

Lieutenant Edward Drummond-Baxter and Lance Corporal Siddhanta Kunwar from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles (1RGR) were killed on Tuesday 30 October 2012 while on patrol in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand Province. Both men were attached to 40 Commando Royal Marines.

Lieutenant Drummond-Baxter and Lance Corporal Kunwar were based in Checkpoint Prrang in the southern area of Nahr-e Saraj. On 30 October they were participating in a shura (meeting) with Afghan Uniformed Policemen inside the checkpoint. On completion of the shura, they were shot and killed by a man wearing an Afghan police uniform who had been attending the meeting.

LIEUTENANT EDWARD DRUMMOND-BAXTER  
1ST BATTALION THE ROYAL GURKHA RIFLES

Lieutenant Edward Drummond-Baxter deployed to Afghanistan on 30 September 2012 as Platoon Command of 1 Platoon, A (Delhi) Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, attached to 40 Commando Royal Marines as part of Transition Support Unit Nahr-e Saraj. He was based in Checkpoint Prrang in the southern part of Nahr-e Saraj District, Helmand Province. He was on his first operational tour of Afghanistan.

Lieutenant Drummond-Baxter was born in Peterborough on 15 September 1983 and lived in County Durham with his parents. He studied at University College London and gained a BSc degree in Psychology. While at university he was an active member of his local TA regiment, The Honourable Artillery Company. He subsequently spent two years working for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office including a posting to Japan before joining the British Army. He attended The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 2010 and commissioned into the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in December 2010.

After Sandhurst he completed the demanding training to qualify as an Infantry Platoon Commander and further cemented his ability as an outstanding field soldier by passing the arduous Jungle Warfare Course in Brunei to qualify as Jungle Operations Instructor. Throughout 2011 and 2012 he expertly prepared and led his platoon through the detailed mission specific training for Operation Herrick 17 in Afghanistan and attended the three-month Nepali language course in Pokhara, Nepal. In August 2012 he volunteered to spend a further month in Nepal assisting with the Brigade of Gurkhas' selection course.

Lieutenant Drummond-Baxter was an excellent Platoon Commander whose calm demeanour and ready sense of humour were widely respected by his soldiers and fellow officers. He quickly made his mark as a talented officer who possessed great potential and always put his soldiers first.

He leaves behind his mother, Helen, father, David and sister, Emily.

The family of Lieutenant Edward Drummond-Baxter said: "Edward was fiercely loyal and totally sincere to his parents, sister and many friends who are mourning him today both in the UK and around the world. He loved the Gurkhas and died among friends doing the job that he wanted to do. Helen and David would appreciate being left to grieve in private."

Lieutenant Colonel David Robinson, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said: "Our Battalion has lost a character, a true gentleman and an inspirational leader in Lieutenant Edward Drummond-Baxter. Edward or 'DB', as he was often known, was one of life's true personalities; his Gurkha soldiers noticeably responded to his dedication to them but also to his great wit and humour. They would follow him anywhere." "His natural empathy and rapport for his soldiers was evident to everyone; it was never a surprise to find him spending additional time with them, whether seeking to further their professional development or just enjoying their company. The tragedy of his loss is beyond words."

"He was also utterly courageous and had already proved himself such a calm and steady leader under fire that his men knew they were in the best of hands. Since joining the Regiment in 2010, he had quickly shown that he thoroughly enjoyed the challenges of command and, I know, was incredibly proud to be leading his platoon of Gurkhas. Despite the inherent dangers of the operation, he focused his time and considerable efforts to their welfare and in delivering professional excellence in pursuit of the mission.

"He will be sorely missed by all who knew him. His brother officers will always remember him for his style, kindness and sense of fun and he truly endeared himself to all ranks as it was impossible not to be won over by his charm and positive personality. He combined his natural leadership with a mature, dedicated outlook and this was never more apparent than when he prepared his platoon for the challenges of the tour. I could not have been more proud of him.

"Edward Drummond-Baxter was a Gurkha officer in the finest tradition and his loss will be deeply felt by all those who had the privilege and honour of knowing him. We know that the deep loss we feel is nothing compared to that of his family and our thoughts and prayers are with them at this extremely difficult time."

Lieutenant Colonel Matt Jackson Royal Marines, Commanding Officer 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"Edward was a remarkably talented officer. He readily accepted the challenges placed before him and was so demonstrably proud to be serving in Delhi Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles. I saw at first hand the way in which he capably led his men through the training prior to deployment and the way that his Gurkhas responded to his leadership; they had clearly made an exceptional bond. He had already proved to be highly effective in the time he was deployed in Afghanistan and will be remembered for his passion and bravery and his commitment to those he so ably led; his reputation as a leader, commander and warrior were known. He loved the men he served alongside and in turn they loved him; leaders like Edward are born to achieve greatness and it is with deep sadness that we find that his life has been cut so tragically short.

"It is difficult in these few words to truly reflect how exceptionally talented Edward was, but I will say this: I am proud. I am proud to say that I knew him. I am proud to have served alongside him. I am proud to have had such a highly talented Gurkha officer serve as part of 40 Commando Group Royal Marines. His loss has had a profound effect on all of us and our thoughts and prayers are with his parents and sister at this difficult time. Rest in peace."

