

Rifleman James Backhouse
2 Rifles

Rifleman James Backhouse, 18, from Castleford, Yorkshire joined the Army in September 2007 and arrived in 2 RIFLES in April 2008 where he joined 9 Platoon, C Company. Rifleman Backhouse joined the Battalion as an Under-18 and was therefore unable to deploy to Kosovo in 2008. So, it was with great enthusiasm that he deployed to Afghanistan with his Platoon in March 2009. Rifleman Backhouse cleared the route ahead for his fellow Riflemen to follow. He was killed in action by an improvised explosive device, doing the job he loved, surrounded by his friends.

Rifleman Backhouse loved his fitness and was always striving to be stronger and faster than the next man. He leaves behind his parents Andrew and Sharon and his three brothers, Gareth, Dean and Ryan.

Lieutenant Colonel Rob Thomson MBE, Commanding Officer 2 RIFLES Battle Group:

"One of four brothers, Rifleman Backhouse, was a natural soldier and this was his first tour. As part of 9 Platoon, he had endured some of the most austere conditions in Sangin - there was never a murmur of complaint and he was the sort who simply got on. He was a determined, rigorous and thoughtful young man who saw the lighter side of life. He loved his rugby and his football and his heart was set on being a PTI - it would have been right up his street. He was always at the front when we ran on the beach in Ballykinler. He had lungs big enough for the rest of his Platoon. We were jealous. He was utterly selfless and always the first man in his Company to welcome new Riflemen. He is sorely missed and his family are front and centre of our prayers at this unimaginably difficult time."

Major Alistair Field, Officer Commanding C Company 2 RIFLES:

"A gritty sounding Yorkshireman; Rifleman Backhouse was in my select group of Riflemen that were being put forward to attempt the gruelling JNCO Cadre on return from Afghanistan. He was quickly accepted by his fellow Riflemen as one of the lads and as someone who could be relied on. This tour had brought out the best in Rifleman Backhouse. He was 'always on the ramparts' as we say and quick to volunteer for any task, especially those which took the fight to the enemy - there were many of those. His sense of service was humbling."

Captain Edward Poynter, Operations Officer C Company 2 RIFLES:

"Rifleman Backhouse was hugely disappointed to miss his first chance at an operational tour when he was unable to deploy to Kosovo last year because he was too young. Characteristically, he quickly and optimistically reset his sights on the up coming tour to

Afghanistan. He attacked the pre-deployment training with charisma, vigour and a keenness that was clearly visible to all. His keen eye and ability to process what he saw in front of him quickly identified him as a natural Lead Scout and he was proud to fill this vital role. Rifleman Backhouse was a cheerful and deeply loved member of his Platoon, and the wider Company, and he will be missed greatly. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends."

Serjeant Jamie Moncho, 9 Platoon Serjeant:

"James had a demanding role within his section as the lead man. He was brave and seemed to be without fear as he led patrols in the most demanding of situations. He was always first to cross the finish line and relished leading from the front. He was keen to complete the army physical training instructors' cadre in the future. As a young Rifleman he never forgot what it was like to join The Rifles and welcomed all new members to the Platoon with open arms - One of his strengths as a key member of 9 Platoon. He loved his fellow Riflemen and his family dearly.

"As a 'Thinking Rifleman' he led from the front, taking the fight all the way to the enemy. He will be dearly missed and never forgotten. A Rifleman first and a friend for life - RIP.

"Swift & Bold."

Rifleman Kevin Holt, Fellow Rifleman:

"Rifleman Backhouse was a very close friend and a fellow Yorkshireman. He was good at his job and never complained. I will miss him dearly and so will the rest of 9 Platoon. He loved his sports and his nights out with the lads. He died for his country, which he loved, and is a hero in my eyes, and should be in the rest of the country's eyes. I'll never forget you James and I'm proud to say I knew you."

Rifleman David Kendall, Fellow Rifleman:

"I first met Rifleman Backhouse in training. He was always the quiet, thoughtful one and until you got to know him you didn't realise how switched on he really was. He was always friendly and a big, kind-hearted bloke. He will always be missed and will forever be in our hearts. Rest in Peace my brother. Kenny."

Rifleman Turagbeci and Rifleman Tagicakibau, Fellow Riflemen:

"Rifleman Backhouse was one of the most brilliant guys. I met Backhouse when I joined the battalion, he came to me and shook my hand and introduced himself. He was one of the guys that the blokes loved to work with. Whenever we where on Stag, he'd tell me to switch to another channel and tell jokes. Rifleman Backhouse was always a good morale boost to me. He showed good leadership and had a fine character. Everybody in his platoon is missing him but Rifleman Backhouse died doing the job he loved. He gave his life for his country. Rifleman Backhouse will be remembered for ever. May your soul rest in peace brother, 'til we meet again.

Your two Fijian friends."