

3 YORKS (Duke of Wellington's), attached to 1 Coldstream Guards Battle Group

Corporal Liam Matthew Riley was born in Sheffield on 7 July 1988. He finished Army training in July 2005 at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick and arrived in the Battalion in Sep 2005. He completed the Section Commanders' Battle Course in 2009 and was promoted to Corporal later that year.

Corporal Riley was a member of a 3 YORKS platoon serving with 1 Coldstream Guards Battle Group, in the Babaji District of central Helmand province. On 1 Feb 2010, he was the patrol 2iC of a base security foot patrol south of the Kings Hill check point when an improvised explosive device detonated. Corporal Riley received catastrophic injuries from the explosion and was killed in Action.

Lieutenant Colonel Tom Vallings, Commanding Officer 3 YORKS said:

"Corporal Liam Riley volunteered at short notice to serve in Afghanistan such was his eagerness to do his duty. He was a strapping soldier from Sheffield and at only 21 years old had been identified as one of our stars of the future. He was an inspirational leader of men and was the youngest corporal in the Battalion. I have little doubt that he was heading to the top of his unique profession. He led by example, with boundless energy and an infectious smile that would spur his team on when life got tough. He was killed today by an IED in Helmand, whilst heroically returning fire to extract one of his team. He personified all the very best qualities of a Yorkshire soldier: brave, tough, honest and proud.

"Whilst we take great strength from Corporal Liam Riley's distinctive courage and example, his loss has hit us hard in 3 YORKS. Our thoughts and prayers are not only with his fellow soldiers who continue to rise to the challenges of Helmand, but also with his family and friends whose loss is immeasurable"

Lieutenant Colonel Toby Gray, Commanding Officer, 1 COLDM GDS Battle Group said:

"In the short period Corporal Riley served with the Coldstream Battle Group, there had been only the highest of praise for this exceptionally talented and promising JNCO. He had the brightest of futures ahead of him. A volunteer augmentee, he was operating in the most demanding environments in the role of patrol 2iC, a position he held with evident pride. With a natural charm and easy going nature, he and his 3 YORKS comrades fitted into the Battle Group with ease, forming a potent and effective fighting team. Leading from the front, his diligence, professionalism and unfaltering courage have been an example to us all.

"Whilst we may not have shared the same cap badge, as fellow infantrymen we have an unbreakably close bond. We therefore share the same deep pain of loss right across the whole Battle Group. We offer our most heartfelt sympathies to his family at this desperately tragic time."

Major Charlie Foinette, Officer Commanding 4 Company, 1 COLDM GDS, said:

"I was privileged to know Corporal Riley only for a short while, but from the moment he arrived at the beginning of January to join the Battle Group he stood out. He was enormously professional and quickly established himself amongst the company - we all knew him within a few days. He was one of us and will not be forgotten by the Coldstreamers here. My sympathies are with his family at this most painful of times."

Major Nick McKenzie, Officer Commanding Corunna Company, 3 YORKS said:

"Corporal Riley was outstanding during our pre-deployment training prior to his deployment as a Battle Casualty Replacement in late December last year. He was delighted to deploy with a 3 YORKS multiple that was attached to the Coldstream Guards.

"Corporal Riley was one of the best soldiers I have ever met, who clearly had a bright future ahead of him. At only 21 years old he had recently passed the section commanders' battle course and had just promoted to Corporal. As a thoroughly professional soldier he eagerly awaited an opportunity to deploy on operations and immediately grasped the chance when it arose.

"Since his deployment he has thrived on operations in Babaji, able to quickly understand the complexities of the local environs. He was comfortable in command and showed excellent leadership when under pressure. Terrier-like in his approach to his work, he was professional through and through and always led by example. He was a very popular member of the company, who was never far from the centre of platoon repartee; a young leader who achieved much in a short space of time.

"His passing is a desperately sad loss for those in the company that had the pleasure of training and deploying with him, but only a fraction of the loss that will be felt by his family and friends. I only hope that they can take some comfort from the fact that he died doing something that he loved. He will live forever in our memories."

Captain Chris Ibbotson, Company Second in Command, 3 YORKS said:

"Corporal Riley was the epitome of the British Soldier. Extremely capable and bright, his professionalism shone through in everything he did. Corporal Riley was an extremely eager volunteer to deploy to Afghanistan and fully believed in his purpose here. The most likable of characters, Corporal Riley used a blend of his professionalism and personality to accomplish his job to the highest level. He will be missed by his family, friends and colleagues alike."

Captain Simon Farley, Platoon Commander, 3 YORKS said:

"Liam was a pleasure to know and a privilege to work with. He was a young man who showed a quick wit and cheeky approach in times of extreme discomfort. Hugely courageous he led by example. He was a fine soldier who took great pride in what he did, and he did everything to the highest standard. A central member of any group, he led for others to follow. I count myself as very lucky to not only have known him but to have worked with him as well. I will miss him. My thoughts are with his family at this difficult and sensitive time."

Sergeant Adrian Dixon, Platoon Sergeant, 3 YORKS said:

"You were all I wanted from a 2iC - your attention to detail, positive attitude, professionalism and upbeat outlook made my job so much easier. You gave so much only to be taken in this most tragic way. All of us from the multiple are going to miss you, and our thoughts are with your family."

Private Luke Wilkinson 3 YORKS, said:

"This has been one of the most difficult days in my life. We will feel the loss of such a quality soldier for many years to come and he will never be far from our minds. I will have to get someone else to teach me how play the best poker! We're going to miss you!"