

Private Jason Williams
2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment

Private Williams was killed following an explosion while on patrol just east of Gereshk in Helmand province on Saturday afternoon.

On the day of his death, Private Williams' platoon was securing the site of an attack which had occurred earlier that day during which three Afghan National Army Warriors were killed.

Private Jason Williams, aged 23 from Worcester, joined 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters) [2 MERCIAN] in November 2008 after completing the Combat Infantryman's Course at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick.

He deployed to Afghanistan with A (Grenadier) Company of 2 MERCIAN on Op HERRICK 10. The company operates with The Light Dragoons Battle Group. His platoon is detached with C Squadron of The Light Dragoons working with the Danish Battle Group.

In Helmand province Private Williams' platoon has operated from Forward Operating Base (FOB) Keenan at Zumbelay in the Upper Gereshk Valley. The platoon plays a crucial role providing security to the local population, enabling the reconstruction and redevelopment of the area.

Private Williams played his part to the full, deploying daily on routine security patrols and taking part in many deliberate offensive operations to rout insurgents operating in the local area. These operations were carried out with the threat of improvised explosive devices and ambushes ever present.

Private Williams and his platoon patrolled and fought alongside a platoon of Warriors of the Afghan National Army (ANA) who share the FOB. It was commonplace that they would be fighting side-by-side in their joint efforts to build the ANA's fighting capability and provide security to the people. They fought as brothers and as equals.

On the day of his death, Private Williams' platoon was securing the site of an attack which had occurred earlier that day during which three ANA Warriors were killed. One of the three ANA dead could not be found and Private Williams' platoon was securing the area in order to prevent insurgents seizing his corpse. During this security operation Private Williams initiated an improvised explosive device and was killed.

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Banton, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"No task or mission was too great for Jason and any request for help would be met by 'Yes, Boss' and a broad smile. He remained cheerful in spite of any hardship. During his short time in the Army Jason had been part of so much and his actions have made a tangible difference to the Afghan people of Zumbelay.

"For his selfless sacrifice, ANA Warriors now refer to Jason as a hero."

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Banton

"On the day he died Jason was taking part in an action which adhered to every soldier's oldest code: leave no man behind. His brave determination and commitment to his brothers in arms ensured that the Afghan Warrior's family are able to pay their proper respects to their own fallen son.

"For his selfless sacrifice, ANA Warriors now refer to Jason as a hero. He will be remembered by the MERCIAN Regiment with honour and by his mates for his irrepressible smile. Our prayers are with his family who are devastated by his loss."

Major Paddy Ginn, Officer Commanding A (Grenadier Company), said:

"Pte Jason Williams turned up to A Company at the start of pre-deployment training for Afghanistan. He had an eagerness and enthusiastic approach to the Army. No matter what he did he always had a smile on his face. He loved socialising around his home town of Worcester, and was always keen to share his tales of his nights out with other members of the company.

"He was part of 2 Platoon, A (Grenadier) Company, based at FOB KEENAN. He quickly adapted to this new challenge and was an important part of the team. He was well liked and proved to be very popular member of the company.

"He was a constant source of morale and always lifted the spirits of others, no matter what the situation was. He died doing the job he loved and he was killed while helping in the recovery of other casualties. He will be sorely missed and will always be remembered.

"He was a true Grenadier and our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends throughout this very difficult time."

Major Sam Plant, Officer Commanding C Squadron Group, Light Dragoons, said:

"In Pte Jason Williams, the FOB KEENAN Team has lost a true star - he was an all-rounder. What was most striking was the high regard in which he was held by his peers and seniors alike.

"As a soldier, he was forward leaning and dynamic and he showed a depth of understanding of the bigger picture in Afghanistan that belied his relative lack of experience. This maturity and intelligence helped him undertake tasks, both exciting and mundane, with equal determination and an unquenchable desire to succeed.

"He was also a great friend and support to everyone. His cheerful and positive approach to life was infectious and he quickly became central to the morale of his Platoon. Pte Williams was synonymous with laughter and happiness.

"Pte Williams was a shining star with an exceptionally bright future. He was a natural soldier and a leader of the future possessing intelligence, common sense, team spirit and courage in abundance.

"No matter what he did he always had a smile on his face. He loved socialising around his home town of Worcester, and was always keen to share his tales of his nights out with other members of the company."

Warrant Officer Class 2 Rich Page, A Company Sergeant Major, said:

"I will always remember Pte Williams as having a smiling face and a beaming smile through our build up training no matter how wet, how cold or how arduous the task was at the time.

