

4TH BATTALION THE RIFLES

Lance Corporal Keogh was born in Paddington, London on August 25, 1985 (aged 24) originally enlisted in 2003, serving until 2008, including a tour to Iraq on Operation TELIC 10. After a year's break, he re-joined in 2009. Immediately upon re-joining, he was posted to the Reconnaissance Platoon, 4 RIFLES. Very soon thereafter, he started pre-deployment training for Afghanistan with R Company Fire Support Group, who were due to deploy as part of the Election Support Force. He was injured in an accident while off duty just before deployment, and remained in the UK to recover, before training for and completing a potential Junior Non Commissioned Officers' Cadre with 5 RIFLES. He gained the coveted top student award on the course, before deploying to Afghanistan with A Company 4 RIFLES for Operation HERRICK 11.

He leaves behind his parents, Lawrence and Marion, and two brothers.

Lance Corporal Keogh's family paid the following tribute:

"Tom was our eldest son and we all loved and admired him greatly. He loved the Army life and lived his life to the full. He brought laughter and happiness to our home and all who knew him. Our family has been left devastated by Tom's tragic death, but not a day will pass without us remembering the happiness and pride he gave us. We love you Tom."

Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Jones, Commanding Officer 4 RIFLES said:

"It is sometimes tempting to get carried away in extolling the virtues of the fallen, but with Lance Corporal Tom Keogh there is no danger of drifting towards exaggeration. He was quite simply one of the very best soldiers in the Battalion and proves yet again the sad adage that it is the best that die young.

"The Reconnaissance Platoon is a haven for the best and most motivated Riflemen, as they are always very keen to tell us. Lance Corporal Keogh was totally at home there and was one of their real stars – a natural soldier who just got it. Highly fit, dynamic, and extremely professional, but always there for those less capable and experienced than him. The younger lads were drawn to him by his example and kindness. He was a genuine role model to them and they aspired to his standards.

"Devastated to see his Recce mates deploy without him last June after he was injured, his moment came recently when he joined A Company as a Battle Casualty Replacement. In the meantime he came top of 130 Riflemen on his Junior NCO promotion cadre; a particularly difficult accolade to secure coming as it did when he was a guest on a course being held by one of our sister Rifles Battalions. Those who have gone before him as Top Student have fast-tracked up the promotion ladder. Like them, his trajectory was set and his future very

bright.

"He is the third to fall in A Company in 10 days and his loss will be felt deeply. Likewise, back in Bulford his great many friends will mourn the loss of a loyal brother Rifleman, an exceptionally decent man and one of our finest warriors. His family are in our thoughts and prayers. They have so much to be proud of in what he achieved. His sacrifice is the tragic price being paid for the deliberate, but concrete progress being made in Helmand to improve the lives of the Afghan people. Those that were touched by him will never forget him. His memory will only give us all yet more determination to deliver improved security as a fitting and enduring legacy."

Lieutenant Colonel Nick Kitson, Commanding Officer 3 RIFLES Battle Group said:

"Despite arriving only a few weeks ago, Lance Corporal Keogh had, true to his highly impressive reputation, already made a significant contribution to the work that the Battle Group is doing out here. The Patrol Base from which he was working is one of our newer locations, established to provide added security to the people of Sangin whilst also restricting insurgent freedom of movement. As such it has very much been in the thick of it over the past few months. Lance Corporal Keogh's arrival reinforced what was already a very effective platoon, helping them to reach new heights in this very tough and complex counter-insurgency battle. With increased insurgent activity of late, the past week has seen some hard fighting. It is typical of such a dedicated warrior that he fell whilst unhesitatingly fighting off an enemy attack with selfless commitment and determination.

"Lance Corporal Keogh joins a list of heroic Riflemen of whom we are immensely proud, who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country, alongside their friends so that the people of this troubled region might enjoy a better future. The thoughts and prayers of the whole Battle Group are very much with his family and friends at this most difficult of times. We know that they, like us, will find solace and inspiration from his revered memory."

Major Richard Streatfeild, Officer Commanding A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"Lance Corporal Tom Keogh joined A Company 4 weeks ago. He came with a strong reputation. When we chatted on his arrival he told me that he had rejoined the Army for this tour; to soldier in Afghanistan, to prove himself. He has done all of that in the short time he has been here. I cannot pretend to have known him well but his commitment and desire were immediately apparent. Platoons strove to have him on their team. 1 Platoon was the happy recipient and he has done them proud after the difficult circumstances that prompted his deployment. He brought a good sense of humour with his professionalism and unbridled enthusiasm in the most austere conditions.

