

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT RAKESH CHAUHAN, RAF ODIHAM

Flight Lieutenant Rakesh Chauhan was born in Birmingham on 3 February 1985. In February 2008 he commenced Officer Training at RAF Cranwell. Upon commissioning into the RAF's Intelligence Branch he underwent further training at the Defence School of Intelligence at Chicksands in Bedfordshire, serving at RAF Waddington, RAF Marham and in Afghanistan. Flight Lieutenant Chauhan deployed to Afghanistan for his third tour on 13 February 2014 as an Intelligence Officer in support of the UK's Armed Forces deployed on Op HERRICK.

His Commanding Officer paid the following tribute:

"Flight Lieutenant Rakesh Chauhan was a hugely influential and well respected officer whose enthusiasm and professionalism permeated every aspect of his work. Charming, funny and sharp as a tack, he was immensely proud of his role and of his service. An exceptional officer, he clearly had a bright future ahead of him. His loss has devastated the Station and our thoughts and prayers are very much with his family and friends".

The Commander for the deployed Lynx Detachment said of him:

"Flight Lieutenant Rakesh Chauhan or Rak to his friends was an outstanding Royal Air Force officer in every respect. Bright, articulate, charismatic and loyal, he was a pleasure to be around. Certainly the best Intelligence Branch officer I have known, his presentations were considered essential viewing by aircrew and others alike. A rising star of the Royal Air Force, Rak was a team player in every respect and worked passionately for those around him. One of my go-to individuals he would unselfishly take on additional work, safe in the knowledge that his peers would do less as a result. His positive attitude was infectious and he would always be seen with a bright smile on his face. His sense of humor was contagious and you could guarantee he would be at the centre of any laughter in the room. Not only did I

have the privilege of commanding Rak in Afghanistan but he also worked directly for me at RAF Odiham. He commanded a small team of dedicated intelligence personnel with skill, humility and professionalism; they will miss him. Rak was my midweek neighbor in the Officers' Mess and we were close friends both in and outside of work. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him but my thoughts and prayers are with his family at this extremely difficult time".