

Rifleman Aminiasi Toge
2nd Battalion The Rifles
Rifleman Aminiasi 'Togey' Toge was born in Suva, Fiji, with his twin brother on 19 July 1982. He swapped the southern Pacific paradise of home for the Infantry Training Centre in Catterick, North Yorkshire in September 2007 and passed out as a Rifleman in April 2008. Posted to the 2nd Battalion, The Rifles based in Ballykinler, County Down, Rifleman Toge soon deployed to Kosovo before returning to the UK and starting pre-deployment training for Afghanistan. Rifleman Toge was a keen swimmer and an outstanding rugby player who could open gaps in a defence with the deftest of steps before accelerating through with his extraordinary pace. He also loved to travel.

Rifleman Toge was thriving in the demanding conditions of an Afghan summer and hoped to attempt the Junior Non-Commissioned Officers cadre on returning to Ballykinler. Along with his twin brother, Loame, Rifleman Toge leaves behind three sisters and his devoted parents. His whole family are very firmly front and centre of the prayers of every single soldier in 2 Rifles.

Lieutenant Colonel Rob Thomson MBE, Commanding Officer 2 Rifles Battle Group, said: "Rifleman Toge was my fastest Fijian and was known as 'Lightning'. He was smaller than most of my South Pacific heroes but no less robust, determined and wily with an oval ball under his arm. And that was when he was at his happiest - on our (usually wet) pitch in Northern Ireland or throwing the ball around his FOB in the dust. "He was one of 35 heroic Fijians in this Battalion who add huge value, character and noise to all my companies across Helmand. "Rifleman Toge was one of the toughest Riflemen under my command and he was adored - heart-breakingly so - by all who had the privilege to encounter him. He made such light work of the heavy General Purpose Machine Gun - it was like a pistol in his hands. "He had that uniquely infectious Fijian laugh and was a godly man who knew in whom he placed his trust. We have lost a courageous man of great stature - there was no truer moral compass in the Battle Group but there was mischief too, all very appropriate and full of fun. Rifleman Toge will be sorely missed and our first thoughts are with his family at this unimaginably difficult time. "Across the Upper Sangin Valley, small gangs of brave Fijian Riflemen sang a poignant hymn as we gathered to remember what Rifleman Toge meant to all of us and bade him farewell. When the Bugle Major sounded the Advance tonight, we knew the call to arms would have been heard in Suva. Mothe....vinaka vaka levu." Major Sam Plant, Officer Commanding C Squadron Group Light Dragoons, said: "I had not known Rifleman Toge for very long ♦ his Platoon came under my command just three weeks prior to his untimely death. Notwithstanding that, he certainly made an impression. "A big, strong man who was very much a key player within his Platoon, Rifleman Toge was comfortable on patrol with his GPMG [General Purpose Machine Gun] in hand. He was a determined and skilful soldier who clearly enjoyed the trust and affection of his fellow men. "He had that uniquely infectious Fijian laugh and was a godly man who knew in whom he placed his trust. We have lost a courageous man of great stature - there was no truer moral compass in the Battle Group." Lieutenant Colonel Rob Thomson MBE, Commanding Officer 2 Rifles Battle Group "Of particular note was his infectious smile and his positive attitude to life. This approach inspired those around him and he was ever present whenever a comrade needed help. He was an all round inspiration. "Forward Operating Base Keenan has lost a great man and a true team player. He will be hugely missed by his many friends and colleagues. We are thinking and praying for his family at this terrible time." Captain Andy Huxter, 11 Platoon Commander, 2 Rifles, said: "Rifleman Toge was a pleasure to command. He had no problems in life and faced everything, including the cold - which he hated - with the broadest and brightest of smiles.