"Recently promoted he was a natural commander, amongst the best of his generation. He found immediate respect and comradeship amongst the Company. We mourn his loss but not as much as his family and friends. Our thoughts are with them. He died a soldier's death, defending his friends and the civilian population from those who would seek to deny them freedom. His was an example to follow, we will do our best."

Major David Godfrey, Officer Commanding S Company 4 RIFLES said:

"In the short time that I had the pleasure of knowing Lance Corporal Keogh, he made a distinct and lasting impression on me. An impressive and talented soldier, it seems that whatever he turned his hand to he aced; he was whole-heartedly committed to striving to be the best he could. Trustworthy, thoughtful and motivated he was the epitome of a Reconnaissance Platoon soldier.

"He blended a keen sense of purpose and ambition with a compassionate heart, wonderfully warm character and disarming smile. It is perhaps indicative of his character that he was keen to deploy to Afghanistan. He knocked on my office door almost daily to see if his flight confirmation had come through; though this could be mistaken as youthful exuberance, it was clear to me that he wanted to test himself fully doing a job he clearly loved. Whilst the loss to S Company and Recce Platoon is great, it is incomparable with the loss to his family, loved ones and friends and my thoughts and prayers are with them through this difficult time."

Captain Ben Shuttleworth, Second in Command A Company 4 RIFLES

"There is no doubt in my mind that Lance Corporal Keogh died doing what he loved. Tom Keogh was born a soldier and died a soldier. He had once tried to leave the services behind, briefly entering civilian employment. Even there he could not stay away from the action: we all fell about laughing when we found him in the tabloids chaperoning a Rolling Stone's young girlfriend merely weeks after leaving but still proudly sporting his Recce Platoon T-Shirt. Civvy street

was not for him and he was soon back in the Battalion, as if he had never left, desperate to join us for our upcoming deployment to Helmand.

"Initially, however, he had to stay behind. The then Rifleman Keogh had remained in that rank for too long. He attended another Battalion's promotion course and surprised none of us when he returned as the top student. He was then able to join the Company for the second half of the Afghanistan tour as a Section Second in Command. Most of us arrived somewhat nervous of the country. Lance Corporal Keogh arrived full of confidence, sorry only that he had missed some of the Company's earlier adventures and thriving on the excited anticipation of the action that he hoped was still to come.

"He was a natural leader of men and the sort of professional soldier that everyone wanted next to them on patrol. Barely a week had passed after he had moved into his Platoon Patrol Base and he had already grown the favourite moustache and looked every part the seasoned veteran. He listened to his comrades attempting to learn from all that they had already experienced. In turn, Riflemen who had served the whole tour naturally looked up to him. In Afghanistan he had found his calling. As such a popular character, he leaves behind so many who were proud to be called his friend. We will all remember him with nothing but fond memories and hope that similar thoughts will help soothe the loss his family now feel. "

Captain Tom Cairncross, Adjutant 4 RIFLES said:

"It is the irony of this conflict that the best always seem to fall first, and Lance Corporal Keogh was the best. He stood out in an extraordinary platoon. Due to deploy with my Fire Support Group to Afghanistan last year, his performance during pre-deployment training was exceptional. He was so naturally talented he could do the job in his sleep. That he was very capable is remarkable, but what is so rare is that he balanced this ability with compassion and maturity. He was a very kind man and had time for everyone, especially when under pressure.

"He sustained a serious head injury in an accident just before the FSG deployed in April 2009. When I told him in hospital that he could not come with us he was devastated. The fact that he not only recovered so quickly, but in a matter of months had been judged the best student on an external JNCO cadre to gain promotion is breathtaking. One can only marvel at the determination and strength of character this must have required. He was screaming to be promoted from the moment he arrived back in the Battalion. The Rifles has lost a superb junior commander. My thoughts are with his family."

Captain Andrew Boardman, Operations Officer 1 RIFLES said:

"Lance Corporal Keogh was an exceptional Rifleman in the best traditions of the Reconnaissance Platoon. He had the highest of personal standards and could always be relied upon to carry out any task to the best of his ability. His charisma, confidence and charm made him hugely popular and he was always the centre of any social gathering. Having re-joined the Army last year, after a short break, he immediately re-established himself as a quality soldier and proved himself to be utterly worthy of the respect of his peers.

"His skills, experience and character made him an ideal Recce soldier and I was delighted to welcome him back into the platoon. A top-class performance on his JNCO Cadre in late 2009 saw him finish as top student and he received a very well-deserved stripe. He was desperate for the opportunity to deploy to Afghanistan and I have no doubt that he will have been a tremendous asset to A Company and shown an impeccable example to those around him. He will be very sadly missed."

