



The Newsletter of Central Scotland Branch  
The Parachute Regimental Association

Issue No. 025

September 2008

# BECAUSE THEY ARE ALL AIRBORNE

**O**n Sunday the 15th of June 2008 ~~Some of our members attended~~ Dryburgh Abbey for Founder's Day Parade, as invited guests of the Royal British Legion Scotland. ~~Nine members accompanied by three members' wives turned up on the day.~~

The sun was shining and after our long journey we arrived to a splendid sight of standard bearers and members of the various branches forming below the abbey.

We fell in at the rear of the parade and awaited inspection by HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG, GCVO. As the duke was ending his inspection he asked, "Why are all the paratroopers at the rear of the parade"? Major Alasdair Hutton replied with style, "Because they are all Airborne and they stick together"

The address was read by Lt Gen Sir Alistair Irwin, KCB, CBE, who is also President of the RBLs. continued overleaf/





After a great day we were invited to visit Viscount Dawyck son of Field Marshall Earl Haig KT,GCB, OM, GCVO, KCIE at his home where we were permitted to take some photographs. Also in attendance was Major Alexander Trotter, Lord Lieutenant of Berwickshire. We were made very welcome, receiving tea and sandwiches. Before leaving, we were invited to visit the gardens of the estate.

It was always said that our lot would get a piece at anyone's door!

*Jim Colquhoun*



## JUST FOR FUN

According to a news report, a certain private school in Washington was recently faced with a unique problem. A number of 12-year-old girls were beginning to use lipstick and would put it on in the bathroom. That was fine, but after they put on their lipstick, they would press their lips to the mirror leaving dozens of little lip prints. Every night the maintenance man would remove them, and the next day the girls would put them back.

Finally the principal decided that something had to be done. She called all the girls to the bathroom and met them there with the maintenance man. She explained that all these lip prints were causing a major problem for the custodian who had to clean the mirrors every night (you can just imagine the yawns from the little princesses).

To demonstrate how difficult it had been to clean the mirrors, she asked the maintenance man to show the girls how much effort was required. He took out a long-handled squeegee, dipped it in the toilet, and

cleaned the mirror with it. Since then, there have been no lip prints on the mirror.

There are teachers and then there are educators. ☺

I was testing the children in my Glasgow Sunday school class to see if they understood the concept of getting to Heaven. I asked them, "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would that get me into Heaven?" "NO!" the children answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the garden and kept everything neat and tidy, would that get me into Heaven?" Again, the answer was, "NO!"

By now I was starting to smile. Hey, this was fun! "Well, then, if I was kind to animals and gave sweets to all the children, and loved my wife would that get me into Heaven?" I asked them again. Again, they all answered, "NO!" I was just bursting with pride for them.

Well, I continued, "Then how can I get into Heaven?"

A six-year-old boy shouted out, "You've got to be deid first!" ☺

## A BIRTHDAY SURPRISE!

By Ken Primrose



Harry Docherty, Sammy Moynihan and Ken Primrose present the Veterans' Badge

Harry Docherty, Sammy Moynihan and I called into Harry's bowling club for a pint after attending "Big" Jake's funeral. We were approached by a lady who had noticed our blazers. She started to tell us that her dad had been in the Paras during the war. She said her dad was having his 84th birthday party and she invited us along although she did not want him to know we were coming.

You should have seen his face when we appeared in front of him with our berets etc. on. When we presented him with a Veterans' Badge, he was over the moon! Photographs were taken and his daughter and family were really pleased.

## Bombed Paras walk away from wreckage of near-death experience Afghanistan bomb blast

Three soldiers have described their "near-death experience" after they survived an anti-tank mine that wrecked their WMiK Land Rover in Afghanistan. The 4-ton vehicle was thrown 20ft into the air by a huge explosion, but two of the soldiers walked away without a scratch.

The men from a patrols platoon of 3rd Bn The Parachute Regiment were on a reconnaissance mission in the Upper Goshk Valley in Helmand province when they hit the mine near an old Russian trench position.

Cpl Neil Sant, the commander of the heavily armed vehicle known as a Wimik, had just fitted the chin strap to his helmet when "the next thing, I was upside down with a big flash going off".

