Afghanistan, Coops spent some time in my section and I knew I could rely on him to carry out his job; I completely trusted him. This was carried on when he moved to 2 Platoon, where his skills and courage were invaluable. He is sorely missed by all who knew him. God bless mate."

Corporal Charles Taylor, Section Commander 1 Platoon said:

"I remember the first time I saw Coops. He was about to go on parade with of A Company, laughing and messing about, which is what most lads do, but what really caught my eye was just how much noise he was capable of making, and how he had everyone in stitches. That was his gift: to keep everyone laughing, and morale high, even at the worst of times.

"Coops, my abiding memory of you is when I fired a LASM (Light Anti-Structure Munition) rocket during a firefight, and you shouted through the noise, "T! That was awesome but maybe next time you'll hit 'em!" With you watching over me next time, I know I will do better; one day we will meet again and get the beers in.

"We are all going to miss your random outbursts: "Alriiiiiiiiiight!", "You what! You what!" and especially "You're good.... You're like, the best!" I've never met a man like you and I know I never will again. Hard as a nail, nearly as funny as Lee Evans!

"There is a gap in the Company and in our hearts that will never be filled. You will be in our hearts forever mate. My thoughts are with your beloved family and friends back home."

Corporal Phil Cree, Section Commander, 1 Platoon, said:

"Coops was an excellent soldier. He was always one to depend on when you wanted something done. He would often lead the pack when jobs, now matter how dirty or dangerous, needed to be done and always with the same eager spirit and enthusiasm. I was always happy when he was in my section and when he wasn't I would always try to persuade 'the rank' to let me have him on my team. Coops was pure morale.

"He would always lift our spirits even in the hardest of times, and he just took everything in his stride. His loss is a massive blow to 1 Platoon he was such a big character. We are all thinking of his family at this time and send them all our best wishes.

"He has left a lasting impression on me and everyone who knew him. I'm glad and proud to say that I knew him. Coops lad, you will be sorely missed but never forgotten. R.I.P. mate."

Lance Corporal Johnny Cassell, 2 Platoon said:

"Coops was the first person I got to know in 1 Platoon, I was attached for a patrol out of NOLAY, and Coops and I were at the rear. We

clicked straight away, as he was forever making me laugh with his razor-sharp wit and quick sense of humour.

"I remember feeling really disappointed the next time I was with 1 Platoon as I was looking forward to catching up with him again but he wasn't on patrol that day. It was therefore great when, 2 months later, he came to Almas to join us in 2 Platoon permanently. He always had a smile on his face, and could always be heard laughing and joking, lifting everyone's morale, no matter how bad a day it was.

"Although he liked a laugh, Coops knew when to be serious and whenever I saw him on the ground his face would be tense with concentration as he knew how vital his role was. I'm really pleased that I got to know Coops on that first patrol, things just won't be the same around here without him. I miss my new friend. Rest in peace, mate."

Lance Corporal Joe Studley, 2 Platoon said:

"There are some people you meet in life who make an impact that's impossible to forget. Daniel Cooper, Coops, was one of those rare few.

"I got to know him at Patrol Base Jamil when he returned from R&R and I remember being struck by how much he had been missed by the rest of the lads, even though he had only been gone a few weeks. But that was Coops all over, Mr Morale. If you were bored you only had to look for Coops and you would either find him half asleep or singing along loudly and out of tune to whatever was on his ipod, or you might find him beasting someone in a half-nelson, with them shouting "release!" And I don't think anyone will forget the way he used to wake you up for stag!

"Aside from the pranks he was an excellent soldier, bold and courageous but also diligent and cautious where required, especially with his metal detector, protecting his mates, which was a great source of pride to him, right up to the end. Coops always looked out for everyone. In fact the only time you would see him upset was when somebody else got hurt; he truly cared.

"Through all the hard times, though, he never lost his sense of fun, on the night before his last patrol I found him standing next to Rifleman Miller's body armour and helmet, which had been 'decorated' with the liquid from about seven multi-coloured cyalumes and when I asked him why he had done it he just smiled and replied "Well, I dunno Studders... I think it needs more red though, don't you?"

"Thanks for everything mate ♦ you will be sadly missed and always remembered fondly."

Rifleman Josh Atkinson said:

"Daniel Cooper, or Coops as he was known to his friends, was the first A Company lad I met when I arrived. I could tell straight away that he was a top lad with a keen sense of humour; if there was any joking about you could guarantee that Coops would be at the centre of it.

"It saddens me to imagine the thought of not seeing him again but the best thing we can do is keep our heads held high and be proud of the things he achieved. My prayers and thoughts are with his family and friends at this tragic time.

"Rest in peace mate you'll always be remembered as a true hero ♦ love you."

Rifleman Ben Buckles said:

"Coops was a great mate to all he met. He was always up for whatever was thrown at him and he strived to be the best at whatever he did, whatever the task. It is a shock to all of us now that he is gone, but I'm proud to say I knew him. My thoughts are with his family in this time of great sadness. Coops you will always be with us in our thoughts and you will never be forgotten mate."

