

MARINE TONY EVANS
MARINE GEORGIE SPARKS
J COMPANY 42 COMMANDO

The Ministry of Defence confirmed the deaths of Marine Tony Evans and Marine Georgie Sparks, both of J Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines.

The men had been conducting a foot patrol to the north-west of Lashkar Gar in Helmand Province. Marines Evans and Sparks had moved on to the roof of a compound when, at around 9am, there was an attack by insurgents armed with rocket-propelled grenades and they were badly wounded. Both received immediate medical attention and were moved to a secure location before being put on a helicopter to be transferred back to Camp Bastion. However, both sadly died from their injuries during the flight.

MARINE TONY EVANS

Marine Tony Evans (aged 20) was born in April 1988 and came from Sunderland, Tyne and Wear. He began his Royal Marines training in October 2006 and passed out in July 2007, joining 42 Commando a few days later. In February 2008 he completed arctic warfare training in Norway.

MARINE GEORGIE SPARKS

Marine Georgie Sparks (aged 19) was born in December 1988 and came from Epping in Essex. He joined the Royal Marines in June 2006 and passed out from training in July 2007, joining 42 Commando a few days later. During his time at 42 Commando he qualified as a sniper.

24th November

MARINE ALEXANDER LUCAS
V COMPANY, 45 COMMANDO

The Ministry of Defence confirmed that Marine Alexander Lucas of Victor (V) Company, 45 Commando Group Royal Marines was killed in Afghanistan.

Victor Company was conducting an operation around Kajaki, alongside Afghan National Army troops, to clear Improvised Explosive Devices posing a dangerous threat to British forces and the local Afghan population.

Marine Lucas was a specialist Royal Marine Assault Engineer and his role within V Company placed him at the vanguard of troop action. With his specialist skills he provided intimate

engineer support to the front line of the fighting troops. As a consequence, he was often the first man into dangerous situations and vulnerable areas, clearing the way for his colleagues to follow. It was in such a situation that Marine Lucas was killed by an enemy Improvised Explosive Device.

Despite all the efforts of those around him, Marine Lucas was killed in action and tragically died from his injuries on board the medical helicopter en-route to Camp Bastion Hospital.

Marine Lucas, 24, was born in Southampton on the 10 January 1984. Although he and his family always considered Edinburgh their home. After completing Royal Marines Commando Recruit training in October 2004, Marine Lucas joined 45 Commando Royal Marines.

A keen footballer he played for the Commando team on a regular basis. He served one year in the Unit before joining the prestigious Royal Marines Commando Display Team, travelling the country to promote the Royal Marines.

He successfully completed his Assault Engineer specialisation course where he proved himself to be extremely capable and a highly professional operator. After the course he returned to 45 Commando in Scotland to be closer to his family in Edinburgh.

After a successful time in the Royal Marines, he was due to leave on completion of his operational tour and marry his fiancée in July 2009. Marine Lucas leaves behind his fiancée, Jill and young daughter, Cara.

Major Nigel Somerville MBE Royal Marines, Officer Commanding V Company said : "Marine Al Lucas was the embodiment of a Royal Marines Commando. Exceptionally courageous, determined and utterly professional, he died fighting at the forefront of hostile enemy action. I am truly proud to have had the opportunity to serve with such a soldier on operations and his conduct typified the Commando ethos he held so dear. As well as V Company and the Royal Marines losing a much respected friend and colleague, my thoughts are with his family, his much-loved fiancée and his devoted young daughter. He will be sorely missed by our close knit 'band of brothers' and will never be forgotten."

15 November

**COLOUR SERGEANT KRISHNABAHADUR DURA
2ND BATTALION, THE ROYAL GHURKA RIFLES**

The Ministry of Defence confirmed the death of Colour Sergeant Krishnabhadur Dura, of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

C/Sgt Dura was taking part in a road move in the Musa Qaleh district of Helmand when the Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicle in which he was travelling was struck by an explosive device.

Colour Sergeant Krishnabhadur Dura (aged 36) came from the Lamjung District of western Nepal and was enlisted into the British Army in 1992. He completed his recruit training at the Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas in Hong Kong and was subsequently posted to A Company,

7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles, based in Church Crookham in the UK.