"I will miss our Sunday night chats returning to Belfast as we usually returned on the same flight. My thoughts and heartfelt sorrow go to his family, friends and fellow Grenadiers. We will miss you greatly."

Lieutenant Duncan Hadland, his Platoon Commander, said:

"Pte Jason Williams joined 2 Platoon, A Company in November 2008. From the moment he joined us his amazing cheerfulness and friendliness stood out. He had no problems settling in, helped greatly by his huge character and good nature - the fact that it was impossible to put him in a bad mood became evident early on.

"In addition to his outstanding personality Pte Williams was also an excellent soldier who could be relied upon totally. He never said no to any task and would always perform any job, no matter how mundane, with an ever-present smile on his face.

"More impressive than this though was the manner in which he managed to pass this enthusiasm on to others who may not have been as keen on the job as him! He was relatively inexperienced but I was more than happy that he would have made the grade as a Junior Non-Commissioned Officer and I was ready to put him on the first available JNCO Cadre after the tour."

Corporal Jason Birch, a Section Commander in 2 Platoon, said:

"Pte Williams was an outstanding soldier. Always up for a challenge whatever that would be. You could never ask anything more from Pte Williams; he would put 100% into everything. He brought morale to the Platoon and Section - every Section would benefit from a Pte Williams, never without a smile on his face. You will be enormously missed.

"Always remembered, never forgotten."

Lance Corporal Glenn Swann, 2 Platoon, said:

"These are just a few words about a very good comrade but most of all a very good friend. Jason Williams was an outstanding friend, always smiling, always laughing and always joking. However, when it came to doing his job, he took it very seriously and professionally.

"A silent thought

A daily tear

A constant wish that your smile was here

An empty space that only your humour could fill

We miss you so much and always will.

Always remembered, never forgot."

Trooper Bull, Privates Browne, Birch, and King, friends in 2 Section, said:

"Pte Williams may be gone but he can never be forgotten. When in his company you would instantly feel happier and his personality would win over any bad day. 2 Platoon has lost a good soldier but an even better friend.

"This message is from all of 2 Section, 2 Platoon - Pte Williams' section. We can't find any words to describe what Pte Williams was like. He was a self-confessed 'happy chappy'. He was the Section's morale, keeping us cheerful all of the time.

"When we were down, he was always the first one to pick us up. We cannot remember any occasions when Williams was feeling down or unhappy because he always had a smile on his face. We will all miss you and you will always be in our hearts no matter what. May your soul rest in peace.

"From all your close mates in 2 Section."

Private Dominic Carraher, 2 Platoon, said:

"Jason Williams, the 'daddy of us all', was one of the nicest men you could ever meet. In the whole time I have known him, I have never seen him down or distraught because he was too busy keeping everyone else happy. He had one of those smiles that would make you smile no matter where you were or what you were doing.

"We used to have little arguments about who was best at volleyball even though we were both shocking! Williams was one of those people who had a good presence about them and someone who you could look up to and tell anything. The things I will always remember Pte Williams for are his constant happiness in all situations and that he was always so kind and

generous to everyone he met. I will never forget him as long as I live. He is a true hero.

"Here's what Pte Williams wrote on one of the FOB Keenan sangar walls - 'A man is not finished when he is defeated. A man is finished when he quits!'"

Private Aron Davis, 2 Platoon, said:

"Williams was the best type of friend. He made you feel good no matter what. He would always be smiling and you could not help but smile with him. He didn't have a bad bone in his body - a top bloke and he would go out of his way to help if he could.

"He was always up for a laugh and that's what made Williams, Williams. Nobody ever had a bad word to say against him; he was part of the Worcester Gang and I will always remember him for the soldier he was and an absolutely great friend."

Private Jason Fletcher 2 Platoon, said:

"Pte Williams was a good friend of mine. We first met in Catterick whilst we were enjoying a conversation about the weekend ahead. Williams and myself were both from Worcester and lived very close by, with just a row of houses between us.

"Although Williams was a few weeks ahead of me in training, we regularly saw each other in the smoking shelter and laughed and joked about that days' training. Every time I saw Jason, there would be an awesome smile on his face whilst nodding his head and grinning. I always knew that we were about to have a funny conversation.

"Jason was definitely a future NCO and many of us knew him as a hardworking caring person. He would always laugh and joke and he would never turn away when I asked for advice. He would always be prepared to help everyone as much as he possibly could.

"Pte Williams. Gone but not forgotten and will always be in our minds and in our hearts."

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