

Sergeant Michael Lockett MC
2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment

It is with deep regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that Acting Sergeant Michael Lockett MC, of 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters) was killed in Afghanistan on Monday 21 September 2009.

Acting Sergeant Lockett was on a dismounted patrol near Patrol Base SANDFORD in the Gereshk district of Helmand province when an explosion detonated, killing him before he could be extracted to hospital.

He was investigating and confirming the find of an Improvised Explosive Device when it exploded. Two other soldiers were injured in the same incident.

Acting Sergeant Michael Lockett, from Monifieth in Angus, joined 1st Battalion the Worcester and Sherwood Foresters Regiment (1 WFR) in Tidworth in 1996. The WFR became 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters) in 2007.

Sergeant Lockett took part in every operational deployment and exercise the Battalion undertook; he served in Bosnia and Northern Ireland, and in 2009 he returned for his third tour of Afghanistan.

At Garmsir in 2007, as Platoon Sergeant in A (Grenadier) Company he displayed selfless commitment and unshakable bravery fighting and leading his Platoon to rescue wounded comrades trapped in a Taliban ambush. For his actions that night he received one of the nation's highest awards for gallantry, The Military Cross.

He spent the large majority of his career as a Machine Gunner but he held many other qualifications including Jungle Warfare Instructor and Military Tracking Instructor.

His deployment to Afghanistan in 2009 was as part of the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team Battlegroup. He was working and operating alongside the Warriors of the Afghan National Army at Patrol Base Sandford in the Upper Gereshk Valley. His professionalism set the finest example to the Afghan Warriors. He was an inspirational leader.

Locky, as he was known to his friends, will always be remembered for his infectious laugh and prominence as a man. His leadership style was the exact mix of compassion and steel which garnered the respect of both those he led and those he served.

He was nearing the end of his tour when he died. He volunteered to stay on at his patrol base to ensure that the incoming soldiers knew as much as they could about the local area and they

could reap the benefits of his vast local knowledge.

Leading men and setting an example was a familiar position for Sergeant Lockett, he died doing a job he loved and he earned the highest respect from all those who knew and worked with him. Sergeant Lockett leaves behind his children Connor (eight), Chloe (seven) and Courtney (five), family, and his girlfriend Belinda.

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Banton, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"The Mercian Regiment has lost one of its brightest and its best, and a true hero. Sergeant Lockett MC was one of the most impressive soldiers I have ever met.

"He maintained consistently high standards and was a brave man, no stranger to battle. In 2007 at Garmsir, Southern Helmand, he fought with immense distinction during a fierce battle to save soldiers cut-off in a devastating Taleban ambush; for his actions that night he was awarded the Military Cross. Lockett was a natural leader in whatever situation he found himself and was admired for his commitment and selfless behaviour.

"In every aspect of his military bearing he set an example that others would wish to match: fit, smart, intelligent, compassionate and brave. He was a loving family man and we pray that his family take comfort from knowing the exceptionally high esteem in which Sergeant Lockett MC was held by all that had the honour to serve alongside him. We miss him desperately and there is now a gap in our ranks that will be so very difficult to fill."

Major Bob Moorhouse - Officer Commanding C Company, 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"It is always humbling to meet someone who has been honoured for gallantry, but to be given the opportunity to serve alongside such a person is a privilege.

"I was afforded that privilege with Sergeant Lockett MC. Soldiering came naturally to Sergeant Lockett and he made it look easy. Not only did he possess a strong understanding of his profession but he was also a superb exponent; every man in C Company, from Private to Major, benefited from watching him operate.

"In command he was unflappable and retained a strong grip in the most difficult circumstances; during one of our final exercises before deploying to Afghanistan the Exercise Controllers tried relentlessly to overload Sergeant Lockett but failed miserably.

"It is not a cliché to say that Sergeant Lockett lived and worked on the edge. It was an approach that did not always pay off and there were setbacks however he treated these as mere hurdles rather than impenetrable walls. Sergeant Lockett was destined to succeed; he was too good not to.

"Sergeant Lockett's raw bravery and selflessness cost him his life but undoubtedly saved that of

one his soldiers. He didn't have to be the man at the front but that was the Lockett way.

"In this, the most difficult of times, I hope his family and loved ones draw some comfort from knowing that he died serving those he commanded and remains an inspiration for those that follow in his footsteps."

Major Andy Clark - Officer Commanding Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team Gereshk, The Parachute Regiment, said:

"Locky was the epitome of a professional soldier. The winner of the MC during Operation HERRICK 6, he was a modest man who was truly at home on operations.

"A courageous and natural leader, he was an inspiration to his small Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team and the Afghan National Army alike. His standards were impeccable and his support to his commanders was unquestionable.

"At the time of his death Locky was on a ground orientation foot patrol in the vicinity of Patrol Base SANDFORD in the Upper Gereshk Valley, Helmand Province.

"He was mentoring the newly arrived Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team from 2nd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment ensuring they were set up for success. During the patrol a number of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) were discovered and it was during routine confirmation drills that Sergeant Lockett was mortally wounded.

"It has been a great honour to have commanded Sergeant Lockett for the past six months. With less than two days remaining at Patrol Base SANDFORD before the completion of the handover, Locky continued to soldier right up to the very end - he died doing what he loved and did best.

