

MARINE JAMES ROBERT WRIGHT

JULIET COMPANY 42 COMMANDO ROYAL MARINES - COMBINED FORCE NAD-E ALI (NORTH)

Marine James Wright was born on 18th November 1988 in Weymouth, Dorset where he grew up with his parents David and Sallie, and younger sister Katie. He attended Wey Valley School and Weymouth College before joining the Royal Marines in November 2009.

He passed fit for duty on 17th July 2010 and joined Juliet Company, 42 Commando making many close friends and carving a very successful career. He was an immensely proud Juliet Company 'Jester' and lived up to the true spirit of the Company; hard working, professional yet socially robust. Before deploying to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 14 he participated in many exercises and adventures including summiting Ben Nevis, conducting amphibious assault training in America on Exercise AURIGA and mastering the slopes during the Navy ski championships in France.

For James, being in the Royal Marines was the supreme job and he was looking forward to a long and successful career wearing the coveted Green Beret; he believed "it's more than just a beret; it's a state of mind". James had a close family and long-term girlfriend, Shelley, who he cared for deeply, loved and enjoyed spending time with.

On 5th August 2011, Marine Wright's patrol was involved in a significant engagement with insurgents in the Shpazh Gerebian area of Nad-e Ali district. After being pinned down by accurate fire for several hours, the patrol managed to extract themselves back to their base at Check Point KAMIABI. The Check Point then came under attack from small arms fire and underslung grenade launchers. Marine Wright was wounded by a grenade which was fired into the CP. He was extracted to the hospital at Camp Bastion where sadly, despite medical treatment, he later died of his wounds.

James will be sorely missed by his Grandparents, father David, mother Sallie, sister Katie and partner Shelley, who is expecting their baby. He will be remembered as a loving son, a brother, godfather and friend.

James' father David said: "James was so proud to be a Royal Marine and we are so proud of him. He was determined to be the best."

A superb sportsman, James overcame a shoulder injury to complete his Commando training at the first attempt. He was an inspiring example to his cousin Ross who followed him into the Royal Marines.

James' mother Sallie said: "He was always smiling with a wonderful sense of humour. James never had a bad word to say about anyone and was so kind and considerate."

Shelley, James' partner, thought the world of him. Her parents said how proud their family were

to have known him and how Shelley and James were so looking forward to becoming parents. James was very close to his younger sister, Katie. He was always looking out for her and making her laugh.

James' parent's said: "James loved his family and was as proud of us as we are of him. He touched the lives of everyone who knew him."

Lieutenant Colonel Ewen Murchison MBE Royal Marines, Commanding Officer, 42 Commando Royal Marines and Coalition Force Nad-e Ali (North) said:

"Marine James Wright was an impressive young man with an insatiable appetite for life. A spirited and passionate character, he loved his job, his fellow Marines and his family and leaves behind a massive void in the lives of all those who knew him. An extremely bright prospect, he was renowned for his cheerfulness, no matter how dire the situation, and indefatigable loyalty and commitment to his profession. Tonight, as I sat with the tight-knit group of Marines with whom he has been working for the past four months in an austere combat outpost, the grief was palpable - a clear indication of the high regard in which he was held within Juliet Company and more broadly across 42 Commando - but so too was the resolve to continue with the challenging task in hand, exactly as he would have wanted and in honour of his memory.

"Marine Wright has selflessly given his life in the service of his country and for the good of the Afghan people. Time and again he has displayed considerable courage, inner strength and physical robustness whilst taking the fight to the enemy; in doing so he has upheld the finest traditions of the Royal Marines. His personal contribution during what has been a demanding operational tour has been both extraordinary and humbling; he was a true Bootneck, a warrior and a consummate professional. His loss is another bitter blow to 42 Commando and he will be deeply missed, but his sacrifice will not be forgotten. He joins an illustrious list of fallen heroes whose bravery, selflessness, determination and dedication inspire us all. As we pick ourselves up and deal with this terrible tragedy, our thoughts and prayers are with his mother Sallie, his father David, his sister Katie and his girlfriend Shelley; may they find the strength to face the difficult days ahead."

Major Aaron Fisher Royal Marines, Officer Commanding, Juliet Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines said:

"Marine Wright was known as 'Big Reach' by the men of Juliet Company, the 'Jesters'. His courage, heart and gentle manner will be long remembered. He possessed an open and amiable manner that enabled him to befriend all those he came into contact with, be it his fellow Marines or the Afghan farmers whose cow he provided first aid to. Always selfless, his infectious enthusiasm encouraged his peers and touched those who served with him. His distinctive laugh will long echo across Check Point KAMIABI and Nad-e Ali. He was a fine man, an outstanding Royal Marine, and the embodiment of what it meant to be a 'Jester'. The

Company's and my sincerest thoughts are with his family and partner at this most difficult of times."