Rifleman Sam Ellis said:

"Coops was not only a good soldier but also a good friend. He always made me laugh, he always got everyone's morale up when we were feeling down, the best squaddie I knew. You will never be forgotten Coops ♦ 'For their tomorrow we gave our today'."

Rifleman Tom Robson said:

"I still can't believe you've gone. It is a heavy blow to the platoon, who will forever miss your humour and your constant energy. It's hard as we both used to talk about doing NCO cadres, girls and how much we couldn't wait to get home. You will forever be in my heart. My thoughts go out to all your

family and friends. Rest in peace, mate, I know you are watching over us."

Rifleman Daniel Ian Cooper said:
"Well mate, I still can't believe you've gone. You will always have a place in my heart after 10 years of being mates. Do you remember the day I named you Mr Bean and you called me Nesquik; only your nickname stuck Bean!

"Well one thing is for sure, I now have a massive hole in my heart which will never be filled. Rest in peace mate, I know Nathan Prince (Princey) will also be gutted you're gone. R.I.P. mate xxxxx"

Rifleman Chris 'H' Hancock said:
"Where do I start, you and me were always good mates, really good mates. It just doesn't seem real that you're gone. You will never be forgotten mate, and will always be in our hearts.

"My sympathy goes to all your friends and family back home. R.I.P. mate."

Rifleman Jason York said:
"Coops ♦ one of the best lads going, I always liked play-fighting with him, even though he always kicked my ass. I remember I hit him with a ball of mud once and that was it ♦ he had me face down in the mud eating dirt. Such a competitor!

"He was strong in the head and in the heart, and always cracked on with the job; I'll never forget his strong character and the way he walked with such confidence ♦ he will never be forgotten ♦ R.I.P. mate."

Rifleman Matthew 'Smithy' Smith said:
"Coops was one of those lads that you will never forget ♦ he was a good lad and was easy to get on with. I will always remember Coops for being the lad that was always in the middle of things. I used to love just walking with Coops and watching him ♦ he could never just walk anywhere without doing anything daft. He would always run up to someone else and ambush them for a bundle. He was a legend, and if you were play fighting you could hit him but it wasn't worth it; you had to let him win or else you would be there all day.

"He was always there to put a smile on your face if you felt down, so thanks Coops mate for being a great lad ♦ we will never forget you mate, and will always think of you. R.I.P. ♦ love you always."

Rifleman Josh 'Corky' Cawkwell said:
"Lance Corporal Cooper was a good friend, a good soldier and was very brave. It is hard to describe in words what this fine individual was like. He was one of the lads through and through, his high morale helped push the lads through the worst of times. 'Coops' as his friends knew him, was never down and always up for a laugh. Coops was one to give his all, and ask for nothing back.

"He helped me through the tough times, and when I needed cheering up. We were always on stag together, joking and laughing about good times in the past. He always spoke about his future. It is my belief he would have made an excellent, if not the best, section commander in the company. I will always remember Lance Corporal 'Coops' and he will always be in my heart.

"My thoughts go out to his family and friends and to anyone who had the opportunity to meet this fine, brave young man. Rest In Peace, mate."

Lance Corporal Lamin Sanneh said:
"When you talk about bravery, he will stand out. Lance Corporal 'Coops' was a hardworking lad, who was always smiling, you never saw him angry, or angry with anyone else. He always spoke about how he loved to play football, and could not wait to play again for the Battalion when we get back. He will be with us forever, even though he is gone."

Lance Bombardier 'Arnie' Arnold , 1st Royal Horse Artillery (attached) said:
"Coops was always a hard worker, a lad who could always be relied upon and one who always gave his all. I had only known him for 3 months when I was moved to the patrol base where we worked together. I remember watching him have a kick around and was in awe of his skills.

"He was definitely a young man who had so much potential within the Army, but he was also a pleasure to be around. He was someone who I found easy to get to know and someone I could always have a laugh with."

Corporal Emma Henderson, Combat Medic, said:
"Lance Corporal Cooper, known to everyone as Coops,

was such a big character in the platoon. He was always smiling and was liked by everyone. My favourite memory of Coops was on pre-deployment training in STANTA where he decided to strip off naked and drive around the FOB on his quad bike!

"Coops was professional at his job and was one of the best men in the platoon. He will be a big loss to 2 Platoon and will be missed deeply by everyone. Rest in peace Coops."

Lance Corporal Simon Miller said:

"I first met 'Coops' out on the town as he knew one of my mates and we both got on very well. The next time we met was when I was sent to 1 Platoon. We then both moved down to join 2 Platoon, where our friendship grew. He was always pure morale when out on patrol, and no matter how bone the job, he would crack on with the matter in hand."

"We did a lot of sandbagging together ♦ we did the cadre! When we felt snapped he use to get us going again, and the time use to fly on stag with him. Words can't describe him properly, he was one of those people, who was just a morale boosting bloke, who was always there. I hope we meet again someday. We will all miss you mate."

"My condolences go out to his family, he was a brave lad."