

PRIVATE JOHN KING 1st BATTALION THE YORKSHIRE REGIMENT COMBINED FORCE NAHR-E-SARAJ (NORTH)

Private John King of 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, was killed on 30th December 2011 while taking part in a partnered foot patrol with Afghan National Security Forces to increase security around the village of Llara Kalay, in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand Province.

The patrol had identified insurgents in the area and had begun to search and clear a number of compounds in the village. The Afghan National Army members of the patrol came under fire from insurgents and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) soldiers moved forwards to support them. During the firefight Private King was caught in the blast from an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and was killed in action, despite the best efforts of medics at the scene.

Private John King, 19, from Darlington, joined the Army in 2009 and served with B(FAMARS) Company of 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment. He deployed to Afghanistan as part of Combined Force Nahr-e-Saraj (North), commanded by the Danish Battle Group, in October 2011.

After joining the Army Private King attended the Combat Infantryman's Course at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, before joining 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment in May 2010, based in Oxford Barracks, Münster, Germany.

He arrived at the Battalion as it entered the rigours and demands of the training year and joined 5 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Company. He was further tested in the Mission Specific Training, which was part of the build up to his first tour of Afghanistan. After training was complete, he was transferred to 4 Platoon B(FAMARS) Company, and deployed to the district of Nahr-e-Saraj (North) in Helmand Province. As an infantryman on the front line he played a pivotal role in the counter-insurgency campaign. He was also a friend to the local community and our Afghan partners, especially the local police, who considered him a brother-in-arms.

Private King leaves behind his mother Karen, father Barry, brothers Ian and Stephen, and girlfriend Kelly. He will be sorely missed by his family, friends, and all that knew him.

The family of Private King said: "John was a tremendous son, brother and boyfriend. He was a devoted grandson, a loving family member, and a proud soldier who died doing a job he adored. He will be sadly missed by all his family, friends, and loyal German Shepherd dog Rex. "

Lieutenant Colonel Dan Bradbury, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment said:

"Private King had been part of the 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment for a little over 18

months - but one of the busiest 18 months in the Battalion's recent history. From early on he was able to fit in quickly through a combination of hard work, grit, a willingness to endure difficult conditions and an irrepressible sense of humour. Always the first to volunteer for anything, he was one of B Company's characters: someone who could be found at the front at work or play, and was hugely popular as a result. His cheeky smile - no matter what we were doing - is the thing we will miss most of all. Our thoughts and prayers are with his comrades in Afghanistan - who will today be resuming their efforts to improve security - but most of all with his family in Darlington. We will remember him."

Major James Kennedy, Officer Commanding B(FAMARS) Company, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment said:

"Private King was exactly the kind of soldier you want in your Company. He was gritty, determined, hard-working and quick to lend a hand to anyone who needed it. But above all of this he did everything with a sense of humour. He was never short of a quip or a joke or a cheeky toothless grin. Never the smartest turned-out soldier, but we wouldn't have swapped him for the world, and I have no doubt that he would have had a long and successful career in the infantry.

"It's easy to sum him up because he was just an all-round great bloke. But far more significant than that, he was our great bloke, and that's why he was special, and that's why he will be missed so keenly.

"A Yorkshire warrior through and through, in true Kingy style he died right in the heart of the action, conducting a dangerous mission - something he never shied away from.

"The loss of Private King has been a huge blow to the Company and my thoughts are with his two families - his B Company family, who are reeling from the loss but determined to continue the mission, and his own family and his beloved Kelly, who I know will be struggling to come to terms with what has happened. You are in our hearts and in our prayers. Kingy - you will be remembered. Fortune Favours the Brave."

2nd Lieutenant Tom Rylands, Officer Commanding 4 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Company, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment said:

"Private King was a true Yorkshire soldier. He was hard-working, determined, and enthusiastic and would always tackle any problem with a grin on his face. His cheerful attitude and cheeky sense of humour made him extremely popular amongst his fellow soldiers, who both admired and respected him. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Fortune Favours The Brave."

Warrant Officer Class 2 Carl Brookes, Company Sergeant Major, B(FAMARS) Company, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment said:

"Private King was an outstanding soldier; a real character in the Company, always joining in with the 'morale' with the lads. He was always up for a challenge and, despite his dry sense of humour, would always get a laugh. He would always be one of the first to volunteer and always willing to get things done, both in work and play. He was highly respected amongst the blokes. We will remember him."

