

CAPTAIN STEPHEN JAMES HEALEY 1st BATTALION THE ROYAL WELSH (THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS)

The Ministry of Defence has announced the death of Captain Stephen James Healey, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), on Saturday 26 May 2012. Captain Healey commanded the Combined Force Burma reconnaissance platoon and whilst conducting a vehicle patrol in the north of the Nahr-e Saraj

District in Helmand Province, his vehicle struck an improvised explosive device. He was given immediate first aid before being flown to the military hospital at Camp Bastion where, sadly, his death was confirmed.

Captain Healey was born on 19 September 1982 in Cardiff. On leaving school he became a semi-professional footballer; playing for a number of clubs in the South Wales area including an apprenticeship with Swansea City. He continued to play whilst completing a degree in Sports Science at Swansea University. He joined the Army in 2007 and was commissioned into the 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers) in 2008.

In 2009 he was awarded a Mention in Dispatches for his actions on Op HERRICK 11 as the Officer Commanding 4 Platoon, B Company. In 2011 he was selected to command the reconnaissance platoon and led their Op HERRICK 16 deployment. He deployed to Afghanistan on 9 March 2012, where he took over responsibility at Checkpoint Langar as part of Combined Force Burma.

Captain Stephen Healey leaves behind his father John, mother Kerry, brother Simon and girlfriend Thea. Captain Healey's family have paid the following tribute: "Stephen was all you could wish for in a son, brother, uncle and friend. He will be sadly missed by us all. He managed to do more in his 30 years than most people do in a lifetime".

His girlfriend, Thea, paid her own tribute: "Stephen will always be in my heart. I will miss him so much, he was my love, my life and my everything. Now he rests in peace, he was living the life he wanted to do with his men".

Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Webb MC, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Captain Stephen Healey will be remembered by the Officers and Soldiers of 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh as one of the most charismatic and professional leaders any of us will have had the privilege of serving with. He was a brilliant Army Officer and a truly outstanding individual. As the Recce Platoon Commander he cared deeply for his soldiers and they, in return, loved and respected him. And it was very

easy to respect him. He had a calm, assured nature, an understated charm and the sort of personality that made it so easy to warm to him so very quickly - quick-witted and sharp his personality lightened any conversation. Steve combined this natural leadership with a professionalism that was second to none. Tactically astute, clear-thinking and tremendously brave he was an excellent Platoon Commander. Already awarded a Mention in Despatches for his bravery on Op HERRICK 11, he was deeply committed to his role here on Op HERRICK 16 and he relished the challenge of bringing the best out of those around him, something he excelled at because he led from the front in everything that he did.

"But Steve will be equally missed for the enormous contribution to wider Battalion life. In the Officers' Mess he was at the heart of everything good and in addition to being an outstanding footballer (he joined the Army after a career as a professional) he was a gifted athlete, excelling at almost any sport he turned his hand to. As if all this wasn't enough, Steve was also committed to raising money for charity and in the latest of many events, only 3 weeks before deployment, he organised and took part in a blindfolded walk from our barracks in Chester to Llandudno to raise money for Blind Veterans UK. This was so very typical of him: generous of spirit and genuinely compassionate.

"Stephen Healey was an inspirational Army Officer and an outstanding person and his loss will be deeply felt by all those who had the privilege of serving alongside him. I am acutely aware that our loss is nothing compared to that of his family and his girlfriend, Thea. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this extremely difficult time."

Major Charlie Carver, Officer Commanding A Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Captain Steve Healey was a genuine pleasure to know. He was charismatic and full of life, always putting others before himself and as a result was loved by those he commanded. He was incredibly professional in all that he did and he was a natural leader. He was always to be found in the centre of the action, be that on the football field, leading his men or out in Cardiff. In his short time in the Battalion he demonstrated courage, determination and resolve whilst always getting the best out of each and every situation. In short he had become the epitome of a Royal Welshman. His loss will be deeply felt by every member of the Combined Force BMA A Company Group but our loss is nothing compared to that of his family and his girlfriend, Thea. Our thoughts and prayers are very much with them at this extremely difficult time."