He said: "I felt it was a bomb halfway through when the vehicle was rolling over." His comrade L/Cpl Duncan Armstrong, 30, who was manning the .50 calibre heavy machine gun, remembered "feeling a blast of hot air going past" and being hit by heavy boxes of ammunition as the vehicle "lifted off". After the Wimik came to a rest on its side L/Cpl Armstrong "grabbed my privates to see if they were still there" and thought "I was tough as nails because I had survived a mine".

Both soldiers then helped the unconscious driver Pte Lucas Van der Merwe, who had his legs trapped. The South African

was evacuated back to England with a broken leg and fractured nose.

Cpl Sant, 30, from Merseyside believed the recent upgrade to the Wimik's under-armour and the engine block saved them from the mine that was probably planted during civil strife in the 1990s. He said: "It was a near-death experience definitely, especially when we look back at the state the vehicle was in. "Only 20 percent of guys walk away from tank mines but all three of us did get away with our limbs intact and we were extremely lucky."

Fortune had favoured the soldier earlier in the day when a mortar round landed 50 yards away but left him unscathed. 14 out of the last 16 British troops to die since October have been killed by roadside bombs.



3 PARA recruits whilst their mortars go into action



## EULOGY

### PRIVATE NATHAN CUTHBERTSON

#### SECOND BATTALION THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT

Private Nathan Cuthbertson, (19) was serving as Machine Gunner and assault engr. with 4 Platoon, B Coy, 2 PARA

when he was killed by a suicide bomb in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

His OC, Maj. Russell Lewis, said, "Pte. Cuthbertson was an incredibly popular member of the Company. A talented, motivated individual he always had a smile on his face and relished the challenges faced by the professional soldier. His humour and morale were infectious and he was widely liked and respected. His loss will be sorely felt by his friends and colleagues. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family."

4 Pl. commander, Lt. David True, said, "Pte. Cuthbertson loved his platoon and worked tirelessly on its behalf, nowhere more so than in Afghanistan. When volunteers were required, his was always the first hand to go up. He was a brilliant soldier and a great man."

Sgt. Wayne Sykes, his platoon sergeant said, "I was also Pte. Cuthbertson's section commander during his basic training, from my time there and also in 2 PARA one of the things what really stood out was that you could always rely on him to get the job done. He never moaned about anything, he just cracked on. He was always happy and never took life too seriously. He was a great member of the platoon."

Cpl. David Baillie, said, "I don't think I ever heard 'Cuthy' complain once. He was like a work horse, carrying out any task he was given straightaway and without fault. Always ready for 'a brew' and a cigarette, Cuthy was a great bloke and will be sorely missed..."

L/Cpl Alan Farmer, said, "Nathe' was a tremendous character... he always worked hard for everyone and was an essential part of the platoon. He never complained and always did everything to the best of his ability. Put simply, he was a mega bloke."

Best friend Pte. Lee Cunliffe spoke of their time together, "I remember on P Company he would always be at the front of the Tabs, or helping keep someone else going... I can remember on our first jump he was on the starboard side of the plane and I was on the port. We were both to be the first ones out of the door on either side. I remember we both looked at each other and he laughed and shouted 'Yehaa!'

"... I am truly sorry and gutted about what has happened to him out here, I have lost my best friend. He was an excellent soldier and man. I will never forget him and the good times we had together."

Nathan's parents, Tom and Carla, said, "Nathan realised his childhood dream by following his Dad's footsteps and joining The Parachute Regiment as a machine gunner. He died a hero, doing a job he loved among his friends... A dearly loved and devoted son, brother, grandson and friend to all who had the privilege of meeting him, his death will leave a massive hole in all our lives. We will not forget him."



**2 PARA landing at FOB Inkerman**

**EULOGY**  
**PRIVATE DANIEL GAMBLE**  
**SECOND BATTALION THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT**



Private Daniel Gamble (22) was serving as a rifleman and Pashto linguist with 4 Pl, B Coy, 2 PARA when he was killed in action by a suicide bomb in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Pte. Gamble deployed to Afghanistan in March 2008. Employed as the platoon linguist, he had gone forward with typical enthusiasm and professionalism to speak with a local Afghani when his platoon was attacked.

