

The Royal Scots Borderers 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Private Sean McDonald was born in Toronto on 5 October 1983. He attended Currie Community High School in Edinburgh before enlisting into the Army and joining the Army Foundation College in Harrogate at the age of 16.

Following a year's initial training, he completed his Infantry phase two training at the Infantry Training Centre in Catterick. He joined his Battalion, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) in 2001 and has since been on three tours of Iraq, and has also served in Bosnia and Northern Ireland.

Private McDonald deployed with B Company, The Royal Scots Borderers 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, as part of the 3 RIFLES Battle Group on 2 October 2009. His Company is operating mainly from Patrol Base Wishtan in the Sangin District of Helmand Province, which previously saw significant activity over the summer of 2009.

Private McDonald, as a senior soldier, was responsible for clearing the ground of improvised explosive devices to allow both ISAF and local nationals to walk the streets without fear of death or serious injury.

Private McDonald was on a routine night patrol providing security to the local people when an IED detonated, killing him and his commander.

He leaves behind his wife Jennifer, his mother Jacqueline and his brother, Darryle McDonald, and his sister, Ceilidh Spratt.

Lieutenant Colonel Nick Kitson, Commanding Officer 3 RIFLES Battle Group, said:
"Private Sean McDonald was a true individual whose talents and outlook brought huge strength to the team. In our hierarchical and career focused organisation a ten-year private soldier can be a rarity these days, especially one found on the very front line, at the tip of the spear as he was.

"Yet such exceptions to the rule are just what bring us true strength and Private McDonald was certainly no exception in this regard. Loved and respected in equal measure, he clearly inspired and emboldened the younger members of his section, his platoon and his company.

"Fearlessly and without hesitation Private McDonald threw himself at the most dangerous and daunting of tasks that the treacherous alleyways and towering compound walls of eastern Sangin could offer.

"Time and time again, day in, day out, he risked his life for his mates, the mission and better prospects for an oppressed local population. Far from being futile, the risks he and his

comrades have taken have brought clear signs of progress towards a better future, none more apparent than in the area in which his company is based. Whether doggedly taking the fight to any enemy brave enough to show himself or compassionately addressing the needs of the local Afghans, Private McDonald was a true warrior and a consummate professional.

"We all honour Private McDonald's selfless dedication and determination. We are deeply proud of his contribution and, while hit hard by his loss, we revere his memory with a renewed determination to continue his good work and live up to his fine example. The thoughts and prayers of all of us in the 3 Rifles Battle Group go out to his beloved wife, his family and his friends."

Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Herbert, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said:

"Like so many of his generation Private Sean McDonald, or Mac as his friends knew him, lived life to the full, pushing himself to the limits, always looking for fun and adventure. He was a true Battalion character, often stretching the boundaries, sometimes crossing them, but always extraordinarily loyal to his Army mates. Loyalty and commitment may not be virtues held in the same regard by some parts of society, but Mac lived them to the full.

"He was a talented sportsman, and although an avid rugby fan, his real flair was for mixed martial arts in particular cage fighting. It is no surprise therefore that he displayed the highest levels of courage and tenacity in the face of the enemy whilst deployed alongside the 3 RIFLES Battle Group in Afghanistan.

"But he was also a loving and devoted husband to Jenny, whose loss we can not begin to imagine, and my heart goes out to her. I hope that she takes some comfort in knowing that her husband died a hero, protecting the people of southern Afghanistan, and in doing so helping to protect this country. He will be missed, but never forgotten, and I am privileged to have served with him."

Major Graeme Wearmouth, B Company Commander, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland said:

"Private Sean McDonald was a unique character. Having joined the Army in 2000 'Mac' was very operationally experienced, serving in Iraq three times. He brought a calm, measured approach to the dangers of patrolling in Afghanistan and it was typical that he fell while at the front of his section, leading them as he cleared a path through hostile territory.

"I know he wrestled with his future in the Army and we talked of his ambition to go into psychology in some guise. I enjoyed his enquiring and bright mind – he could always be relied upon for an incisive observation.

"Once his feet touched the plains of Afghanistan he was focussed and showed immense, single minded resolve. He was simply a very good soldier and proved his worth under fire on a number of occasions. After one incident when he was mildly injured he shrugged it off and cracked on with true Jock spirit.

