

It is with sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the death, in Afghanistan on 12th August 2011, of Lieutenant Daniel John Clack.

Lieutenant Clack was leading a 10 man Patrol into Dactran, a nearby village, to speak to the local nationals and discuss a Shura due to take place the next day. Approximately 150 metres from the front gate his patrol was struck by an improvised explosive device, killing him and injuring five other members of his patrol.

Lieutenant Daniel John Clack

Platoon Commander, 8 Platoon, C Company The First Battalion The Rifles

On 12th August 2011, Lieutenant Daniel John Clack was leading a 10 man Patrol into Dactran, a nearby village, to speak to the local nationals and discuss a Shura due to take place the next day. Approximately 150 metres from the front gate his patrol was struck by an improvised explosive device, killing him and injuring five other members of his patrol.

Lieutenant Daniel John Clack deployed to Afghanistan in April 2011 with C Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, in command of 8 Platoon. He commanded Check Point Shaparack in the district of Nahr-e-Saraj (South), Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Born on 25 March 1987 in North London, Lieutenant Clack preceded his military career by studying at Exeter University, before working for a short while in Switzerland driving for a Ski Chalet Company, exercising his passions for skiing and adventure.

He joined the Army in May 2009, and Commissioned from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst into The Rifles in April 2010, serving as 8 Platoon Commander since his arrival. A keen sportsman, on the way he represented both The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and the Battalion at rugby.

Lieutenant Clack had become immensely popular with his Riflemen to whom he showed great empathy and loyalty. He was known as a man of integrity, and driven by doing the right thing; this attitude had forged a strong Platoon and an impressive reputation – in a relatively short period of time he had become hugely popular across the Battalion, and will be sorely missed by all who had the pleasure of serving with him.

Lieutenant Clack leaves behind a loving family: his mother Sue, father Martin, brother James and fiancée Amy Tinley, who he absolutely adored; the thoughts of the Battlegroup are very much with them.

Lieutenant Clack's family paid the following tribute:

"Dan was a brave Rifleman and he died doing the only profession he ever considered. He loved leading his riflemen and was so proud to be an Officer in the British Army. There are no words to describe our loss. He will be forever missed by his mother, father, brother, fiancée and all those who knew him. He will always be in our hearts."

Lieutenant Colonel James de Labillière DSO MBE, Commanding Officer, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Lieutenant Dan Clack was a young officer who was, quite simply, part of the heart and soul of the Battalion. He died commanding his Riflemen on operations in the most demanding of circumstances. He had, day on day, demonstrated a courage and bravery that was profound and inspiring but, as was his way, exercised with the lightest of touch.

"Dan joined 1 RIFLES just over a year ago, and even in that short time he had achieved much, just as he had done before joining the Army. I remember his first day in Battalion as he met his platoon for the first time at the beginning of a huge endurance march across Dartmoor. It was wet and miserable but he successfully made his mark, teasing us with a glimmer of the great things he still had in store to show us.

"He was, like many officers of his generation, completely committed to both his Riflemen and to achieving success on the battlefield. He had excelled on both accounts. His men quite evidently adored him and they showed him a loyalty and respect in a way that is reserved for only the very few and the very best. And it was clear to me that he walked the thin line between command and friendship with an ease and professionalism of one well beyond his years and experience.

"He was, in all respects, a natural Rifles officer. He was also a man blessed with complete integrity. This was a gift in the main although latterly proved less beneficial when pitching himself against his wily second in command at Monopoly, a game they often played together in the quieter moments in their patrol base in the Green Zone. But competitor he was, and his contribution to rugby or a mess challenge with his closest of friends will be very much missed.

"His parting has come too soon, by far. Dan had so much to give, so much to look forward to and so many opportunities ahead of him. The Rifles has been denied one of our best, and a professional commander for the future has been taken from us. But our tragic loss is insignificant compared to that of his family; his mother, father, brother and Amy, all of whom he loved so much. And so to them we offer prayers and our thoughts, and our thanks too, for sharing with us someone so very special. Dan will never be forgotten and our memories of him will forever be cherished. Swift and Bold."

Major Bill Eden, Officer Commanding C Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Lieutenant Dan Clack was a terrific officer who commanded his platoon in the UK and Helmand skilfully, tenaciously and with a deep regard for each and every one of his Riflemen. Dan

commanded 8 Platoon, C Company, based out of Check Point Shaparak in the village of Tasikan. The team worked tirelessly to improve the Check Point's defences and their own ability to live and operate from it, deep in the highly populated village it protects. The Platoon, and Dan in particular, established a deep rapport with the population, which continues to grow in recognition of the improvements made to the area. Whenever I visit Tasikan and the nearby villages the locals tell me with great gratitude and warm affection how hard Dan and his men work to protect them from the Taliban.