Warrant Officer Class 2 Andy Place Royal Marines, Company Sergeant Major, Juliet Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines said:

"The 'Big Reach' will be remembered by Juliet Company for his irrepressible smile and positive outlook. Our thoughts are with James' family and especially his girlfriend."

Corporal Ross Adams, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines said:

"Marine James Wright, 'Big Reach' as he was known, was without question one of the most liked, cheerful and central characters within Multiple 5. I first met James in America and found him to be a jovial character that I easily warmed to. I will sadly miss him and my thoughts go out to his family and his girlfriend Shelley."

Lance Corporal John Seekins, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"'Big Reach' was an amazing bloke with a laugh you could pick out from a 'Where's Wally' crowd, and one of the most hoofing blokes you could ever meet. It was a pleasure to be in his Multiple and only now does it hit home. He was an excellent Marine to us, a great son to his parents and loving partner to his girlfriend Shelley; I can't imagine what they are going through at this difficult time."

Lance Corporal Christopher Watson, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"A great lad and a tragic loss. Liked by everyman in Juliet Company and a true 'Jester'. He will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him."

Lance Corporal Sam Leighton, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"A true Bootneck through and through and an even finer Juliet Company 'Jester' who will be sadly missed."

Lance Corporal Gavin Kester, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"James was a hoofing Bootneck, always happy with never a bad word to say to anyone or about anything. James joined Juliet Company shortly after myself and immediately clicked with everyone as if he had been a 'Jester' for years. He was a familiar face and always with the crowd; he will leave Juliet Company with a hole that will be very hard to fill. Rest in Peace Royal, we will miss you."

Leading Medical Assistant Robert Durrant, Medical Assistant Patrol Base KAMIABI, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"I only knew James for 4 months but he was a great lad with a real zest for life and a laugh that you could hear from across the Check Point. I particularly remember his antics earlier in the tour when he gave first aid to a cow which had wandered into our Check Point's wire and he freed it, much to the local farmer's delight. All-in-all a top bloke who will be sorely missed by all who knew him."

Marine Marc Jolly, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"James would be laughing at me now if he knew I was writing this, as he knows I'm not one for words and there isn't a single word I can use to describe him. James and I got on so well we just gelled, which is surprising considering we didn't have the same taste in music, which made getting ready for a night out ridiculous. James was more than just someone I worked with and more that just a mate, he was a brother in arms. It's not just me who's lost a best mate, everyone who worked with him has lost a great friend. He loved being called 'Big Reach' as, after a rather funny night out we had together in New York, whilst trying to get a kebab at 4 o'clock in the morning, James somehow made friends with a six foot gangster who introduced himself as 'Big Reach'. Even though we are saying goodbye to this great man, he will still be with us, with Shelley, his sister Katie, and his mum and dad. My thoughts and love goes out to his family and girlfriend; you will never be forgotten James."

Marine Jonathon Dean, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"My first memory of James was when he joined 2 Troop, Juliet Company. He joined not long after me but you could see the sort of lad he was straight away. Able, confident, a top laugh and above all always smiling. Even when on long arduous Company phys sessions he still laughed and smiled; probably too much at times as this didn't impress the PTIs. After I left Juliet Company I didn't see much of James until pre-deployment training, a good year or so on. He was still the same but with a bigger skip in his step as he was more senior and commanded a lot of respect from the lads in his Multiple. During a recent Operation in Afghanistan at KAMIABI only a few weeks ago we had a chance to catch up again, spin dits and have a good laugh over a wet. Still the same lad, cheerful, funny and highly professional; he always had time for the lads. James will be greatly missed by all he met and it was a huge pleasure to have known and worked with him."

Marine Dave Ayling, Mortar Troop, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"Marine Wright (also known as 'Big Reach') was a great lad, always full of morale, smiling and spoke a lot about getting on 'Op Massive' with the Mortars lads. In my short time of knowing him I could see what a genuinely great bloke he was. He always put the lads first and kept cracking jokes throughout the tour. My thoughts are with his family and girlfriend. We will never forget him. Rest in Peace 'Big Reach'."

Marine Aston Yelland, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"From your Vallon man partner: you are, and always will be the number one Vallon man of KAMIABI. A true Bootneck, always laughing and smiling and putting others first. You and your

'find' dits will be sadly missed. Rest in Peace Royal."

Marine Kevin Bradnick, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"'Big Reach', what can I say mate? I am absolutely gutted. Never wanted to turn a job down, big or small, and always on a constant high. 'Bags of Morale' and a true oppo (opposite number) who would do anything for the lads and I would do anything for you mate. Once again I am gutted and really choked for words; my thoughts are with your family and girlfriend at this difficult time. I'll see you on the 'Reorg' mate."

