

Sapper Richard Reginald Walker from 28 Engineer Regiment, attached to 21 Engineer Regiment as part of the Task Force Helmand Engineer Group was shot in an apparent 'insider attack' by a member of the Afghan National Army (ANA) at Patrol Base Hazrat in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand Province on Monday 7 January 2013. He was working on a construction task with other military engineers from his Troop, as part of the preparations to hand the camp over to Afghan security forces, when the Afghan soldier turned his weapon on ANA and ISAF soldiers at the base. The incident resulted in a number of casualties, of whom were extracted to the Bastion Role 3 medical facility where Sapper Walker was pronounced dead. Read the full eulogy on the next page

Sapper Richard Reginald Walker, Corps of Royal Engineers was born on 7 February 1989 in Leeds. He worked as a technician for Vauxhall before joining the Army in July 2008. Upon joining the Royal Engineers he completed his basic training at the Army Training Regiment Basingbourn before moving on to Gibraltar Barracks, Minley, where he completed his Phase Two Combat Engineer Training. He then moved to the Defence School of Transport Leconfield where he completed his trade training to become a driver.

He joined his first unit, 28 Engineer Regiment in Hameln, Germany, in

September 2009, deploying with them to Canada and then Kenya on major

exercises. His Troop, from 42 Field Squadron, was attached to 73

Armoured Engineer Squadron (73 AES) based in Ripon, North Yorkshire for

Operation Herrick 17. His Troop joined 73 AES in August 2012 and

deployed with the Squadron to Afghanistan at the start of September as

part of the Task Force Helmand Engineer Group.

Sapper Walker was a valued member of 73 AES and deployed on every single

Troop task. He was a popular and well respected member of his Troop and

upon joining the Squadron he quickly gained friends across the spectrum

of ranks; a testament to his likeable character and willingness to join in.

An avid football fan, Sapper Walker represented his Regiment at football

and spent endless hours in the gym. He even managed to spend some time

trying to learn to play the guitar albeit one chord at a time. Above

all he was a devoted father and would talk for hours on end about his

love for his daughter Lilly-Faith who sadly he only knew for 18 months  
before his deployment.

Sapper Walker was destined to go on to greater things - his willingness  
to learn, unswerving sense of duty and personal motivation to pursue a  
successful career would have seen him progress far. Above all he will  
be remembered for his charisma and team spirit; a true all rounder, his  
loss will be felt for years to come.

Sapper Walker's family paid the following tribute to their son and brother:

"Richard held two things close to his heart - his daughter and his

colleagues in the Army. A proud, patriotic man, he died doing a job he

loved, supporting his friends".

Lieutenant Colonel Chas Story RE, Commanding Officer, 28 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Sapper Walker was the epitome of a true Sapper, one who would roll up

his sleeves and get on with the task in hand no matter what, but

importantly he would do it with great humour. He made sure that he made

the most of every opportunity, both in the Army and at home; it is

without doubt that he had a lot to offer and a bright future. He was

highly respected as a fit, professional soldier with a massive

character. This was his first tour of Afghanistan but anyone would have thought he was a seasoned expert, such was his ability and professionalism.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, including his young daughter Lilly-Faith, at this very difficult time."

Lieutenant Colonel Jack Nicholson RE, Commanding Officer, 21 Engineer Regiment, said:

"In the short time that Sapper Walker served with my Regiment he struck me as being a driven young man, full of ambition and oozing with professional pride and confidence.

"An outstanding soldier in the best traditions of The Corps of Royal

Engineers, he made an immediate impact on all those who had the

privilege of serving alongside him. Although on his first operational

tour, he acted like a veteran of many years' experience and clearly

relished the challenges he faced with his Troop in Afghanistan. Hard

working and utterly loyal to his mates, he was a real character who had

established himself as a man of action within his adopted Squadron.

"His tragic loss has stunned the whole Engineer Group and we are all

trying desperately to come to terms with this awful event. Our

heartfelt condolences are with his family and friends at this terrible

time, most especially his young daughter Lilly-Faith."

Major Chloe Plimmer RE, Officer Commanding, 73 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 21 Engineer Regiment, said:

"I first met Sapper Walker when he arrived with his Troop to join our

Squadron for the forthcoming deployment to Afghanistan. He immediately

struck me as a very likeable character; a polite and motivated young

soldier who was very keen to deploy on his first operational tour. He

saw it as the culmination of all his training and was excited about the

prospect of operational service.

"Over the initial months spent in theatre Sapper Walker was a key member

of his Troop and was crucial to facilitating every task that they

undertook; he had the skill-set to operate a number of critical

vehicles. His enthusiasm for his role and the success that the Troop

achieved during this time were undoubtedly testament to his

professionalism; always keen to be involved, he would give his best at

all times even when under considerable pressure.

"Whenever I saw Sapper Walker he always made a point of saying 'hello'

and I felt that I got to know him better than many other soldiers in the

Squadron. I never once doubted his motivation and he always said he was

'living the dream'. He was a bright, cheerful, fun soldier who was

relishing the challenge.