Sergeant Steve Pizarkiewicz, Platoon Sergeant, 4 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Company, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment said:

"Private King was one of my best soldiers, valued for his work ethic and his outstanding character. He fitted in straight away to the platoon. I never once heard him moan whatever the task he was given and he always had a smile on his face. He was true 'morale' and will be missed. I am honoured to have worked with him."

Corporal Gareth Raper, Section Commander, B(FAMARS) Company, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, said:

"Kingly was a true infanteer and an outstanding private soldier. He was all a section commander could ask for from a private soldier. His true grit and determination and unbelievable morale was an added bonus, as well as his passionate love for his job. You will be missed mate, but never forgotten. Midge."

Lance Corporal David Akeroyd, Section Second in Command, B(FAMARS) Company, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment said:

"Kingly was an all round good bloke. He never complained and always helped blokes out. He came to 4 Platoon and got stuck straight in, and it was like he was always a part of the platoon. Two things come to mind when I think of him; he always had kit missing on inspections, and he was a ropey driver! He was a top bloke and will be sadly missed."

Privates Andrew Brunning, Daniel Cook, Joshua Griffin, Sam Horton, Parmeet Singh and Shane Wood, members of 4 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Coy, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, said:

"Kingly was a great lad; always full of morale. His smile will never be forgotten. He was always first with the banter, but never fast enough to reply, and he was always willing to help. When something needed doing or someone needed help you could always count on him."

"As a team we were all very close and we class him as a brother to us. He will be sadly missed by us all and all our thoughts go out to his family, friends and to his girlfriend Kelly, who we all know he loved very much, as he never stopped talking about her. He's a massive loss to our platoon as he was always looked to for inspiration and a laugh."

Private Alex Simmonds, Rifleman, 4 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Coy, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire

Regiment, said:

"Kinky, it's been a pleasure to have called you a friend. You'll be sadly missed pal; see you on the other side kid. Simmo."

Private Joshua Clay, Rifleman, 4 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Coy, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, said:

"Private King was a true Yorkshire warrior, and a true morale raiser for all around him. He had a way of making everyone's day brighter, no matter how bad things were. Be in peace mate."

Private Joseva Rojica, Rifleman, 4 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Coy, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, said:

"Kinky was always morale in our Platoon. A true warrior and friend to everyone. We'll miss you mate and we will never forget you pal. Rocky."

Private Daniel Ward, Rifleman, 4 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Coy, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, said:

"John was a great soldier and an even better friend. With his fantastic sense of humour he would lighten any room he walked into. John will be missed by all of us who knew him. God bless."

Private Daniel Hoe, Rifleman, 5 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Coy, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, said:

"Kinky was one of the big characters of the platoon - nothing ever seemed to faze him or get him down. Wherever we were, whatever the weather, he could always be relied on to cheer us up. He was an all-round nice bloke who would do anything for anyone. Rest in peace, Kinky. Fortune Favours The Brave."

Private Alistair Frame, Rifleman, 6 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Coy, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, said:

"Kinky was one of the boys who held everybody together. He got on with everyone because of his sense of humour. He always looked on the bright side of things; even when things weren't good he managed to make them seem okay. I'll always remember the time we were stuck in Cyprus going home for R&R. With you it didn't seem so bad. I'll miss you, the guys will miss you; rest in peace."

Members of 5 Platoon, B(FAMARS) Coy, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, said:

"Private King spent over one and a half years in 5 Platoon. He was a popular soldier and one of the real characters. Always seen with a cheeky smile on his face, Kinky's

upbeat and cheerful personality was a constant source of morale for the platoon as we went through the Pre-Deployment Training (PDT).

"After PDT Kingy was transferred to 4 Platoon and it was a measure of his character that he quickly settled into his new role. Despite moving out of 5 Platoon he remained a close friend to all the lads in the Company, which has always been a close-knit family. On operations Kingy proved himself a reliable and confident soldier, and he embodied all that is great about the Yorkshire Regiment, with his can-do attitude and his infectious sense of humour. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this difficult time. Sleep easy Kingy, lest we forget."