"With Dan's death Tasikan has lost a most loyal defender of the people; Check Point Shaparak, 8 Platoon and C Company have all lost an inspirational leader; and 1 RIFLES Officers' Mess has lost a most colourful, charming and dynamic character. All are stronger for having known Dan. Strong, resilient and robust, he was also a most affable and genial gentleman who brought out the best in all. None met him whose lives were not touched by his warmth and passion. None of us will allow his memory to fade and the relationships he made will endure. His legacy will be the resolve with which we stay on the front foot and push on. Although we are hurting now we will come back harder, driving forward and his hand will remain firmly on his Riflemen's shoulders. Our thoughts and prayers are of course with his family, and especially Amy of whom he spoke so fondly, at this most difficult of times. Swift and Bold."

Captain Sam Branston, Second in Command, C Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Dan was an exceptional Platoon Commander who invested in his Rifleman and led with distinction. He joined the Battalion six months before deploying and I instantly liked him. Often complaining, constantly sarcastic but always smiling, 'Clacky' was a spirited yet balanced addition to the mess and to C Company. He was a talented scrum half on the rugby pitch and had a skill for sneaking in 40 winks at every opportunity, but where he excelled was in command of his treasured 8 platoon on the frontline in check point Shaparack.

"Dan had led his men through a difficult tour and a difficult week; he was a huge inspiration to them through the challenging times. Unwavering loyalty to his Rifleman he knew everything about each and every one of them, and selflessly invested his time in them. He led from the front facing all challenges head on, guiding his blokes and leading by example. He was the master of his area of operations around his check point and knew everyone in it; he was regarded fondly by locals in the villages and fields and of course by all in C company. I will miss him on the radio net, and his cynicism toward my planning and the tasks he would receive. Getting a 'bite' out of him became a running challenge on daily briefs over the radio, his responses snappy but humorous, giving instant motivation to all. In truth, I relied on him often, his considered approach and unquestionable knowledge of his job, the ground over which he worked and his platoon. A shining example of a Rifles officer, he was sharp witted, confident and highly capable, a pleasure to call a friend and to serve alongside.

"C Company and the First Battalion has lost one of its best; he leaves a gap in this close knit team that can never be replaced. Sincerest thoughts are with Amy, his girlfriend whom he loved dearly, his family and all his loved ones at this unimaginably difficult time. Swift and Bold."

Lieutenant Marcus Denison, Platoon Commander 7 Platoon, C Company, The First Battalion,

The Rifles, said:

"Dan was a fantastic friend and a great officer. Since arriving in Battalion he showed his dedication to his men and his profession to a level that I have admired greatly. He was an immensely popular young officer and a great addition to the subalterns in the mess. He will be sorely missed by all of us.

"Dan achieved the most difficult status amongst the men: that of being both respected and liked. His platoon in particular have been hit hard by his loss but, as Dan would have wanted, they have already begun to push on with the job that Dan had so wholeheartedly dedicated himself to.

"My own personal loss pales into insignificance when compared to the tragic pain that has been imposed on both his family and his girlfriend, Amy. I hope that you can take comfort in the indisputable fact that Dan was a great young man, a shining example to others. I am proud to have known him and honoured to have served with him. Swift and Bold, Dan, Swift and Bold."

Lieutenant Tom Francis, Platoon Commander 9 Platoon C Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles said:

"Dan was a dear friend and a superb officer. We worked together closely since the first day of Sandhurst and 'roomed' opposite each other in the Mess. I have many fond memories of the scrapes we managed to get ourselves into. At work he never failed to bring a smile on a bad day and despite his capabilities as a soldier, I will never forget the look of absolute misery on his face sitting in two feet of snow whilst on a Sandhurst exercise. Working with Dan brought out the best in his peers as we tried to keep pace with his standards, and in a close Mess he was a central figure.

"Dan was deeply committed to his family, very proud of his brother and totally in love with Amy. I hope they know that his thoughts and love were first and foremost for them."

Lieutenant Mark Dorman, Platoon Commander 5 Platoon, B Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Dan, you were the ultimate good lad. You are going to leave a huge hole in our tight group of friends. Everything I have ever done with you I have enjoyed. Over the years now there have been some awesome times, even more so over the last year. I will remember most managing to always have a smile and a laugh with you no matter what had just happened. I know that I speak for us all when I say, sincerely, you will be missed by all of us here and back at home so very much.

"I cannot imagine how everyone back at home must feel; my thoughts are with you all. Please make sure his send off is an epic one, one worthy of the man."

