

A Company, 4th Battalion The Rifles (4 RIFLES)

It is with sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that Rifleman Martin Kinggett from A Company, 4th Battalion The Rifles (4 RIFLES), part of the 3 RIFLES Battle Group, was killed in Afghanistan on Thursday 25 February 2010.

Rifleman Kinggett, a 19-year-old soldier from A Company 4 RIFLES, serving as part of 3 RIFLES Battle Group, was killed by a gun shot wound in Sangin, Helmand Province.

He was on a routine foot patrol, part of a larger operation to provide security for the local population in Sangin. During the patrol he and his comrades were required to provide covering fire for the evacuation of an injured colleague and Rifleman Kinggett was shot and killed.

Rifleman Kinggett, from Dagenham, joined the army in 2007 but left for a short while, before re-enlisting in 2009. He attended the demanding Combat Infantryman's Course at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick before joining 4th Battalion, The Rifles in April 2009. Very soon, he was involved in Pre-Deployment Training for Afghanistan.

He deployed with A Company in October 2009 as dismounted Rifleman (foot patrol based) on his first operational tour to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 11, as part of 3 RIFLES Battle Group.

Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Jones, Commanding Officer 4 RIFLES said:
"Rifleman Martin Kinggett was nothing if not a character and his friends loved him for it.

"He was a young man enjoying life and brightening up the lives of those alongside him. Things were never going to be dull with him around and his mischievous streak saw him push the boundaries regularly and get him into a fair few scrapes.

"There is no doubt that he could be exasperating, but everything he did was good natured and conducted with integrity. Like the best Riflemen, he had plenty of edge and he liked to operate on a long leash.

"He joined 4 RIFLES as a member of the 'big 3' – friends from Essex who went through training together at Catterick and then joined the Battalion.

"He was a young man that his mates could absolutely rely on. Indeed, through training he was the man that others naturally went to for assistance. He had a very good heart and was deeply loyal to his friends; loyalty that was repaid without question.

"As so often, it was in Afghanistan that he really found his calling. His strength of character and values proved a rock to those around him. His brother Riflemen drew strength and comfort from his confidence. He was fearless as the lead man in his section, clearing the ground for those

that followed.

"There are few lonelier jobs and it requires inner steel and calm maturity.

"Rifleman Kinggett took this in his stride. He was proud to be a Rifleman, indeed he left Catterick the first time at the thought that he might not be sent to The Rifles.

"The Regiment excels because of young men like him and he was a true Rifleman – highly professional, with no shortage of attitude, but always steadfast.

"It is typical of him that he fell giving covering fire while his comrades extracted a seriously injured friend in contact.

"His family who he loved so openly and talked of so frequently will be devastated at his loss, but will take great pride that he fell as he had lived, helping his friends.

"His legacy will be the enduring progress that is being made in Helmand and the changes that are being made to the lives of the Afghan population – something of which he would be very proud."

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

"Rifleman Martin Kinggett has been a truly valued member of this Battle Group as it fights tirelessly, day by day, for a better future for the population of Sangin and this region.

"His enthusiasm and lust for life were infectious. He had on this tour clearly shown the makings of a promising career. He epitomised the selfless commitment and wholehearted engagement of our country's young men in this most complex of political and military challenges.

"The classic feisty Rifleman, he was blessed with a quick wit, a disarming smile and a mischievous temperament balanced by an inquiring mind, a hard sense of professionalism and an unmovable devotion to friends and his duty.

"Brave as a lion and selfless until the end, he fell to enemy fire while protecting the evacuation of a wounded comrade shot minutes before.

"The loss of one so young and full of promise is a great blow to the Battle Group and to our proud Regiment. We shall steel ourselves further as we continue the noble work for which he gave his all too brief life.

"We shall not falter in our efforts here but draw strength and inspiration from his humbling example. The thoughts and prayers of us all in this Battle Group go out to his friends, family and loved ones."

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

"Rifleman Martin Kinggett was impossible not to like. He arrived in A Company in April 2009.

"He had completed the full repertoire of mistakes one might make as a young Rifleman and even added a couple for good measure before we got to Afghanistan in October. Honest mistakes; borne of exuberance, confidence, and a solid belief that he could talk himself out of any scrape.

"Soldiering in Afghanistan was the making of him. On operations he performed outstandingly well. He gained maturity, professional pride, trust, a keen sense of responsibility and a whole load more soldierly qualities too numerous to mention.

"He volunteered for the most demanding of tasks leading the section through the fields, compounds and alleyways of the Upper Sangin Valley. Rifleman Kingett was brave and quick thinking. It was these qualities that saved my hide on one occasion and I owe him a personal debt of gratitude.

"He never lost his quick wit. He was always to be found in the thick of the banter as well as the action. He was very good for morale even under the most stressful conditions.

