

PRIVATE MATTHEW JAMES SEAN HASELDIN

C COMPANY GROUP 2ND BATTALION THE MERCIAN REGIMENT (WORCESTERS AND FORESTERS)

Private Matthew Haseldin, 21, from Settle, Yorkshire, joined the Army in February 2011 before successfully passing the Combat Infantryman's Course at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick. Upon completion of training, Private Haseldin joined the 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment in August 2011 ahead of the Regiment's deployment to Afghanistan in September on Operation HERRICK 15.

Private Haseldin joined C Company Group just after they had deployed to the Nahr-e-Saraj District in Helmand Province as part of Combined Force Burma. The Regiment are responsible for securing freedom of movement along Route 611, which is a key Main Supply Route linking Gereshk city with other district centres in Helmand province and beyond, including Kandahar City.

On the morning of 3rd November 2011, Private Haseldin's patrol deployed from their operating base to clear and secure areas along Route 611, a key ground line of communication. Whilst conducting a check, the patrol came under attack from sustained small arms fire and underslung grenades during which Private Haseldin was fatally wounded.

Keen to prove himself and perform to the best of his ability, Private Haseldin had quickly become a popular member of his platoon. Quietly confident and displaying levels of competence that exceeded his experience, Private Haseldin was a reliable, fit, professional and dependable soldier.

Private Haseldin was proud to serve in The Mercian Regiment alongside his friends and comrades. His performance on the battlefield epitomised the Regimental motto, never failing to Stand Firm and Strike Hard.

Alan and Jill, Matthew's parents said: "Matthew was a loving son and we are very proud of him. He had only been in the Army for a few months. Friends and family will miss him greatly. Rest in Peace."

Lieutenant Colonel Colin Marks, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment and Combined Force BURMA said:

"Although Private Matthew Haseldin had only served a short time with C Company Group, he stood out as a young man of immense character who had travelled widely and was mature beyond his years. Hugely popular, it was impossible to tell that he was the newest member of 7 Platoon; all of whom loved him like a brother. One of the team, Matthew was at the centre of most things and enjoyed a game of cards during precious rest periods.

"Steadfast in battle, Matthew faced more challenges in the few short weeks he spent in Helmand than many soldiers experience in a lifetime. He died standing firm in the face of a determined enemy, in the highest traditions of The Mercian Regiment. Stand easy comrade, your duty is done. Your sacrifice will not be in vain and our success will be your legacy. We will never forget you.

"Stand FIRM, Strike Hard."

Major Tim Spoor, Officer Commanding C Company, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment said:

"Matthew joined the Company in Afghanistan, but such was his character and enthusiasm it was only a matter of days before it felt like he had always been part of the team. On the ground he demonstrated his courage and resolve in the most demanding of circumstances, earning the respect and admiration of his newly found friends and colleagues.

"Matthew will be remembered for his laughter, his stories and above all his commitment to his friends. Our thoughts are with his family at this difficult time. He will not be forgotten and will be remembered always by the soldiers of C Company."

2nd Lieutenant Luke Beetlestone, Officer Commanding 7 Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment said:

"Matthew arrived in theatre with the perfect attitude. Full of enthusiasm and ready to tackle any challenge that faced him. He was liked by all and had made a significant impression on his peers in the short time he had known them. An exceptionally likeable character, he was often at the centre of conversation with his many stories of previous life experiences. He will be remembered for his sharp wit and will remain always a member of 7 Platoon."

WO1 (RSM) Martyn Chatterley, Regimental Sergeant Major, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment and Coalition Force Burma said:

"Private Matthew Haseldin was only 21 years old, still young, enthusiastic and eager to further his career. He was proud and enthusiastic with his fellow soldiers and his mates. For the short time I knew Matthew he made an instant impression.

"He will be sorely missed but we should be proud to have known him and to have fought alongside him. My most sincere condolences and thoughts are with his family and friends at this difficult time. He will be sorely missed by all in 2 MERCIAN but never forgotten.

"Stand FIRM, Strike Hard."

WO2 (CSM) Lee Lougher, Company Sergeant Major C Company, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment said:

"Private Mathew Haseldin joined C Company with the attitude expected of a young professional soldier. He fitted well into 7 Platoon showing the skills and drills of a seasoned soldier, and he made good friends and strong bonds from the off. He quickly made his mark within the Platoon and he will be sorely missed by his friends and comrades of C Company, 2 MERCIAN. My thoughts go to his family and friends.

"He will never be forgotten."

Sergeant Mark Harris, 7 Platoon Sergeant, C Company, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment said:

"Tall and thin, Matthew joined the Platoon fresh faced but quickly earned respect by more than holding his own during challenging situations. 'Haz' was his nickname and he is already missed by 7 Platoon. My heart goes out to his family and friends back at home. He showed great courage and commitment to the mission, the mission in which he sadly gave his life."

Lance Bombardier Sam Chesney, Fire Support Team, 137 Battery, 40 Regiment Royal Artillery said:

"Matt joined the Platoon in theatre. Young, fresh and eager to impress he fitted into 7 Platoon very quickly and made friends with ease. He was straight into the thick of it, conducting vehicle and foot patrols to provide security to the local population. He was liked by all and quickly impressed, making the lads laugh with tales of his time working in Aiya Napa!

"Matthew Haseldin summed up 2 MERCIAN: Stand FIRM, Strike Hard."

Lance Corporal Danny Clements, Team Commander, 7 Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment said:

"I didn't know Haz that long, but from the time I did spend with him I was impressed by his good soldiering skills and ambition. He was always the first to offer a helping hand and was certainly not shy of hard work. Haz fitted in amazingly with the blokes considering the short time he knew them, immediately being accepted as one of the lads. He will be sorely missed and never forgotten."

Lance Corporal Mark McHugh, Team Commander, 7 Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment said:

"Matthew Haseldin was a first class soldier who never had a sad face. He was always smiling and everything he was tasked with was completed to the highest standards. He made a big impression upon his arrival in the Platoon and we quickly made friends. It is a sad day for the Platoon to lose such an outstanding soldier and caring friend. My thoughts go out to his family at this tough time.

Private Mel Francis, Combat Medical Technician, Royal Army Medical Corps said:

"I didn't know Matt for very long but in the short space of time I spent getting to know him, he came across as a really nice lad. He very quickly became one of the lads, embracing the cards nights. He was always happy and always having a laugh. My thoughts are with his family at this sad time and he will be sorely missed by all of us here."

Private Chris Connolly, Rifleman, 7 Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment said:

"Matthew "The Hoff" Haseldin was a true friend who I first met at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick. We were in the same section so we looked after each other and I remember the very first "stag" I did was with Matthew. Despite being cold and wet we joked about going out on the town in Settle where he lived and discussed in detail the perfect night out. I will miss him, he was a true friend."

Private Chris Scott, Rifleman, 7 Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment said:

"I didn't know Haz for a long time but every time I saw him he was always smiling and joking. We regularly sat down and played cards but Haz always seemed to win! I will be thinking about his family at this tough time and never forget him."

Private Tom Hawksley, Rifleman, 7 Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment said:

"Private Haseldin was a really good lad, keen to the cause and always doing the right thing. My thoughts are with his loved ones. RIP buddy."

Private Abriham Saho, Rifleman, 7 Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment said:

"Matt was a very hard working and friendly individual. He has only been with us just a few weeks but fitted in so well it was like he had been here ages due to the strong bond he built with everyone. I liked him a lot as a person and as a friend, and especially as he was a Manchester United fan like me.

"I am praying for him to have his soul rest in perfect peace, Amen."