

Rifleman Joseph Murphy

2 Rifles

Rifleman Joe Murphy, 18, was from Castle Bromwich, Birmingham and joined the 2nd Battalion, The Rifles in November 2008 after attending the Army Foundation College, Harrogate and completing the Combat Infantryman's Course in Catterick. He completed pre-deployment training with C Company and in March 2009 he deployed to Sangin as a light machine gunner in 9 Platoon, C Company. Rifleman Murphy was killed in action by an improvised explosive device on the 10th July 2009. He leaves behind his parents, Brian and Jill and his older brother, Ben.

Lieutenant Colonel Rob Thomson MBE, Commanding Officer 2 RIFLES Battle Group:

"Rifleman Murphy joined us in the middle of pre-deployment training and was straight into the mix - at the double - which is how he lived his life. A really bright lad; another product of the Army Foundation College, Harrogate, he soaked up new skills and thought deeply about his new profession. Out here, he was in his element, helping to bring security to Sangin and its people. He knew right was on his side and his commitment was exemplary. He loved his football and was itching for the new season. A driven young man, he had so much going for him and his loss has hit us all hard. But our first instinct is to pray that his family will find the strength and courage to face the dreadfulness of the coming days."

Major Alistair Field, Officer Commanding C Company 2 RIFLES:

"Rifleman Murphy was another Harrogate trained star in waiting. Smartness was not his thing - the dust, dirt and austerity under which we lived was right up his street! He also had an infectious sense of humour which he tried on with me during my first interview with him. I am extremely proud of all he had achieved. Sadly he was snatched from us by an IED trying to rescue another fallen Rifleman. His death will not deter us from the task in hand - it is both important and urgent. Rifleman Murphy knew that more than anyone."

Capt Edward Poynter, Operations Officer C Company 2 RIFLES:

"Rifleman Murphy was an exceptional young Rifleman. He was fiercely proud of his Section and his Platoon, a passionate Villa fan and the joker of the Company. It is the mark of the man that he was selected to bear the responsibility of being one of the Platoon's three Machine Gunners despite his relative inexperience. Rifleman Murphy was carrying his close friend and battle-buddy, Rifleman Simpson, to safety after he had been wounded in the first explosion when a second device initiated and killed them both instantly. Rifleman Murphy gave his life while trying to save that of his fellow Rifleman. The thoughts and prayers of all in C Company are with him and his family. Rifleman Murphy, We will never forget your smile."

Serjeant Jamie Moncho, 9 Platoon Serjeant:

"Joe Murphy loved being a Rifleman. He had many talents and often combined his talent for drawing with his love of Aston Villa Football Club. He was often sent to remove his 'artwork' from the sentry positions! With an eye on the future, he wanted to complete the demanding Rifles Sniper Cadre. Joe was close friends with Rifleman Danny Simpson whom he was helping to extract to the safety of the FOB during their last minutes together. He spoke constantly of his parents and his older brother, whom he missed and loved dearly.

"Gone, but never forgotten - Rifleman Joe Murphy, 9 Platoon, C Coy, 2 RIFLES."

Lance Corporal Rehan Pasha, Section Second-in-Command:

"I was Rifleman Murphy's Section 2IC only briefly (we were posted to the Battalion at the same time), but I will never forget him. Typically, no-one in 9 Platoon called him Joe; it was always "Murph" or "Smurph" and a few other nicknames besides. Murph habitually made me laugh (although not always intentionally) even when I was trying to be angry with him. His semi-permanent expression of fatigue and Brummie drawl belied a sharp wit and an outstanding artistic talent. Joe, I am sorry that I was not a better friend to you. I will miss you and I will miss being greeted every morning with a cheerful, "Allroight Pash?"."

Rifleman Wilson, Fellow Rifleman:

"I've known Joe Murphy since day one in basic training at Harrogate. As soon as he turned up, he was the joker of the platoon, always with high morale no matter what he was doing. He was the funniest lad I have ever known and he loved annoying people in a funny way, which would always have everyone in stitches. We have been in the same section all the waythrough so I saw him as my own brother and my best friend. I don't know how we are all going to cope without him making us laugh every day. My deepest sorrow goes to his family and friends and I wish them the best for the future. I'm going to miss you so much Murph. Rest in peace my best friend, my brother."

Rifleman Jacobs, Fellow Rifleman:

"Smurf the Murph. What a lad! He was one of a kind. I started Battalion at the same time as Joe and from the start we got on. I will never forget the nights we spent joking and laughing. I will miss you brother, you will always have a place in my heart. Love from big Ginge."