

The MOD has announced the death of three soldiers yesterday. Two soldiers serving with the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards and one serving with the Royal Corps of Signals were killed in an incident at Check Point Kamparack Pul in Nahr-e-Saraj, Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

The soldiers were serving in an Afghan Police Advisory Team and had been to the check point to conduct a shura. On leaving, they were engaged by small arms fire by a man wearing an Afghan Police uniform. During this exchange of fire the three soldiers were wounded and despite receiving first aid at the scene, they died of their injuries.

The spokesman for Task Force Helmand, Major Ian Lawrence, said: "It is with deep regret that I must inform you that three soldiers, two serving with 1st Battalion Welsh Guards and one serving with the Royal Corps of Signals, have been killed in an incident at Check Point Kamparack Pul in the Nahr-e-Saraj district of Helmand Province."

"Their loss will be felt deeply across Task Force Helmand. However, this will be nothing compared to the grief experienced by the soldiers' families. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this extremely difficult time."

The soldiers' families have been informed and have asked for a 24 hour period of grace before further details are released.

Defence Viewpoints always complies with such requests

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said:

"I was saddened to hear of this cowardly act by a man wearing an Afghan uniform, which has taken the lives of three brave British soldiers. All of our thoughts are with the families of these men who have died in such tragic circumstances. They gave their lives protecting Britain's national security, helping to make sure that Afghanistan never again becomes a haven for international terrorism.

"Every day, tens of thousands of coalition forces, including UK personnel, live and work successfully with their Afghan counterparts to build an Afghan police force and Army which can take the lead for their own security by the end of 2014.

"That process will continue, and though deeply tragic, yesterday's incident and attacks like it will not derail the mission or distract us from the task in hand.

"An investigation is now under way; we are determined to get to the bottom of exactly what happened yesterday at Checkpoint Kamparak Pul, and to pursue those who are responsible."

General Sir David Richards, Chief of the Defence Staff, said:

"I was extremely saddened to hear of the deaths of these three British soldiers. My thoughts are with their families who will be devastated by their loss and the friends they fought alongside.

"I was in Afghanistan with British troops last week where these deaths will be felt keenly. At the same time, I know that the resolve of those on operations will be unshaken. Generally, there remains a high level of trust between the Afghan forces and their British counterparts with whom they work and live every day.

"Every time I visit Afghanistan and I am struck by the progress we are making alongside the Afghans in building a country increasingly able to stand on its own two feet. Attacks like this will not stop us from moving forward."