Second Lieutenant Jessie Leach, Officer Commanding 1 Platoon, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"I have only known Tom Keogh for a couple of weeks but in that time I have learnt two things about him. He was a good soldier but had a bad stomach for chicken! Having shared a small room with him here in Patrol Base "Bariolai" I will remember the couple of chats about home life and women, we had in the evenings. He spoke passionately about both subjects. I knew Lance Corporal Keogh was a Battlefield Casualty Replacement who volunteered to come out following a number of casualties sustained by A Company. This takes quite a bit of courage and deserves the upmost respect.

"Prior to his deployment he completed a Junior Non Commissioned Cadre in Germany, he got best student which was the icing on the cake. An experienced and intelligent soldier who has spent most of his time in Recce Platoon, I knew he would be an asset to 1 Platoon as Section Second in Command and Section Commander when needed. Although Lance Corporal Keogh has spent a little over a month with the Platoon and myself, I have noticed how his warm

personality and nature has had affect on the Rifleman. We are all proud of serving along side such an example of a true soldier and Rifleman. The guys will miss him I know."

Warrant Officer Class 1 Lee Roberts, Regimental Serjeant Major 4 RIFLES said:

"Lance Corporal Keogh was the typical Recce soldier in every aspect: fit; professional; loyal and trustworthy. No job was too hard for Lance Corporal Keogh. He would crack on and get the job done to the best of his ability and he had immense ability. In The Rifles, we breed the thinking Rifleman and he was all of this and more. It takes a special kind of soldier to go to another Battalion and to come away with their top student on a NCO Cadre, but this is exactly what he did. He was a pleasure to be around and we will miss him massively. My thoughts are with his family and friends at this sad time."

Warrant Officer Class 2 Pat Hyde, Company Serjeant Major A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"Lance Corporal Tom Keogh joined the company only a few weeks ago but was a well know face within 4 Rifles as a member of the Reconnaissance Platoon. Ever since early last year Tom had been knocking at my door asking to deploy with the Company to Afghanistan but was unable to due to him attending a Junior Non Commissioned Cadre with 5 Rifles. Tom was fit, experienced, professional & confident, all in all, raw Infantry talent which enabled him to become top student on the Cadre. Tom loved being a Rifleman and loved soldiering, a true legend he will be missed by all that knew him. Rest in peace mate."

Colour Serjeant Kevin Gaghan, Reconnaissance Platoon Second in Command 4 RIFLES said:

"I have had the pleasure to have known Tom for a long time. When he rejoined the Army last year I was delighted to learn that he was returning to the Recce Platoon. Tom had an infectious appetite for soldiering which brings everyone else's game to a higher level. We recently won an inter Platoon competition in which Tom was massively influential. He then went away and completed an external JNCO Cadre which he came top, which was no surprise to anyone who knew him. Tom will never be forgotten. I've lost a fantastic soldier and a great friend. Rest in peace mate."

Serjeant Ross Jones, Platoon Serjeant 1 Platoon, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"I have known Tom for a few years now; he has always been a close friend to me. We served together in COP, Northern Ireland and Recce platoon in Iraq. He was one of the finest soldiers I have known, constantly trying to better himself. He was dedicated to the Regiment. It was no surprise to me when he won best student on the last Junior Non Commissioned Cadre. When rumours were flying around he was coming to Afghanistan as a BCR, I was first in line to try and get him in my Platoon, luckily I did and he made an impact from the start. He took over Second in Command of number 2 Section which had already been hit hard.

"Tom was a very confident and intelligent bloke, his sense of humour was infectious. His outlook on life and politics regarding the Army always had me in stitches. The way he played the part on patrols and operations, tooled up to the max with his moustache. He would have a

complete transformation in his down time to look as ridiculous as possible; 'Rock and Roll' as he put it. One example would be wearing boots with really short shorts or wacky thick rim sunglasses which he though made him look retro. Back in England you would probably think he was from Camden market. Tom was by no means a poster-boy soldier, although he worked hard on exercise and tour.

"There was always a mischievous side to him and when nothing was happening and boredom got the better of him, then he was a nightmare to hierarchy. I will always remember Tom as a brilliant and proud soldier who I saw firing back at the enemy till the moment he died and the close friends who were taken away in his time. He won the respect and admiration from everyone he met. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family and all his friends everywhere."