He immediately stood out as a robust young soldier and attended the All Arms Parachute selection course which he passed with ease. He excelled on all his military courses and was promoted quickly through the ranks. His drive, determination and outstanding soldiering skills marked him out early in his career and he was subsequently selected to serve in the Gurkha Reinforcement Company with 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment. He served with distinction with this battalion and returned to the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in 1997.

C/Sgt Dura commanded by the power of his personality and led by example. Never demonstrative, he was exceptionally calm under pressure and reserved in character. He was rated as one of the Army's best snipers attaining best student on his Snipers' course. He was highly respected by all.

12 November

MARINE ROBERT MCKIBBEN
MARINE NEIL DUNSTAN
UK LANDING FORCE SUPPORT GROUP

The Ministry of Defence confirmed the deaths of Marine Robert McKibben and Marine Neil Dunstan, both from UK Landing Force Command Support Group.

Both men were killed by an explosion in the Garmsir District of Southern Helmand, at 1647hrs local time, while operating as part of Task Force Helmand's Information Exploitation Group. They were taking part in a routine joint patrol with soldiers from Afghan Security Forces when their Jackal vehicle was struck by an explosive device. Despite the best efforts of medics, both men were pronounced dead at the scene. A member of the Afghan National Security Forces also lost his life and a third Royal Marine was seriously injured.

MARINE ROBERT JOSEPH MCKIBBEN

Marine Robert McKibben, known to most on his unit as 'Frank', was serving on Operation HERRICK 9 with the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF), United Kingdom Landing Force Command Support Group, as a Reconnaissance Operator. Marine McKibben (aged 36) was born in June 1976, and before joining the Corps he lived in Co Mayo, in the Republic of Ireland. He joined the Royal Marines at the relatively advanced age of 27 and, after completing Commando Training, joined J Company 42 Commando based in Plymouth.

He proved to be an excellent all round field soldier and went on to pass Recce Troop selection, joining 42 Commando's Recce Troop. With this unit he learned the 'pleasures' of soldiering in the winter Arctic conditions of Norway, and passed the arduous Recce Operators' course with flying colours. He served in Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 5 where he performed with great enthusiasm, compassion and gallantry.

Following this operational tour he volunteered to move to Brigade Patrol Troop, where he travelled to America, Norway and Switzerland, amongst other places overseas. A very experienced operator, he hoped to fulfil his long-term ambition of becoming a member of UK Special Forces. In addition to his impressive military exploits, he held an honours degree in Environmental Science.

Marine McKibben leaves behind a loving family in Co Mayo and a girlfriend he cherished.

MARINE NEIL DAVID DUNSTAN

Marine Neil David Dunstan was serving on Operation HERRICK 9, with the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF), United Kingdom Landing Force Command Support Group (UKLFCSG), as a Reconnaissance Operator

Marine Dunstan (aged 32) successfully completed Royal Marine Commando training with 854 Troop in 2003 at the age of 27 - quite an achievement in itself! He joined J Company 42 Cdo in Plymouth and, in recognition of his innate skills as a soldier, was selected to work in the Unit's Reconnaissance Troop.

He travelled the world, visiting the USA, Ghana, Egypt and Bavaria. He also worked in close defence of the UK's independent nuclear deterrent, serving with the Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines. He developed a keen taste for mountaineering when working for the Mountain Leader & Reconnaissance Company. After a winter deployment to Norway and a number of mountaineering trips to Switzerland he succeeded in selection for the Brigade Patrol Troop where he fulfilled his goals of becoming a reconnaissance soldier and a trained military parachutist.

A confident soldier, he deployed to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK looking forward to proving himself on the battlefield; an aspiration which he rapidly and convincingly fulfilled. He had great ambition and huge potential: he passed the Royal Marines Mountain Leader selection course with flying colours and would have made an outstanding Mountain Leader.

With an honours degree in French and Tourism he was fluent in spoken French. Marine Dunstan came from a small loving family in Bournemouth where, until meeting his fiancée Kate, he lived with his mother & brother. He was due to be married to Kate in the summer of 2010. He also leaves behind his father and grandmother who, like all his family, have supported him throughout his life and career.

4 November

RIFLEMAN YUBRAJ RAI 2ND BATTALION, THE ROYAL GHURKA RIFLES

The Ministry of Defence confirmed the death of Rifleman YUBRAJ RAI, who was killed while taking part in a joint International Security Assistance Force / Afghan National Security Forces operation against enemy forces south of Musa Qaleh in Afghanistan.

