

1ST BATTALION THE MERCIAN REGIMENT

The Ministry of Defence confirms that Private Jonathan Michael Monk from 2nd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, attached to 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment, was killed in Afghanistan on Wednesday 9 June 2010.

Private Monk was caught in an explosion and killed during a foot patrol to clear an area of improvised explosive devices to increase local national freedom of movement.

Private Jonathan Monk was 25 years old and from London. He joined the Army in 2001 aged 16 and joined the 2nd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment following completion of basic training.

Initially in 6 Platoon, B Company he completed tours of Iraq in 2005 and Northern Ireland in 2006. Thereafter he moved to the Javelin Platoon for a further three years which included a tour of Afghanistan in 2008.

He left regular service in March 2009 to join the Fire Service. Due to a delay in the recruitment process he volunteered for mobilisation with the 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) for the duration of Op HERRICK 12.

Following mobilisation, Private Monk deployed to Afghanistan with Mons Platoon, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) in April 2010. He subsequently moved to C Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) operating from Patrol Base RAHIM as part of the Danish Battlegroup in the Combined Force Nahr-e Saraj (North) area of Helmand Province.

The company has been providing security and stability to the Upper Gereshk Valley over the last three months along with improving the lives of ordinary Afghans by promoting governance and Afghan economic development.

The family of Private Jonathan Michael Monk made the following statement:

"Jonathan/Jon was the most wonderful son, and a truly great brother to Michaela. The Army was in his blood, it was all he'd ever wanted to do since he was five years old.

"He had great energy and drive, and tremendous courage and determination. Even as a child he had no fear of tackling difficult situations and would never give up.

"He was extremely generous both to family and friends, and always eager to give help to anyone that needed it.

"He leaves an enormous void in all our lives. We will miss him so much, but we will always be

so proud of his achievements and the dedicated way he served his country. He will always be our hero."

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Hadfield, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Private 'John' Monk had served with the 1st Battalion for a relatively short time, but had quickly established himself as a highly capable soldier, and a valued comrade to his many friends.

"His previous service in Afghanistan with the 2nd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment had given him valuable experience, and he used this not only for his own benefit, but also for the benefit of the other members of his Company, most of whom are on their first tour.

"It is a sign of his total commitment to his Country and the Army that he loved, that when he found time before his next career started he returned to serve with the Colours.

"We are fortunate that he chose to accompany us, bringing his unique style of humour and his extensive military experience with him.

"In camp he was every Sergeant Major's nightmare, nonchalant and laid back, but in combat he fought like a tiger and was always to the fore when the bullets were flying.

"He was the epitome of the combat Infantry soldier, and will be missed by all who knew him. We will remember his ready smile, his quick wit and his cool head under fire. He was so full of life and had so much more to give to the World, I consider myself privileged to have had him under my command.

"He stood firm and struck hard to his last breath, and will be sorely missed. His parents, Peter and Diana, his sister Michaela and his family and many friends are in our thoughts."

Lieutenant Colonel Kim Schmidt, Deputy Commander Danish Battlegroup, Combined Force Nahr-e Saraj (North) said:

"C Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) arrived as a valued reinforcement to the Danish Battlegroup in mid-April.

"Under the name Foxtrot Company we have come to appreciate and respect the persistence and professionalism with which the Infantrymen from C Company go about their business. They always take the fight to the enemy and are relentless when it comes to standing up against them in the Green Zone.

"C Company have been at the forefront of the primary task of interacting with the local Afghans in a way that promotes the overall mission. The soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers are good representatives of the hard and complex task of fighting in a counter insurgency conflict.

"The area around Patrol Base Rahim where Private Monk met his death is one of the hardest, most challenging combat zones in Helmand. John Monk did not die in vain; he died advancing on the enemy alongside his comrades.

"He died amongst his brothers in arms serving in Helmand waiting to start a new career with the Fire Service upon return from Afghanistan. As soldiers we are proud to serve with men of the calibre of John Monk.

"He set the standard when things were the hardest. This is what shows the true measure of a fine and respected soldier. Private Jonathan Monk rest in peace."