Major Jon Matthews, Officer Commanding, Fire Support Company, 1st

Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Steve was a truly outstanding person and I am honoured to have had the pleasure of serving alongside him. He was a charming individual, utterly professional in all that he did and a naturally talented leader. He was dedicated to his men and he commanded the utmost respect from all those who served with him. We have lost an amazing officer, a born leader and a great friend. His loss has hit us all hard, but this great loss will be insignificant compared to that felt by his family and his girlfriend, Thea. Our thoughts and prayers are very much with them at this very sad time."

Captain Adam Libbey, Second in Command, B Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Steve epitomises everything good about the Royal Welsh and the Army, fun, up for anything and fiercely loyal to his men and battalion. He was a genius at friendship that reached all levels, loved as much on the football pitch as in work. He was adored by his men for his assured yet unassuming and humble nature. Steve was ultra competitive and unfairly fit making him a brilliant sportsman and competitor. He had the same steely determination in work and was always the ultimate professional. He was the talisman of the officers of the Royal Welsh both socially and professionally and always a 'go to man' for me. Ever reliable and honest, I cannot imagine a better officer and friend. Steve was a true winner of a bloke in every sense of the word. He will be sorely missed by all the battalion and his best mate."

Captain Mark Lewis, Second in Command, D Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Quite simply he was a giant of a man with an even bigger heart. A true leader of men that inspired and made an impression on all that he met. He was the ultimate professional and set the example to all that worked for and with him.

"Steve was a charming bloke and the social hub of the Officer's mess. He was also a humble man who would often shy away from the praise and the limelight, even when he clearly deserved it. He embodied the true spirit of a Royal Welshman and lived up to everything a Fusilier should be. He was the model of what an Officer should be, all can learn from the example he set.

"It is nothing but an honour to say that I have served alongside him and that I could call him my friend.

"He will not be forgotten."

Captain Nick Zorab, Operations Officer, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Steve was quality in every sense of the word, a talented and courageous officer and all round good bloke. The men he led were always his first thought, he was admired and respected because of this. It was a privilege to call him not only a brother Royal Welsh officer but also a friend, he will be sadly missed. My thoughts, at this difficult time, are with Thea and his family."

Captain Ollie Tagg, Mortar Platoon Commander, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Captain Steve Healey was an exceptional Officer, friend and leader of men. He was fiercely loyal to both his friends and soldiers alike and he always led from the front. As an Army Officer he always strived to be the best and always encouraged his soldiers to be all they could be. As a friend he was quick witted and easy going. He could always make you laugh no matter how bad the situation seemed to be. Steve was a patriotic Welshman and was proud to have served within the Royal Welsh. He was dedicated to helping others, and he planned and conducted a number of charity events to raise money for Blind Veterans UK, a charity close to his heart. Steve will be missed as a colleague, but most importantly as a brilliant friend, and it was an honour to have known him. My thoughts and condolences go to Thea and his family."

Captain Chris Cookson, Regimental Signals Officer, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Steve was a popular member of the mess and a good friend to us all. His cheerful outlook and keen sense of humour meant he gave as good as he got. He was a hugely social member of the mess and led me astray on many occasions. Leading by example he was an inspiration to all those who worked with him. He epitomised the spirit of the Royal Welshman and his loss is devastating to us all. My thoughts go out to Thea and his family at this very sad time."

Captain James Dott, Officer Commanding, Fire Support Group, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"The loss of Captain Steve Healey has been a massive blow to all members of the Royal Welsh. Steve was an incredibly popular member of the Battalion, who from the very moment he joined swiftly won the respect and admiration of his superiors, his peers in the Officers' Mess, the

Sergeants' Mess and indeed his men. He was a natural leader and I was always in awe of how effortless he made command look, coupled with being very efficient and a consummate professional. Steve was the best Officer within our peer group, doing very well on the Platoon Commanders Battle Course and carrying on that high standard throughout his career, most recently taking on the prestigious job of Recce Platoon commander. He had a bright future ahead of him and would have gone far. Steve was a good friend who will be sorely missed and I am proud to say that I have served alongside him, he was one of the best. Our thoughts are with his family and his girlfriend Thea throughout this terribly difficult time."

