

[Image]

Rifleman James Stephen Brown
3 RIFLES Reconnaissance Platoon

It is with great regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that Rifleman James Stephen Brown from the 3 RIFLES Reconnaissance Platoon, was killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday 15 December 2009.

Rifleman Brown was killed following a suicide improvised explosive device blast on a route into central Sangin, northern Helmand, Afghanistan. He died on his way to hospital in Camp Bastion from injuries sustained in the incident.

At the time his platoon was manning a vehicle checkpoint alongside an Afghan National Army section in order to provide reassurance and security to the local population.

Rifleman Brown was born in Farnborough, Hampshire, on 9 January 1991. He joined the army in 2009, completing initial training at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick before passing out to join 3rd Battalion, The Rifles in October 2009.

He attended the Individual Reinforcement course for Operation HERRICK and deployed as a Battle Casualty Replacement in late November 2009 where he joined B Company Group.

Lieutenant Colonel Nick Kitson, Commanding Officer 3 RIFLES Battle Group said:
"Rifleman Brown was a young man only just embarking on his chosen career with the Army and The Rifles. He had been with the Battalion for a desperately short time but was showing the promising signs of a soldier with a bright future. He had already made a lasting impression on his fellow Riflemen with his immense courage, infectious confidence and talent for making people laugh.

"Amid this tragedy, we take some small comfort but immense pride in the fact that he and the soldiers who died with him, both Afghan and British, averted a much larger tragedy.

"Their sacrifice prevented two suicide bombers from reaching their intended target, the bustling and ever more prosperous Sangin Bazaar, packed with local Afghans going about their daily business.

"What he lacked in experience he made up for in enthusiasm, young yet keen to please and with a voracious appetite for work and fun in equal measure. It is all the more difficult to come to terms with the loss of one so young and we are all deprived of the joy of watching his promise unfold.

"Few will ever rival his commitment and sacrifice. We remain fiercely proud of his all too brief but lasting contribution to our current challenge. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends."

Major James Richardson, Officer Commanding B Company 3 RIFLES said:

"The death of Rifleman Brown is, in many ways, particularly cruel. He had arrived with the Company less than two weeks ago and had been very quickly integrated into his platoon and deployed to one of the patrol bases.

"He had made a really good first impression, typical of the high quality Riflemen that are coming to us from training and that I am so lucky to command. He was already making his mark, and not just for his insistence that he should be known by his rather unflattering moniker of 'Fat Head'.

"He was beginning to show all of the hallmarks expected of the thinking Rifleman and was testimony to the generation of guys who are willing to take on the challenges that we face out here.

"While he did not have a chance to forge the closest of relationships with his new battle partners his loss weighs heavily because of the unrealised potential and the strength of the initial signs. Our thoughts are with his family for whom this will have been the bitterest of blows."

Warrant Officer Class 2 Paul Kelly, Company Serjeant Major B Company 3 RIFLES said:

"I have known Rifleman 'James' Brown only a short time, he joined us approximately mid-way through the tour so far. He joined us at a difficult time but this did not faze him, he wanted to join his platoon and get started.

"Apprehension is something we all have to deal with daily but James seemed to take it in his stride. His loss has hit us all hard but our thoughts must be with his family at this very difficult time."

Colour Serjeant Paul Lucke, Recce Platoon Commander said:

"Rifleman Brown sadly only joined the platoon a week ago. Importantly he fitted straight in. He found making friends easy and showed enough even from the first patrol that he could deal with the rigours of Afghanistan.

"This was shown with him being appointed as one of our Vallon Metal Detector operators, an incredibly important job after such a short time with the platoon. He definitely had a bright future ahead of him within The Rifles.

"Unfortunately he never will be able to show us his full potential. My thoughts remain with his family during this difficult time. He is truly worthy of the platoon's motto: 'We lead, you follow.'"

Serjeant Slater, Recce Platoon Serjeant said:

"Rifleman Brown, known as Brownie, you were sadly only with us for your short time of a week. What I saw of you, you were a professional young man with a fearless character which singled you out from the rest.

"You had an appetite for soldiering which was seen by all. You had all the tools for being a good recce soldier but sadly you were taken away. Rest! 'We lead you follow'.

Rifleman Atkinson said:

"I only knew Rifleman Brown for a few months but he made a lasting impression on me and all others who met him. He looked to help everyone when he could and was very much a 'team player' whether in the field or even on the football pitch.

"He was a very outgoing person and it did not take him long to make good friends. He made everyone around him laugh and always saw the positive side of life.

"Rifleman Brown was someone who always spoke about his family, especially his dad, mum and girlfriend who he missed very much. His loss is felt massively within the platoon. He was and always will be a true Rifleman. Rest in peace, mate."