Serjeant Jimmy Houston, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"Tom Keogh was truly a soldier's soldier, opinionated, articulate and intelligent. He never shied away from putting across his own views – no matter what the topic. Highly professional he looks the modern front line soldier with a hint of old school. A true Green Jacket, he died doing the job he was born to do. RIP"

Corporal Gareth Evans, Reconnaissance Platoon 4 RIFLES said:

"He was a friend and a true Recce soldier; he had not long joined back up from his short break on Civilian Street

and walked straight back into Recce Platoon when we started PDT (Pre deployment training). Tom was in my section as a Rifleman, and one who any Section Commander would have wanted to have. Even after his short spell in Civilian Street

, Tom's drills and skills were on the ball. He was a keen and enthusiastic soldier, he joined back up to do the job that he loved and died doing the job he loved. He was an achiever and this showed when we won the Tarleton Trophy. He then came top on his JNCO cadre - he would no doubt have progressed massively in his career. Tom was a character and a very good friend. He ran the race that was set before him. He will be dearly missed and never forgotten. Rest in Peace, Swift and Bold."

Corporal Daniel Ord, Reconnaissance Platoon 4 RIFLES said:

"Tom came to Recce in 2005 from his selection. He was selected to come to my call-sign as my driver. From then whilst in Canada I remember he had done nothing but tick and whinge. This is where our friendship started. After returning from Canada we started our training for Iraq; he was my driver this is where our friendship became stronger. Tom was a natural Recce soldier and brother. On returning from Iraq he remained in my team as a gunner and was unfortunate not to deploy with the Platoon to Afghanistan in 2009. He will be sorely missed."

Corporal Alex Lee, Reconnaissance Platoon 4 RIFLES said:

"Tom was a fit and ambitious Junior NCO. He was the perfect role model for any Rifleman. He will be sorely missed by Recce Platoon and by 4 RIFLES. RIP."

Corporal Bobby Charlton, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"I only knew Tom for a short time but he made a big impression on the platoon. He was a chosen man and died fighting. CELER-ET-AUDAX"

Corporal Danny Pearson, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"Tom wasn't just a work colleague; he was a good friend and an awesome buddy. Tom was a legend in and out of work. In work he was a very well liked, fit, robust, professional and also a great leader of men. Easily one of the best. Out of work he was a rock star, so he liked to think. When he left the Army after Iraq, I can remember he said to me 'Trust me one day I'll be famous' then about a month later we all saw him in the paper falling out of a club and hanging out with some random celebrities. So that was Tom sticking up his fingers to all that doubted him.

Mate I am going to miss you loads and never going to forget you. RIP Swift and Bold."

Lance Corporal Ned Tawake and Lance Corporal Joni Wakavonono said:

"Tom Keogh was a chosen man at his best, great honour to have fought with one of the best Rifleman of 4 Rifles. Patrol Base Bariolai will never be the same without him, we have lost a brilliant soldier and a great man. Tom died doing what he loved best, trying to give cover to mates whilst in contact. Our thoughts are with his family. Once a Rifleman always a Rifleman."

Rifleman Jofrey Pepler, Reconnaissance Platoon 4 RIFLES said :

"I only met Tom last year but can remember feeling so comfortable around him from the start, I had only experienced that before with a handful of friends, and can honestly say that there's only a few people who have walked into my life and changed it forever. I felt like I could tell him anything, like he was a brother and for me he was indeed. He was a consistent figure in my life I could turn to at any time for friendship and support.

"From the first time we met I've always admired Tom's optimism and professionalism and looked up to him without ever admitting it. I wish I could have said this to him while he was still here but would never forget his shining example and commitment. The thing I'll miss most about Tom is how we could just start a conversation on the most boring subject and bring it around to be one of the best, he was always a very good conversationalist and always kept people captivated with stories of what he got up to on weekends, sometimes even jealous.

"Good men will die, but death cannot kill their names and Tom's will forever stay a monument in

my thoughts and actions."

Rifleman Peter Choy, Reconnaissance Platoon 4 RIFLES said:

"I've not long known Tom as I only joined Recce Platoon last year; however Tom was by far the kindest and politest person I have ever worked alongside. Tom would come to my room often asking me if I needed any assistance on anything that I'm weak at military wise, and made sure that we all knew that he was always there for us. What a great person to be with in times of trouble, especially for us young Riflemen. We looked up to him as he was one of the keenest and diligent soldiers; I know he'll be sorely missed by all his mates who knew him very well."

Rifleman Charlie Foley, A Company 4 RIFLES

"I hate writing these things because you never know what to say, like you're having a laugh with each other then the next thing you're gone. Tom I'm happy you came to the Platoon and my Section, you were a good person and a good Second in Command. You will be missed much."

Rifleman Steven Preece, A Company, 4 RIFLES

"Lance Corporal Tom Keogh was a great friend, I didn't know Tom long but he came into two Section as the Second in Command. He was always helping out from doing stag to helping out on the ground. He was a great laugh and a good drawer and will never be forgotten. True Rifleman and will forever be looking over us. Swift and Bold."