

Lance Corporal James Hill
1st Battalion Coldstream Guards

Lance Corporal Hill was killed as a result of an explosion that happened near to Camp Bastion in Helmand Province.

Lance Corporal Hill (23) was an outstanding Junior Non Commissioned Officer with excellent prospects. He started training in Autumn 2005 and passed out into the Battalion in Spring 2006. He conducted State Ceremonial in London District throughout the summer of 2006 from Windsor before moving to the Mortar Platoon in time for Exercise African Thorn in South Africa during early 2007. Lance Corporal Hill then immersed himself into pre-deployment training for OP HERRICK 7. He was quickly identified as an excellent mortarman and he soon became a No 1 in a Section, the senior post for a mortar number. It was in

this post that he deployed on OP HERRICK 7 and he spent the tour in FOB KEENAN with No 3 Company Group. This was a busy tour and his mortar section was fully involved in numerous engagements in support of the Company as they fought the enemy in that part of the Upper Gereshk Valley. After this highly successful tour he was sent on a Junior Non Commissioned Officer's cadre and passed with a very high standard. In January 2009 he was sent on his Mortar Standards Course for which he received a Highly Competent pass proving his considerable abilities. During the summer he qualified as a Joint Fires Coordinator proving his understanding of the wider Joint Fires battle that is often fought in Helmand Province. He was again very involved with the pre-deployment training prior to deploying as a Mortar Fire Controller 'B' for No 1 Company Group.

Lance Corporal Hill was a personable, motivated and intelligent warrior. He nurtured those under his Command whilst constantly striving to be better by learning from his superiors. He was enthusiastic and energetic about his job and was excited by the prospect of serving in Afghanistan as a Mortar Fire Controller. He was every ounce a model Coldstreamer.

Lance Corporal Hill was engaged to Anastasia Newman. He was an only child and very close to his family who are from Redhill in Surrey.

Lieutenant Colonel Toby W Gray, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards:

"Lance Corporal Hill was, from the very start of his career, a soldier with the most outstanding qualities. His drive to be the best was constant and he was a man with commendable ambitions within the Army. His qualities really came to the fore prior to OP HERRICK 7 when he was selected, as a relatively junior Guardsman, to be a No 1 in a mortar section. He thrived on the challenge of the job as well as the added responsibility that it demanded of him. He rose to the task with typical gusto and determination. During OP HERRICK 7 he was based in FOB KEENAN at a time when the conditions were austere, the offensive action frequent and the call

for mortars continuous. His actions throughout the tour were in line with what we all began to expect from him; Second to None.

"As his Commanding Officer I was very proud to promote him in late 2008 to the rank of LCpl after he produced a commendable result on his Junior Non Commissioned Officer Cadre. The added burden of Command clearly inspired him and he went straight onto his Mortar Standards Course on which he once again did extremely well. Lance Corporal Hill was relishing this tour with his new found skill of being a Mortar Fire Controller. He was a ray of light for the future of the Mortar Platoon with his skills, current experience and thirst for knowledge and it is a tragedy that he has been taken from us so early in his life.

"Lance Corporal Hill was, quite simply, superb at everything he did. He was personable, intelligent, fit and ambitious. His humour, coupled with his energy, singled him out as a popular and respected Junior Non Commissioned Officer. Our loss is huge but that of his family, fiancé and friends is even greater. My deepest condolences go out to them at this very sad time."

Major Toby PO Till, Number 1 Company Commander 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards:

"I had only known Lance Corporal Hill the short time that he was attached to No 1 Company but it was clear from first meeting him that he was every ounce a professional and relishing the opportunity to prove himself in his new appointment as a Mortar Fire Controller. He had bags of enthusiasm and an infectious energy and clearly loved his job but more importantly was enormously popular in the Mortar Platoon and the Company Group. He was simply one of those 'good blokes' in life and he will be sorely missed by everyone in the Company. Our thoughts are with his family and fiancée Anastasia."

Captain Nicholas Powell, Mortar Platoon Commander 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards:

"Lance Corporal Hill was a man of outstanding ability and character. Intelligent and physically robust, Lance Corporal Hill was an exemplary operator in the field whose technical skill as a Mortar Fire Controller were unrivalled by a man of his age and experience. He inspired the Guardsmen under his command and earned the greatest respect from his Commanders.

"Lance Corporal Hill's loyalty to both the Platoon and to the mission was exhaustive; his mindset was selfless. He was an asset that cannot be replaced. My deepest condolences go to Lance Corporal Hill's family, friends and fiancée. The Platoon will miss him dearly."

Sergeant Tony Bolton, Mortar Platoon Sergeant 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards:

"Jimmy Hill was a true soldier, a warrior, a brother and a friend to us all. His loss will leave a hole in our platoon and hearts that will never be filled, I will miss him. Jimmy's passion for the platoon was second to none. He strove to be the best he could be always, his character and nature was an example and inspiration to

all.

Jimmy will be in our thoughts and actions every single day while we are here, and mine forever."

Lance Sergeant Simon Walker, Mortar Platoon Alpha MFC 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards:

"Jimmy was an exceptional soldier and an even better friend, not only to me but to the whole of the Mortar Platoon. The fact that Jimmy is no longer with us has left behind a space that can never be filled again. He will be sadly missed but never forgotten. My heart goes out to his friends and family at home, in particular his parents and fiancée Anastasia."

Lance Corporal Matthew Cutting, Best Friend:

"Jimmy was one of the battalion's best soldiers and one of my closest friends. He was a very professional soldier. Despite being highly committed to the job he could always find time for his friends. I will never forget all the great times I had with him, from the insane times sky diving in France to having a beer with him and all the mortar boys. He was a big inspiration to us all and will be missed badly and will never be forgotten. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends. Rest in Peace Jimmy."

Guardsman Luke Fitzpatrick, Close Friend:

"Jimmy was a great and close friend not only to me but to everyone he knew as well as being a phenomenal leader and inspirational to us all. Jimmy was an excellent morale raiser, and could always find a way of making me and the rest of the boys smile no matter how bad times got. The other great quality Jimmy had was how he could get us out in the evening socialising with each other down the pub even if it was on a school night or if we had an arduous task the following day. It's for this reason we all owe him thanks, because it's the reason why all the mortar boys are all so close to each other. The world won't be the same without you Jimmy and never will be. So to that end our thoughts go to your family and friends back home. You will always be remembered by us all and you will never be forgotten."

Guardsman Myles Coleman:

"Jimmy was one of the finest soldiers the British army will see. He was morale to the lads and a very good friend to everyone. I only knew Jimmy for a year but as soon as I met him we became great friends instantly and after work, if there was nothing to do he would always find a way for the platoon to get together even if it was from a couple down at the pub or having a laugh in the foyer. He was a great mortarman, a great leader but mostly he was an extremely good friend. He will never be forgotten and forever missed. MORTARS OR YOU'RE NOT!!!"