"He was physically tough and had a real passion for mixed martial arts, especially cage fighting, helping to introduce it as a sport at the Battalion when we were in Edinburgh.

"We are hurting at his loss and as day breaks the world seems somehow a dimmer place for his absence. Our loss is nothing compared to those he loved and who loved him. Our thoughts are especially with his wife Jenny and his mother Jacquie, father Curtis, brother Darryle and sister Ceilidh. We will ensure his memory will always remain strong in the fighting ranks of The Royal Scots Borderers. Go well. Nemo me impune lacessit"

Lieutenant Dave Clark, 4 Platoon Commander said:

"Private Sean McDonald was a vastly experienced soldier having joined the army in 2000. He had been deployed on Op TELIC 3, 7, 11 and had served on Op HERRICK 11 since October 2009. Private McDonald was a fighter, not only had he demonstrated bravery on patrol in Helmand and Iraq, he also took part in mixed martial arts.

"Far from being a thug he was intelligent and had a sharp mind and quick tongue. He was interested in Psychology and hoped to gain a degree in the subject, as well as looking to work in mental health.

"Private McDonald was a fit and robust character who would push himself to the limits of endurance throughout training and whilst deployed. He got on with the task at hand in Helmand and didn't look to complain or give a second thought to the dangers he faced. Whilst deployed on the ground he would share a joke as if we were in a bar and then get up and clear a potentially lethal area of ground.

"The loss of Private McDonald has stunned 4 Platoon, he was someone we could all rely on whilst in Afghanistan and his presence cannot be replaced. 4 Platoon was honoured to have him among us and his memory will be with us on patrol.

"Our respects are with his family at this traumatic time, his mother Jacquie, his father Curtis, his brother and sister Darryle and Ceilidh. We also extend our condolences to his wife Jenny, he was a remarkable character and I hope they can take comfort in that knowledge."

Warrant Officer Class 2 (CSM), Scotty McQuillan said:

"Private Sean McDonald was a strong jock with a strong and reliable character who had great things ahead of him. He will be sorely missed by all. Rest in peace, we will always remember you."

Sergeant Sean Jardine said:

"Private Sean McDonald was a strong character always telling stories about his vast experience: he was well known within the Platoon and Company as being very strong and fit. He prided himself on this and whenever there was a hard task to be undertaken he would be there. Sean will be sorely missed within 4 Platoon. My thoughts are with Jenny and the rest of his family. Rest in peace."

Sergeant Johnny Gooding, 7 Troop 42 Field Squadron RE said:

"As a section attached to B Company 1 SCOTS we have only known Cpl John Moore and Pte Sean McDonald for a short period of time. When I asked the Engineer Section to sum both John & Mac up this was just a few of the words they used; professional, courageous, selfless, committed and true infantry soldiers. FOB Wishtan has lost two true brothers from their close family. To these Warriors we will continue the fight. Rest in peace Cpl John Moore and Private Sean McDonald."

Corporal Sean Cumming said:

"Private Sean McDonald was a strong member of 4 Platoon and he was always willing to help other members of the Platoon. The things I will remember most about Sean is his love for his wife Jenny and his cage fighting and of course not to forget his local pub the Penny Black, back home in Edinburgh. He will always be missed and remembered. Rest in peace Sean."

Lance Corporal Kieran Cromie said:

"Private Sean McDonald was a strong and reliable member of 4 Platoon, B Company. He was a very strong character from the Platoon who loved to tell a story to anyone who would listen, those mostly being about his wife Jenny and his cage fighting. Sean always liked to have a laugh and a joke within the Platoon. Sean, you will be strongly missed mate by everyone in 1 Section and the whole of 4 Platoon. You will never be replaced. Rest in peace Sean."

Private Calum Welsh said:

"I have known Sean McDonald for about 2 years now; I will always remember him for looking out for the younger members of the Platoon. The other thing I remember about Sean is how he was always referring to how he had been in the Army for 10 years. Sean was a great guy and he will always be missed by me and the section. Rest in peace, you will not be forgotten."

Private Carl Fisher said:

"I will always remember Private Sean McDonald for his story telling and his love for his wife Jenny and also not to forget his cage fighting. He was a great member of 4 Platoon and he will be missed dearly. My thoughts are with his family and friends at this difficult time. Rest in peace Sean."