Major Chris Wood, Officer Commanding C Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Private John Monk was killed in the early hours of the 09 June 2010 as his section moved to clear an insurgent held compound in the ADINZAI area of the Upper Gereshk Valley. He was deployed as part of a deliberate IED clearance operation to provide greater security for the people of the Upper Gereshk Valley.

"John Monk joined C Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) shortly after we had deployed into the Upper Gereshk Valley. He was a naturally scruffy individual who constantly caught the attention of the Company Sergeant Major whilst in camp with his beard and ill-fitting or mixed combats.

"Nonetheless, he was a gregarious and outgoing individual who fitted in immediately with the men of C Company. His happy demeanour and enthusiasm was infectious and during his short time with the Company he became a close friend and colleague to all.

"He seemed at home on operations having served previously in Afghanistan, Iraq and Northern Ireland and had proved himself to be a highly capable infantryman. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this very difficult time."

Lieutenant Stephen Rice, Mons Platoon Commander, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"I first met Private Monk in January of 2010 when he, along with a number of other Territorial Army and Regular Reserve soldiers, joined the 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) in preparation for the Battalion's deployment to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 12.

"I can honestly say that he was one of the most relaxed individuals I've ever met. Private Monk was always cheerful - despite an outward appearance that might suggest otherwise - and always joking. He had a confidence that was contagious and was always happy to voice a group opinion when others would keep quiet.

"His experience with 2nd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment was invaluable in helping the Territorial Army soldiers with whom he lived, worked, trained and deployed, and when it came to soldiering he was completely committed

"Having previously deployed to Afghanistan, he had more than enough experience of life over here, and so it was no surprise to me that when I asked if any members of Mons Platoon would be willing to join C Company he said that he would step up.

"I was disappointed to see another experienced soldier go, but knew that he would be able to carry out his duties with professionalism and with the same cheerful and relaxed manner.

"The loss of Private Monk has shocked and saddened those of us who knew him, but I believe we can all say that he would wish us all to carry on soldiering, and would more than likely tell us to stop being so miserable!

"He will never be forgotten, he was a great soldier and a fine comrade. Rest in Peace."
Corporal Leo Quinn, Mons Platoon, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"As I became aware of the tragic news of your death I was deeply saddened and hurt, even though I only had known you since January. In that short time you made an impact on me.

"You were always there for advice; even on the last day before you left Camp Bastion you spent time giving advice to me. For this I owe you and you made sure I remained within the group. For this I thank you and pray that God will give you his eternal peace as I know you are with him now."

Lance Corporal Matthew Smith, Private Frazer Locke, Private Callum McMahon, Private Adam Whelan and Fusilier Nico Williams Mons Platoon, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"We first met Private John Monk at the Reserve Training and Mobilisation Centre (RTMC) Chilwell on 4 January 2010 when we were mobilised for deployment on Op HERRICK 12.

"As a regular reservist he was heavily outnumbered and when referred to as being in the Territorial Army, he would point out the error every time; however over time we wore him down and he eventually accepted the badge of being a member of the Territorial Army.

"On arrival at Marne Barracks, Catterick Garrison where we joined 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire), he was immediately given the nickname 'The Reverend Monk' by Sergeant Ellis, who was keen to give everyone a nickname if possible.

"John was the joker of the pack, and always kept morale high with pranks and jokes, and was especially well known for saying 'boo' to anything that didn't suit him. He would drag his feet, and moaned like any good soldier does but he would always get the job done to best of his ability.

"His laid back attitude and humour was infectious and would always get him in trouble, but he would never have any regrets. The best asset he brought to the group was his relaxed demeanour and calm personality that ensured he never became stressed or worked up and would just sail through any situation.

"John lived life to the full and would encourage everyone to get out, have fun and gel, but most of all chill out and not to take anything too seriously.

"John was always a hit with the ladies but would never take it seriously; sometimes that attitude would get him into trouble at first, but in the end they would always come running back to him; how he did this will always be a mystery to us!"

Private Duane Knott, C Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Private Monk - many words describe this soldier: strong, humble, good at pool, dancing and drinking, more successful with women than he should be, intelligent and honest.

"The courage and honour this man showed in the face of fear takes more than a man, it takes a hero."