"He was a Sergeant destined to become an instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, he will be missed by all of my team.

"All ranks within my Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team extend our thoughts and prayers to his family and young children at this very difficult time. We are all proud to have known and served with him."

Major Ed Gaffney, Officer Commanding AMBER 91, Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team, Patrol Base Sandford, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"Sergeant Lockett MC was quite simply the best soldier I have ever worked with. He was immensely brave, talented and hugely committed to his soldiers.

"They in turn were completely devoted to him. On numerous occasions during our tour his actions saved the lives of members of the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team and the Afghan National Army.

"I personally will always appreciate the support he gave me and friendship we shared over the last few months. His tragic death is a huge loss to the soldiers in the team and the Battalion. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family."

Captain Mike Brigham, Officer Commanding Machine Gun Platoon, 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"Sergeant Mike Lockett MC was my Platoon Sergeant and one of the best field soldiers I have had the privilege to work alongside.

"Having been awarded the Military Cross for his outstanding achievements in 2007 we had joked many times that it was his destiny to receive the award as he was christened Michael Christopher Lockett.

"He died doing what he knew best, keeping his soldiers alive. He embodied the ethos of 'leading from the front', and was willing to take a bullet for his men; he happily led the clearance of the Improvised Explosive Device that killed him. I know Sergeant Lockett MC will be at peace knowing it was him and not his soldiers that left us that day.

"Sergeant Lockett MC was a loving partner, and devoted father, he was intense, and caring, willing to do anything to please the ones he loved. Sergeant Lockett was a man who wore his heart on his sleeve; this was clearly evident throughout his life and made for a very interesting and devoted friend.

"I will always remember Sergeant Mike Lockett MC for the good times we shared, the lessons he taught me and the intensity in which he lived and loved throughout his life.

"It can be said that we should not be measured by our failings, but rather our ability to overcome them. Sergeant Mike Lockett MC knew this and worked hard in every aspect to learn from his mistakes and stop his soldiers from doing the same.

"Sergeant Mike Lockett MC is a friend I will miss and always hold in the highest regards, I will remember him for our highs and lows, for his terrible dancing and equally bad driving, but most of all for his benevolent and loving character."

WO2 (CSM) Paul Barnett - Company Sergeant Major, Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team Gereshk, 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"Throughout the tour I have had the pleasure of having Sergeant "Locky" Lockett as one of my Platoon Sergeants. Not only was Locky a work colleague, but a friend I have known for many years.

"He was an unreservedly professional and well motivated soldier who was extremely passionate about his work. Socially Locky was a very friendly guy who was outgoing and always up for a laugh. A true friend who will be greatly missed by us all, especially his family who our thoughts are with at this difficult time."

Colour Sergeant Bryn Knowles MBE, 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"I have had the pleasure of knowing Mick Lockett for nearly 13 years. I was his Section Commander in the Drums Platoon when he first joined the Battalion in Tidworth in 1997, and subsequently his Sergeant in the Machine Gun Platoon. Locky was the consummate professional soldier, always immaculate in turnout, the fittest soldier in the Platoon and the best Machine Gun Instructor within the Battalion.

"He rose quickly through the ranks completing his Junior Non Commissioned Officers' Cadre, Section Commanders' Battle Course, General Purpose Machine Gun (Sustained Fire) Gunners' and Platoon Sergeants' Battle Course within a few short years.

"For a young man he was a steely, battle hardened, and an old fashioned true grit Platoon Sergeant who was immensely popular and respected by all that knew him.

"Today our Regiment has lost a true hero, we have lost a star of the future and I have lost a good friend. My sincere condolences go out to all his family and friends."

Sergeant Chris Lavelle, 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"Sergeant Lockett MC was an exceptional Platoon Sergeant. Over the last five months I have had the personal pleasure to have worked with him and to know him as a friend.

"He will be missed by all and my deepest sympathy goes out to his family and friends at this difficult time. Michael - Rest In Peace."

Lance Corporal Matt Carnell, 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"Sergeant Lockett MC was not only an outstanding commander; he was also a really good friend. His tragic death has come as a shock to us all. He will be missed by all that knew him and our thoughts go out to his family especially his children. He will never be forgotten."

Private Ryan Rodgers, 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"Sergeant Lockett MC was a great commander and a good friend. He was always there to help you no matter what the problem was. If it was to do work or if you were having problems at home he was always there if you needed someone to talk to.

"His tragic death is a shock to every one in his team and to everyone that knew him. Our thoughts go out to his family and friends and he will be missed by all that knew him. We shall remember him."

Private Alex Sheridan, 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters), said:

"Sergeant Lockett MC was an outstanding combat infantryman. Whatever the situation you were in, you could be sure that whatever decision he made on the ground was always the right one.

"When you were on patrol with him you felt safe, he was an inspiration to young soldiers like myself. My thoughts and prayers go out to his children, family and friends in these difficult times. Sergeant Lockett MC - always remembered, never forgotten."

Private Dave Stock, 4th Medical Regiment, said:

"I have worked with Sergeant Lockett MC for the past two months, in that short time period I have learnt a lot from a very brave man and an exceptional soldier.

"He always led from the front and you always felt safe when he was on patrol with you. He looked after our team and put himself in danger to protect us. It has been an honour to have worked with him. My thoughts go out to his family at this tragic time."