"I know, from the many conversations that I had with him on the subject, that he was extremely fond of his family. Our thoughts and our prayers are with them. He was at the start of a career that was full of promise.

"Rifleman Kinggett transformed from boy to man before our very eyes. Before deployment he got himself in to so much trouble I often thought that he would not be allowed to deploy. In retrospect he was simply a young boy having fun.

"Since his arrival in Afghanistan, Rifleman Kinggett has thrived on responsibility, grasping every chance to lead. First he became the lead man of the section tasked with finding road side bombs and clearing a safe route for the remainder of his team. Then, when his section second in command was away, he stepped up to the post, working tirelessly to administrate his section and support his commanders.

"Rifleman Kinggett was an essential part of the Platoon. He consistently displayed a dry wit and confidence that inspired and motivated those around him.

"When I first joined 3 Platoon a considerable amount of time was devoted to reining in Rifleman Kinggett and trying to shape him into the Rifleman that he knew he could be and get him to focus.

On operations however Rifleman Kinggett bounced from one difficult situation to another with an effortless professionalism and a self assured confidence that proved innate.

"He was given the opportunity to act as Section Second in Command during the tour and it was a chance he did not waste. In the environment he worked in and the scenarios he faced, hesitation would have been understandable but never once did I see Rifleman Kinggett falter.

"He was very much a man of action who relished being away from camp life. He proved a

leader by example, and this is the highest accolade I can give him, people would follow him and would draw strength from him.

"He was a diligent and hardworking individual on operations, he was also forthright and frank, he told life how it is and this proved a useful trait.

"His youth was revealed by being endlessly cheeky and this brought him to the attention of all, but it was his loyalty and effort that endeared him to them.

"Rifleman Kinggett grew in to the Rifleman he promised to become during our tour, and achieved even more than he could have hoped.

"The finest elements in his character shone through and to lead him was a pleasure. He had become an outstanding prospect and I have no doubt that he had a great future ahead of him.

"It has been fantastic to have had the opportunity to witness the rapid progression and personal development of Rifleman Kinggett and to have had the chance to work with him, he has taught me a great deal and he will never be forgotten."

Second Lieutenant Mark Shawyer, 3 Platoon Commander, A Company 4 RIFLES said:
"Rifleman Kinggett served with me for only two weeks but in that time he left a lasting impression.

"A confident Rifleman, he did everything with enthusiasm and skill. Until the end he put others first and was everything I could hope for as his Platoon Commander at the time.

"It is clear to me how deeply he will be missed by all his colleagues, friends and family."

Warrant Officer Class 2 Pat Hyde, Company Serjeant Major, A Company 4 RIFLES said:
"Rifleman Martin Kinggett joined A Company just over a year ago while we were preparing for this tour of Afghanistan.

"Martin was a confident and witty character, fun loving and always with a little cheek.

"Often never far away from the Serjeant Major's door on a Monday morning, Martin had become well known within the Company, for all the wrong reasons, but Martin knew what was important to him and that was putting his family first.

"On Deploying to Afghanistan Martin was given the responsibility to find a clear route and avoid Improvised Explosive Devices for his section, one of the most demanding tasks in a patrol.

"During the tour Martin proved himself time and time again, we have seen Martin grow from a young man into a true Rifleman. Martin was a true character within the company and will be sorely missed by all that knew him, A Company have lost a very dear friend.

"Our thoughts go out to the family and friends at this very difficult time. Rest in Peace Kingy"

Serjeant Jimmy Houston, Platoon Serjeant, 3 Platoon A Company 4 RIFLES said:
"There is much talk about everything that is wrong with the youth of today. Martin Kinggett however exemplified everything that is right about the young people of Great Britain.

"Ever since I have had the pleasure of knowing him, Martin has shown nothing less than absolute dedication to his job and friends.

"The 'Classic' Rifleman, his cheeky sense of humour and sharp wit always gave way to his hard-nosed professionalism whenever the situation demanded.

"In Afghanistan, Martin matured extremely quickly always looking for ways to improve his skills.

"He had become an exceptional lead Vallon man and had virtually turned this difficult drill into an artful one. So impressive was Martin's development he even assumed the duty of Section Second in Command which he carried out with diligence that would put a Lance Corporal to shame.

"I will remember Rifleman Kinggett for his jokes, for his mischievous smile and for his ability to confound me with his quick replies. Most of all I will remember him for his love of life and his absolute loyalty to his friends and colleagues.

"My Platoon has lost an outstanding Rifleman but the world has lost an outstanding individual. My thoughts are with his family and friends and to all who knew him."