Lieutenant Luka Grujic, Human Terrain Intelligence Officer, Nad-e-Ali (North), Intelligence Corps, said:

"Dan Clack was born for the Army. For him there was no other option, five minutes with him and anybody could see that, in so much as some people have a natural calling in life, for Dan this was undoubtedly the military. He was a man who felt confident in command and who could inspire others to follow him through the force of his personality and the strength of his convictions. For us, in his platoon at Sandhurst, this meant that when it was Dan's turn to step forward there would be a small sigh of relief. We knew, no matter how awful a Brecon-related ordeal was waiting for us, at least there was someone who knew what they were doing in charge and all we had to do was work hard for him. In that environment I can think of no greater compliment.

"In this hour, if anything can bring solace to Dan's family it should be that he was one of a rare breed of people that achieved a calling in life that he was made for, perfect for, and that he valued what he did with pride and an incredible sense of duty. These words are humble things, they do him no justice, they catch but a fleeting part of the man that he was and everything he could have become.

"Rest in peace Clacky, you will be missed."

Lieutenant Michael Evans, Officer Commanding Police Advisory Team, Nad-e-Ali (North), The Second Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, said:

"I was fortunate enough to have gone through the rigours of Sandhurst and Infantry training at Brecon with Dan. He was a youngster amongst a platoon of relative old men through training but you would not have known it from his standing among us. He always seemed to be that man in control, confident in his own abilities and with the drive to follow his own path. He was an easy man to admire and aspire to follow. He pushed himself to achieve the very best and expected the same from everyone around him. Ultimately he was a professional soldier who took great pride in his work. He has died doing a job that came naturally to him, leading others through adversity.

"I have many lasting memories of him, from stolen minutes during training, drinking tea and having a healthy gripe at the system, to skiing in France that saw me walk away with broken ribs and Dan a guilty look. He was always a man you could turn to when you needed a competent pair of hands, balanced with a cheeky come back. I never knew him sorry for himself, he would rather make a situation his own than worry or wallow.

"He was devoted to his family and my thoughts, and I'm sure those of all of his colleagues and friends, are with them and his girlfriend at this tragic time. He will be missed and carried with us always."

Serjeant Darren Gornall, 9 Platoon, C Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"I spent the last year as Mr Clack's Platoon Serjeant, from the first day he arrived I knew he was not only a very good officer but an all round top bloke, our first exercise together was the H Jones competition, an arduous patrols exercise. The rifleman loved him because he led from the front and was a natural leader. Personally, he was the best young officer I have seen and

worked with. I know when tragic events happen they always say that the person was outstanding, but in Dan's case it really is the truth.

"I'm going to miss beasting you about your terrible brews, and as the whole platoon will testify; the amount of sleep you had (a good 18 hours a day). Not only were you my Platoon commander, you were my friend. I am going to miss you telling awful jokes that you have just read out of a magazine.

"Stand down, sleep easy bossy, and get the brews ready until we meet again. All my thoughts are with his family and to his girlfriend Amy."

Acting Serjeant Daniel Field, 8 Platoon, C Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"I didn't know Lieutenant Clack very long but am glad to have had the privilege of working with him and serving alongside him. In particular I used to enjoy the board games we would play to waste away the down time in the check point.

"I will miss the energy and enthusiasm he brought to the job while down in check point Shaparack, keeping the guys going and keeping everybody smiling. I will miss the friendly upbeat tempo that we shared for that short while; he will sorely be missed by me and the Platoon."

Acting Serjeant Paul Nancolis, 8 Platoon, C Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles said:

"In the time that I knew Mr Clack I found him to be a very brave man and a fiercely loyal Platoon Commander toward his Rifleman and his Platoon. We shared a common interest in rugby and the gym and became very good friends whilst working down in Check Point Shaparack.

As everyone who has met Mr Clack will know he is very stubborn, we argued on many occasions on such topics as who was the best Monopoly player and who was the strongest in the gym. Throughout our time together the boss or 'snagglepuss', on account of his ability to sleep a lot, became a good friend of mine and gave me great confidence from the type of soldier he was and the type of soldier he could have been. He will be sorely missed by me and the Rifleman and everyone at check point Shaparack, and all our thoughts go out to his family and friends."

Rifleman Connor Minshall, 8 Platoon C Company, The First Battalion, The Rifles, said:

"Even though he was the Boss, Mr Clack was a friend. If it was playing Monopoly in the check point or ribbing me for not using the gym, his banter kept me going and he made the check point feel like a second home. The banter he held with everyone will truly be missed. Rest in Peace."