"We in 73 Armoured Engineer Squadron have been hugely privileged to have

Sapper Walker's Troop attached to us and as an individual he was a

shining example to all ranks across the board. His positive attitude

and excellent performance ensured that he was seen as one of our own,

and our heartfelt sympathies go out to all of those in his Troop and

also his friends and colleagues in 42 Field Support Squadron and 28

Engineer Regiment back in Germany. He was one of the very best and we

are all left feeling hollow and saddened by his loss.

"To his family, there are no amount of words that can reduce the pain of

losing such a brave son, brother and doting father to Lilly-Faith. Our

deepest condolences are with them at this extremely difficult time."

Lieutenant Brad Southall RE, Support Troop Commander, 42 Field Squadron, 28 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Sapper Walker was a shining star. When I took command of my troop I

was struck by his charisma, his devotion to duty and his immense

capability; he was the older brother whom everyone looked up to. To his

friends he was hugely loyal and he was headstrong too. I could discuss

tasks with him at length but he would always end up doing things his

way; he was so determined. I began to accept that over time it was his

view that counted and I learned to trust him immeasurably. He was

passionate and committed to his work - a consummate professional. He

died doing the job he loved and I am proud to have served alongside him;

a fellow Sapper.

"He spoke often of his daughter, Lilly-Faith, and was a proud and

devoted father. My thoughts and condolences are with his family and

friends at this most tragic time. The Regiment has lost one of its best

men."

Staff Sergeant Sean Eaton, 8 Troop, 42 Field Squadron, 28 Engineer Regiment, said:

"I have had the privilege of knowing Sapper Richie Walker for well over a year now. Firstly in my Troop in Kenya last year and now on Operation Herrick 17. Sapper Walker was a character and always present to give a small quip when required. As a soldier he remained professional in all that was asked of him. He had started a physical training regime with the aspiration to box on return from Afghanistan.

"Sapper Walker has a young daughter, Lilly-Faith, who was never far from

his mind. He would often speak about her with everyone. I only knew Richie for a short time, but he has left a lasting impression on me and will never be forgotten.

"My thoughts go out to his family at this difficult time."

Lance Corporal Terry Burke, 8 Troop, 42 Field Squadron, 28 Engineer Regiment, said:

"I've have had the privilege of knowing Richie since he joined 28

Engineer Regiment through the Regimental Football Team. However, I

really got to know him throughout the last year when I joined his Troop

in 42 Squadron back in Hameln.

"I class Richie as a close friend who was always there with a smile on

his face, especially when he was talking about his daughter Lilly-Faith;

he was a very proud dad. I had only spoken to him on 3 January 2013

while on R&R and he told me how much he had enjoyed spending time with

his daughter at the beginning of December.

"As well as being in the next bed space to me out here, we tended to go

the gym together where Richie was keen on getting the perfect 6-pack.

"All of the lads that have ever met Richie know what a great friend he

was. He will be sorely missed. All our thoughts are with his daughter

Lilly-Faith at this sad time."

Sapper Liam Ballantyne, 8 Troop, 42 Field Squadron, 28 Engineer Regiment, said:

"I first met Richie in October 2009 when I joined 42 Field Squadron. I

was allocated a bed space in the same room and we hit it off as friends

immediately. Richie was always willing to assist me with anything that

I needed having come straight from Training Regiment myself. It was

clear to me from the start that he was an extremely caring and

thoughtful individual to all around him and he immediately became a very

loyal friend. We would have done anything for each other.

"Over the years, we visited each other in our home towns and we got to

know each other's families during these visits. We enjoyed some great

times and his family always extended their greatest hospitality to me

whenever I stayed.

"Richie was a devoted father who would have done anything for his daughter, Lilly-Faith. He never stopped talking about her wherever we were. I even remember being on stag in the Kenyan bush with him and all he could talk about was his daughter, despite the ever present threat of lions roaming close by.

"Richie, you were a truly wonderful person and that is why people were naturally drawn towards you as a friend. You were a true brother to me; you will never be forgotten and you will be sadly missed by all who knew you."

Sapper Matthew Cunningham, 8 Troop, 42 Field Squadron, 28 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Sapper Richie 'Guns' Walker - comrade, friend, father and much-loved son.

"I knew Richie for 3 years and was privileged to be able to call him my best mate. He was thoughtful, funny and a big character in any group he found himself amongst, but he always put others first. He was very wise and mature for such a young lad. I have so many good memories from over the last three years but the one that stands out the most for me was the day that he christened his daughter Lilly-Faith. He was so proud of her; that day I remember him standing that extra inch taller and his smile beaming more than usual.

"You will be sorely missed brother, gone but never forgotten until we meet again at the bar in the sky... RIP"

From all members of 8 Troop, 42 Field Squadron, 28 Engineer Regiment:

"We had the privilege of knowing and working with Richie from the start

of Operation Herrick 17. In this time we have found out that he is a

joy to work with, plus an amiable character amongst the Troop.

"Richie was always talking about his daughter, Lilly-Faith, and from

this you could tell he was a devoted father and loved his little

Princess.

"He was a top bloke and our condolences go out to his family; he will be

sorely missed by all who were fortunate enough to have known him."