While working alongside a fellow Gurkha, Rifleman Rai received a gunshot wound from enemy fire. He received medical treatment at the scene but died a short time later from his wounds.

Rifleman Rai (28) came from Khotang district in eastern Nepal. Following in the footsteps of his uncle, he joined the British Army in January 1999. On completion of his recruit training, he joined the 2nd Battalion the Royal Gurkha Rifles in Brunei.

In 2000, Rifleman Rai was posted to D (Gurkha Reinforcement) Company, the 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment, where he served with distinction for two and a half years. His soldiering skills were widely recognised and his career was characterised by a number of successful operational tours including to Iraq on Operation TELIC 1, Sierra Leone and a previous tour in Afghanistan during Operation HERRICK 4.

Rifleman Rai was an avid sportsman who enjoyed all competition, but his real passion was for football, at which he represented B Company. This enthusiasm for the game extended to his support for Manchester United FC.

He was one of B Coy's more senior Riflemen. He acted as a mentor for the younger men in the Company, often impressing them with his fitness and stamina. Most recently he was employed as the Company storeman, where his attention to detail, care to ensure that the men received the correct administrative support, and constant diligence were immensely respected.

He had been eager to deploy back to Afghanistan, his selfless attitude once again coming to the fore when he volunteered to deploy with 5 Platoon to replace another rifleman who had fallen ill. Rifleman Rai supported his mother, sister and three brothers as the family's main earner.

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Darby, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion, the Royal Gurkha Rifles, said: "Yubraj Rai was an extraordinary character and a hard professional soldier with a proven operational record. Having served his time as a driving force in 5 Platoon, he moved to a supporting role in Musa Qala, but it was typical of the man that he volunteered for a place on the operation in Dagan when another member of his Company fell ill, and a measure of his professionalism that he did it so seamlessly.

"Big, strong and highly experienced, Rfn Yubraj was one of the cornerstones of his Company and he was known throughout the Battalion for his presence, drive and his ability as a soldier. Part of a small and tight knit team he understood intuitively what needed to be done, how, when and by whom and would move heaven and earth to ensure he got the support to his friends and comrades whatever the circumstances.

"Yubraj was a proud Nepali, a proud soldier and was exceptionally proud of being a Gurkha Rifleman. He knew the dangers involved in becoming a soldier and understood better than most what it meant to go to war; this was one of his greatest strengths. He died doing what he did best, amongst his greatest friends and admirers and for a cause he had taken the time

to understand. He was brave, strong, hard and noble; he epitomised all that makes the Gurkhas great – the best. I was proud to have known him; he will not be forgotten."

Major Ross Daines, Commander of B Company, 2nd Battalion, the Royal Gurkha Rifles, said : "Rifleman Yubraj Rai was a stalwart of B Coy 2 RGR. After 6 years as a member of a Rifle Platoon he volunteered to become the Company's storeman, a job that requires great attention to detail and genuine concern for other soldiers. He was invariably the man working long hours to ensure that he could issue equipment in the best condition.

"Rifleman Yubraj was a quiet man who I will always remember politely entering my office with a pile of forms requiring signatures. Once he got them he would smile shyly and walk purposefully away from the office. Not once in my year with B Company can I remember a bad word said against him. He was held in genuine affection by all

"Rifleman Yubraj died as he lived his life, selflessly and with great humility. After deployment to Musa Qala he volunteered to be a member of 5 Platoon, a job that involved frequent patrolling in dangerous areas. He chose this role when he could have easily avoided being so close to the action. This willingness to do the hard graft and share danger was his hallmark.

"The death of Rifleman Yubraj is a great sadness and one that will not pass easily. He was a fine man and I miss him already

Lance Corporal Gajendra Rai and Lance Corporal Sunil Rai, who both served alongside Rifleman Rai, wrote : "Dear friend Yubraj, you are our best friend, we will never forget you. We used to go everywhere with you. We shared our thoughts no matter how difficult the days were. We are proud to have been your friend, you are the one who inspired us to be brave men like you. You were a really honest, punctual and gentle person. You know that we used to play football, basketball and swim together; you were a really good competitor. We always used to admire your playing style, which was fantastic. We will remember the day that we all spent the whole night talking about our futures, but you broke your promise, you have left us forever. But we are proud of you and what you did for us, your family and for the Queen. Thank you for being our very best friend, we will always remember you."