Sergeant Mike Jones, Second in Command, Recce Platoon, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Captain Healey was by far the most outstanding young officer I've ever had the honour to serve with. He understood the needs of the Army balanced against the needs of the soldiers under his command, and this was something I always really admired. Morale among all those around him, even in the harshest of circumstances, always remained high. I was lucky enough to have served alongside him for almost four years as his Platoon Sergeant in both a Rifle Company and more recently in Recce Platoon. I'd like to think we forged a good team together not just as Platoon Commander and Platoon Sergeant but as friends. We would discuss our family life on most days and share any problems or worries, normally ending in an exchange of banter for showing weakness. Steve Healey was a true gentleman and will be sorely missed by everyone who was ever lucky enough to know him. He will be missed by everyone in Recce Platoon and missed by myself and not only for being 'the Boss' but for being a true friend. RIP BOSS! If you are looking down on us, don't worry, I will keep reminding everyone you used to be a professional footballer!"

Corporal Phillips & Lance Corporal Vincent, 5 Platoon, B Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Captain Steve Healey was our platoon commander in 4 Platoon B Company from 2009-2011. We were both senior fusiliers in his platoon when he first came, with no intention of progressing any further! However, when we went to Kenya in January 2009 he made us both section 2i/cs in the platoon. Captain Healey along with Sgt Mike Jones taught us all the things necessary to be good junior non-commissioned officers in a rifle company. When we returned from Kenya they made sure we attended the next JNCO cadre. In December 2009 we deployed to Afghanistan as non-commissioned officers in Captain Healey's Platoon. After working under him for 6 months in Afghanistan, we can honestly say he was the best platoon commander we have ever worked with. He was the sort of commander where you wouldn't question any decision he ever made, you

would just carry out the task 100% knowing that he always had the platoon's safety close to his heart. He was a good friend and a great commander, sadly missed but never forgotten."

Lance Corporal Coleman, Recce Platoon, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Captain Healey was not only my Platoon Commander he was also my friend, as he was to the whole Recce Platoon. He was good at his job in both motivating the lads and doing his commander's job in the field. He was never far away from instigating trouble between the lads and took his fair share of stick, which he did well. He is going to be missed lots by myself and the Platoon. What a great guy!"

Lance Corporal Rogers, Recce Platoon, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"The Boss, he looked older than he was with his hair thinning. He was down to earth, humble, warm, had a dry sense of humour but was funny and loved to be one of the boys. Thus, he fitted in to the Recce Platoon taking the mickey out of the boys with the banter that went back and forth. He was a leader! He was switched on, professional, fit, and incredibly proud to be the Recce Platoon Commander - the job he considered to be the most prestigious within the Battalion. And he believed in what we were doing, massively proud to be a soldier and believed greatly in our Platoon. He always had time for all of us if we wanted or needed a chat. We're all friends in our Platoon, "one in all in". He will be sorely missed by us all. He'll want us to continue the hard work, which we will with him in our thoughts every day. He'll be proud. Captain Steve Healey, Boss, we'll miss you - love from the boys!"

Lance Corporal Shipton, Recce Platoon, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"One word could sum up Captain Healey - LEGEND. Apart from being ridiculously fit and extremely good at his job, he could sit down with the boys and have a laugh, banter flowing in all directions. He was one of the boys, a friend to us all and will be severely missed by us all. RIP Boss. I'll see you on the flip side."

Fusilier Jayne, Recce Platoon, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Stephen Healey was a great man. He always listened to anything anyone had to say. He was my boss and my friend and that is rare to find in an

officer. He is the best leader I have ever had, always looking out for the best way to do anything. He was always up for a laugh and as far as soldiers go, he was the best. As far as leaders go, there is no comparison to him. As a man and a friend there are so many words I could say and they just wouldn't be enough. He will be missed and will always be remembered as a hero."

Fusilier Passmore, Recce Platoon, 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers), said:

"Captain Healey was one of the best officers I've worked with. He was a legend of a bloke, funny as hell and down to earth. I got on great with Captain Healey and he has helped me get back on track with my Army career and my personal life outside work. He played for the great football team, Swansea City. My thoughts go out to his family and his girlfriend. I'll never forget him as he was a legend in my eyes."