Marine Lee Taylor, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"Marine Wright, also known as 'Big Reach', was a top bloke who was our Vallon man and a good one at that. Our partners have just become good friends, and I am gutted."

Marine Matthew Smith, Headquarters, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"James Wright was a hoofing bloke! Always one to crack the jokes and have a laugh and always knowing how and when to make you smile. A quality lad, from a quality Troop in a quality Company. My thoughts and prayers are with his family. Miss you already mate, Rest in Peace. 'Prove Jokers!'"

Marine Tyler Jones, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"I only got to know Marine Wright over the last few weeks and it didn't take long to realise we both had a passion for motor-cross. In my eyes James was an outstanding lad who I thought was awesome at his job. He will be sadly missed and my thoughts go out to his family and girlfriend."

Marine Jonathon Driscoll, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"A hoofing soldier but an even better friend. In the short time I had the pleasure of knowing you it was clear for everyone to see what an amazing bloke you were. Nobody could say a bad word about you mate, you were taken from us far too early. One of the kindest men I have ever known and we will all miss you buddy."

Marine Iain Munz, Mortar Troop, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"I'd not known James for long but in the time I knew him I saw all the qualities of an amazing soldier and Royal Marine. He led the route on patrol with professionalism and diligence as the point man. Best thing about him for me was his laugh which you could hear from one side of the Check Point to the other, often caused by his own jokes. He will be sadly missed."

Marine Garry Timbs, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"Jim was one of those guys that stands out and therefore left a big impression on all he met."

He was an all round decent bloke and a constant source of morale. Whenever I saw him he'd always have a smile on his face, no matter what the situation. He had a type of cheerfulness that was infectious. We've lost a good man, a good Marine and a good friend. Rest well now Jimbo, see you again in the obvious."

Marine Thomas Holleron, Recce Troop, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"James was one of the most genuine blokes that I have ever met in the Corps. A solid professional, with an unmistakable laugh and great sense of humour. James was the embodiment of a Bootneck. A true credit to Juliet Company and his Multiple, he will be sorely missed. Rest in Peace Royal."

Marine Adam Cracknell, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"Marine Wright, or Wrighty to the lads, was a true Marine: Bootneck spirit all the way. He lit the room with a smile and the air echoed with his laugh. He was one of the first Marines I met when I arrived at 42 Commando and he helped me settle in; a true friend to the end."

Marine Robert Tatman, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"'Big Reach' for me was an all round good Marine: always cracking jokes and bringing morale to the lads, always had a smile on his face, and even though I only knew him for a little while, he talked to me like I had known him for years and welcomed me to the Multiple with open arms. When things were bad and morale was down he always had a way of turning it around and making us see the better side of things. He was a person with many talents, a big heart and always saw the best in people. He is going to be greatly missed as a friend and a Marine; it's a great loss to our Multiple and Company."

Marine James Chester, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"Marine Wright, or as he was more commonly known, 'Big Reach', was an extremely charismatic individual, forever maintaining a great sense of humour. He was a fantastic Marine and a pleasure to work with. Despite the somewhat daunting task of being a Vallon man he quickly volunteered for the task and evidently, with his numerous 'finds,' did a superb job leading the way. The patrol had every confidence in his natural ability. My thoughts are with his girlfriend, family and friends; the loss of such a popular, fine young man is truly tragic."

Marine Iain Duncan, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"James, words cannot describe how we feel. You were always up for a laugh, and never did you get in a bad mood. You will be sorely missed by us all, it won't be the same without you. My condolences to your family and friends; I'm sure you enlightened their lives as much as ours. Rest in Peace mate, catch you later."

Marine Dean Smith, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"Hoofing bloke, always morale, will be sorely missed."

Marine Keston Serrette, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"A brilliant lad with such a high spirit. Always smiling and he will be sadly missed."

Marine Ryan Dunning, Multiple 5, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"An absolute quality lad, always 'toppers with morale'. I will be drinking for you on the first 'run ashore' in Weymouth and you will be sorely missed mate."

Marine Chris Ferguson, Juliet Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines said:

"James or 'Big Reach' as he was known to the lads was an inspirational Bootneck and it was an honour to have worked with him, go ashore with him and share a room with him back at Bickleigh. James always had a smile on his face, apart from when I would wake him up in the morning! He was always as professional as a Royal Marine should be and despite being one of the more senior lads in Juliet Company, was always first to put his hand up for a detail. Our thoughts are with his girlfriend, Shelley, and his family and friends. Rest in Peace Royal. See you on the 'Re-org'."