Major Dave Pack, Officer Commanding A (Delhi) Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:

"Edward was an outstanding officer; trustworthy, honest and exceptionally competent. He saw it as a privilege to command his Gurkhas. He was so proud to deploy with them on operations and in return every one of them felt privileged and lucky to have him as their Platoon Commander. As his Officer Commanding it was an honour to know him and to work with him. He will be irreplaceable. His robust and proactive nature combined with his irrepressible cheerfulness made him perfectly suited to the austere conditions in which he was working. Brilliant with the Afghan locals and fearless on patrol, he operated with a calm confidence that gave me and his men utter faith in him as a man and as a leader. He was inspirational. Everyone who knew him should be incredibly proud of him. He was a shining example of what a Gurkha officer should be; professional, brave and selfless."

Captain Shuresh Kumar Thapa, Second in Command A (Delhi) Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:

"I first came into contact with Edward ten months ago when I arrived

as  
Second in Command of Delhi Company. He first struck me with his  
professionalism and positive approach to his job as Platoon Commander  
Platoon. He was very proud to be an officer in 1RGR and Delhi Company, a fact that showed in his work and life in Shorncliffe (Kent).  
"He was a true hero to me and for all of Delhi Company. He was a great character and great commander, a very calm and big-hearted man who always put his boys first and never tired doing the job he loved. He welcomed any tasks and always said 'Huncha Saheb' ("Yes, Sir" ). He was the only commander who never had any negative comments and always highlighted the positive about his boys who he was extremely proud to lead and serve with. He always entertained us during our conference calls by saying 'roger' and 'out' together at the end of acknowledgement. His well-spoken tones added a touch of class to the conference call and on the Company net. From now on there is no one here to say to me 'Huncha Saheb' and make me laugh during the Delhi Company conference call. I would like to extend my thoughts and prayers to his family."  
Captain Ryan Davies, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:  
"Edward Drummond-Baxter was a good friend. He was a hugely popular member of the Officers' Mess and his open, warm and personable nature ensured that those that knew him knew him well. He had a real lust for life, would always grasp opportunities for adventure and had an uncanny ability to liven up any social event. He was a guy who would always lend a caring ear and who you could simply sit down and have a heart to heart with."  
"He will be immeasurably missed by all those in the Royal Gurkha Rifles, both officers and soldiers alike. Spending time with him recently in Nepal, it was clear that his love for Gurkha soldiers underpinned all that he did in his job. Known as 'DB Saheb' to his Platoon; they will feel his loss considerably, but are far better for having known him, as are the rest of us. He was a selfless and enigmatic commander, a first-rate soldier and a true gentleman."  
Captain Jiwan Pun, A (Delhi) Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:  
"Lieutenant Edward Drummond-Baxter was a cheerful, engaging and professional man who was universally popular and highly capable in all he did. He was known as 'DB Saheb'; one of the finest officers who I have ever served with. I always will remember my days with DB Saheb; particularly my last visit to CP Prrang on 29 October 2012, where we were warmly welcome saying 'Oh Jiwan saheb, what a pleasant surprise, you are also here with us'; Major Pack (Officer Commanding Delhi Coy) replied saying 'Yeah, this is A team for you Ed'. We then had fresh fruit and water together chatting about how he was getting on. On the way back to Patrol Base 2, I kept thinking 'why I did not give him a hug?' as he saw me off by hand-shaking three times in the CP Prrang. I truly sense that he wanted to lead his men and utilise his considerable experience and very likeable character to guide them through the next six months and leave Afghanistan a better country. DB Saheb's cutting, self-deprecating wit, easy going manner and endearing personality will never be forgotten by all those who had the privilege and pleasure to have met and worked with him. His calm and reassuring voice did and will always echo on our ears. Our thoughts and prayers are with all his family and friends. He fell doing the job he loved, surrounded by those who loved him. He will never be forgotten."  
Captain Alex Brown, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:  
"Edward was the consummate gentleman. We, his brother-officers in the Mess, all loved him for his sense of humour, easy going manner, and desire to have fun. But it was his charm, kindness, and consideration that set him apart from us.

He was in many respects a throwback to another era, an English gentleman abroad. He had spent time in Japan prior to joining the Battalion and loved Asia, and so was very excited about going out to Brunei with us next summer, linen suit and all. Because he was slightly older he brought a calmness and maturity to his manner that the soldiers responded to and respected, and which gave him the gravitas to be an excellent commander. My heart goes out to his family because today we lost one of the best."

Corporal Hirabahadur Phagami, 1 Platoon, A (Delhi) Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:"Throughout my career Lieutenant DB Saheb was one of the best platoon commanders. He was always calm and caring to all of us. Always a smile on his face no matter how difficult the task was. Best leader I have ever met and worked with. May his soul rest in peace. I will forever remember him. May God bless his family."

Lance Corporal Roshan Gurung, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:"Lieutenant DB Saheb was a very kind hearted and generous gentleman. It was a great honour to serve with a Platoon Commander like him. May his soul rest in peace in heaven, we will miss him and he will always be in our hearts."