"He came to my Platoon in October 2008 from the Machine Gun Platoon, and has been at home in the dust and stifling heat of Afghanistan from the day he arrived.
"He was fitter, stronger and more robust than most. He would step so lightly on patrol, belying the weight he was carrying, setting an example to all of us.
"When asked by a fellow Rifleman why he went to the gym twice a day, he responded that it was so if anyone else got injured, he could carry them to safety.
"He was killed carrying his General Purpose Machine Gun, the job he enjoyed most. My lasting memories will be of him running around in the FOB (Forward Operating Base) in the heat of an Afghan summer trying to warm up because it was too cold in the FOB 'pool'.
"He was softly spoken, unassuming and utterly reliable. His presence made people laugh and be happy - his good cheer was infectious.
"Rifleman Toge was a gentle man, he will be sorely missed and 11 Platoon will not be the same without him. My thoughts and prayers are with his family for whom he cared very much. Rfn Toge, I know, is in a far better place now."
Corporal Llweyelyn Bryan, Section Commander, said:
"Rifleman Toge, or 'Togey' as he was fondly known, was a larger than life character who was forever lifting the spirits of his mates.
"Whenever his name was called, an almighty grin would appear on his face, swiftly followed by a mischievous giggle.
"Rifleman Toge was a Section Commander's dream; he rarely had to be told to do anything. He was a natural infantryman who was very proficient and professional. He was also very robust and fit.
"It will come as no surprise that he was the natural GPMG candidate. It will remain firmly etched in my mind whilst on patrol in the middle of the heat of the day, with sweat pouring down his face, he would look back at me and give me one of his monstrous grins, immediately followed by his unique giggle.
"I was very fortunate to have such a remarkable Rifleman covering my back and that of the rest of the section. Rfn Toge was a much loved member of the platoon and his constant humming and singing will be sorely missed.
"All our thoughts are with his family and friends in this very sad moment in time. Rest in peace my big Fijian friend."
Rifleman Peter White, fellow Rifleman, said:
"Rifleman Toge was the easiest bloke to make friends with and, when I was told that we would be in the same platoon, I was really pleased.
"For three months we had neighbouring bedspaces and spent time in the sangars where he would tell me all about his home, his family and his faith in God.
"I learnt a lot about him as a person and his family. I know that he loved his sisters dearly and he talked about home so much that I want to go to Fiji.
" 'Togey' was always smiling and always had morale, but most of all he never complained, not even about his difficult job which he did as capably and with more enthusiasm than anyone.
"Everyone in 11 Platoon is going to miss his giggling and soft voice. My thoughts and prayers are with his mother, sisters, brother and his father whom he talked about so much and loved so very much. Take care, Togey, miss you mate."
Rifleman Kyle Kalakoda, fellow Rifleman, said:
"Rifleman Toge was a shy guy whom I met when I first came to the Battalion. He showed me the ins and outs, even though he had not been in the Army that long himself.
"To me he was like the big brother I never had, his advice would range from soldiering to day to day living of life.
"He was a tremendous person with a big, big heart and he will be sorely missed by me, the lads and even my girlfriend whom he knew really well.
"Rest in peace my friend, your smile and humour will never be forgotten."
Rifleman Wilhelm Louw, fellow Rifleman, said:
"Rifleman Toge, you were my Christian friend and all I can say is thanks to God for the privilege of knowing you these past five months.
"There is only one verse I can read today, the one you showed me: For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worth

comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. Romans 8:18.

"I know you are sitting in the presence of God and one day I will see you up there my friend. Thanks for everything and my prayers are with you and your family."

Rifleman Robert Gatward, fellow Rifleman, said:
"Our hearts have swollen with your loss. Without you here to sing and laugh with your mates, we will never be the same. March to heaven and help guide us through these dark times. Never forget us as we shall never forget you."

Rifleman Sovita Turagabeci and Rifleman Jotame Tagicakibau, Fijian brothers and fellow Riflemen, said:
"Rifleman Aminiasi Toge was a true Christian by his belief and his actions. He loved to help people and was like an older brother to Fijians joining the Battalion, ready to put an arm around them and give them advice.

"He loved socialising and was friendly to everyone. He was always laughing and making the people around him laugh.

"He loved his job and of course he loved rugby, which he played fast and hard. We are certain that his family will miss him very much, especially this Christmas when he was due to go back to Fiji to spend it with them.

"Rifleman Toge will also be missed by many people in the Battalion, every Fijian amongst them, including us.

"We called each other Naita, a Fijian greeting showing respect and friendship for each other and for Rifleman Toge's home province Kadavu and ours Lomaiviti. Aminiasi, you were a hero, see you in heaven. Moce mada Naita"</p></div>

3 / 3