Corporal Daz Penk, Mortar Fire Controller, A Company 4 RIFLES said:
"Rifleman Kinggett, your selfless commitment saved the sections' lives and mine and for that I will always be in your debt. I was proud to call you my friend. Swift and Bold."

Corporal Brett Campbell, Section Commander, 3 Platoon A Company 4 RIFLES said:
"Rifleman Kinggett was everything a Rifleman should be, forthright, cheeky but most of all extremely professional and proud to be a Rifleman.

"He showed a great deal of courage and selfless commitment when the patrol was hit, by exposing himself under fire and suppressing the enemy firing points whilst the rest of the section was dealing with the casualty.

"His action no doubt saved his fellow Rifleman in the section. Swift and Bold."

Lance Corporal Strype, A Company 4 RIFLES said:
"A true soldier; giving us covering fire whilst doing a CASEVAC. We all owe him dearly."

Rifleman Daniel Babbidge, 3 Platoon, A Company 4 RIFLES said:
"Rifleman Martin Kinggett is a true hero in my eyes and probably to everyone that knew him. He was a funny, smart and charming lad. His part in our Platoon was second to none and he will be so deeply missed. My heart goes out to his family and girlfriend who he was always talking about. He's one soldier I'd have working by my side because I knew he was switched

on, no matter what was going on. RIP."

Rifleman Guy Murray, 3 Platoon, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"Martin Kinggett, there are two types of people in the army, colleagues and mates. Kinggett was neither, he was my best friend someone to talk to and joke with. He was my wing man. You are and always will be in my thoughts mate. I love you man and I will never forget you."

Rifleman Edward Morgan, 3 Platoon, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"Kinggett I am going to miss you loads, stag won't be the same. I'm going to get the shop sign made soon. It is going to be the best in Afghanistan. My heart goes out to your family. Swift and Bold."

Rifleman Chris Turvey, 3 Platoon, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"Kinggett was a real good lad and good mate, always laughing and joking but loved to moan. He always boasted a fine line between arrogance and confidence and he said he had it just right."

Rifleman Tommy Townsend, 3 Platoon, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"It's hard to put into words how the section feels about losing such a character and such an amazing mate. He was funny, cocky and a joker but a true professional when needed. It's left a big void in 3 Platoon and these few words will never do Kinggett justice. Rest easy my comrade and friend."

Rifleman Danny Rider, 3 Platoon, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"I knew Martin well; he was a quality lad and a top squaddie. He was always the joker of the Platoon and that's what everyone loved him for. From day one to living with him in the PB, there's not one thing anyone could say bad about him. He was a strong lad and a reliable man on the ground. He never used to like doing it but when he was doing it he'd give it 100%. He saved lives doing it. Rifleman Kinggett will be sadly missed; he was like a brother to us. RIP mate Swift and bold."

Rifleman Geoff Stanley, 3 Platoon, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"Martin Kinggett joined 3 Platoon in the early part of 2009, just in time to catch the full swing of A Company's Pre Deployment Training. He soon established himself in the Platoon and became one of the boys with his witty banter and good sense of humour.

"Through PDT he proved his skill as a Rifleman and it soon showed when coming to Afghanistan. He proved himself and on top of this he was a morale booster for the Platoon and could be looked at to raise the boy's spirits at the lowest of times.

"I know he was a key figure in the Platoon. He was acting Second in Command of his Section for a while and again proved his skills. Rifleman Martin Kinggett was a much loved member of 3 Platoon he will be missed. He was an outstanding Rifleman and a friend to everyone, he will be missed deeply by friends and family. RIP Mate."

Rifleman James Shaw, 3 Platoon, A Company 4 RIFLES said:

"My mate Kinggett is a man I'll never forget. The morale he brought to the Platoon and I,

through his laugh and his sense humour is something I'm thankful for, in the short time I knew him.

"He was able to leave an impression, I was always looking up to him as a soldier and I know that his family and mates have lost a great man. He wouldn't back down from anything and was always in the thick of it.

"My deepest sympathy goes to his family and girlfriend of whom he always spoke of with such love and fondness. Take care mate."

Rifleman Wem Walters, 7 Platoon, C Company 3 RIFLES said:

"Rifleman Kingett was one of my best mates ever since I joined the army until now. I became friends with him on the first day; the first day we met was the 14th September 2008.

"I will truly miss Rifleman Kingett, I will never forget him. Neither will I forget all the times we worked together.

"I'm sad that Rifleman Kingett's family will be mourning now, I want them to know he was a good mate and all his friends including me, will be mourning for him. I can remember the last words he said to me at FOB INKERMAN 'Look after yourself out there, it's dangerous' I replied the same.

"On behalf of the rest of the Rifles 6 Platoon and training staff we had at Catterick, I would like to say we will all truly miss Rifleman Kingett and I will never forget him and to let his family know he was a good mate to us all."