His OC, Maj. Russell Lewis, said, "Pte. Gamble was an incredibly talented individual and had completed a very demanding Pashto language course before the deployment. As a linguist he was instrumental to the Company's ability to communicate with the locals. It was in this role that he had gone forward to communicate with a local national and was tragically killed by a suicide bomber. A professional, intelligent individual he had added huge value to the Company mission in Afghanistan. His loss will be sorely felt by his friends and colleagues. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends."

4 Pl. commander, Lt. David True, said, "As an important part of my Platoon Headquarters, Pte. Gamble and I spent a lot of time together on and off patrol. He was a highly professional soldier and I felt secure in the knowledge that on patrol he was covering my back. Having grown up in the same part of the country we often spoke of home. He was very proud of his family and loved them dearly."

Sect. commander Cpl. Mathew Walden said, "Danny was a good friend and I'm going to miss him and his see-through shorts."

L/Cpl Alan Farmer said, "Dan was a dedicated individual who, when told he was to attend the Pashto course, did it with his usual dedication. Not only did he understand the language, he also tried to understand the culture and empathised with the people of Afghanistan. This is the only way to ever try and explain the character of the man, his dedication, professionalism and determination to make a difference to this country."

Pte. Tom Wilson said, "Dan, I'll never forget meeting you on day one of basic training and having a laugh about being the only southerners and how cold it was or going down to Brize on our 'Jumps' course and your gift of the gab with the ladies helped me meet my girlfriend. You're a great friend and an even better soldier. I don't speak alone when I say what a pleasure it has been working with you and how much I'll miss you."

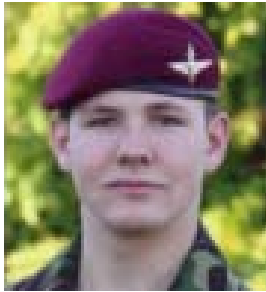
Pte. Lewis Barlow said, "Dan was an exceptional paratrooper and very intelligent. Mostly I will miss our banter and conversation. My thoughts and condolences go to his family and friends."

Pte. Gamble's mother and father said, "Dan died doing the job he was so proud to do, with the regiment he was so proud to be a part of. He was special because he had trained in the Afghan Pashto language. He was special to his family and friends - a true hero in every sense.

"He will be missed by so many people more than he would ever know. We all love him and will miss him so very much, forever in our memories. Our hearts go out to the families of the comrades who fell with him."



**The "Iron Man Challenge" at Sangin.**



**EULOGY**  
**PRIVATE CHARLES DAVID MURRAY**  
**SECOND BATTALION THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT**

Private Charles David Murray aged 19, Dave to his friends and colleagues, was serving as a rifleman and assault engineer with 4 Platoon, B Coy, 2 PARA when he was killed in action by a suicide bomb in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

His OC, Maj. Lewis, said, "Pte. Murray was the consummate professional and clearly enjoyed being a soldier. He took pride in his work and was a valued member of his section. A relaxed, humorous individual he was an incredibly popular member of the Company. His natural charm shone through. Widely known, liked and respected, Pte. Murray will be sorely missed by his friends and colleagues. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends."

4 Pl. commander, Lt. David True, said, "On patrol, Pte. Murray was a thoroughly focused and effective soldier who was mature beyond his years. Off patrol Murray was constantly entertaining and the origin of much of the platoon's morale. I cannot begin to express how much he brought to the platoon; he will be sorely missed."

Pl. Sgt. Wayne Sykes, "He always had a smile on his face and never let anything get him down. He certainly was going far in The Parachute Regiment. He wanted to train as a sniper and you could see he was destined to be a star."

Sec. Commander, Cpl David Baillie, said, "As a soldier he was second-to-none and I looked forward to watching him grow as a soldier and no doubt soon he would have been promoted to Lance Corporal. Always ready for a laugh, Dave kept the morale of the section up even if it meant laughing at himself. I will miss his cheeky grin most of all."

Section 2i/c L/Cpl Alan Farmer, said, "His attitude to everything, whether it was work or play, was always positive. He always had time for his friends and was popular with everyone."

Private Tom Wilson said, "Dave always enjoyed being a paratrooper and would always make the best of any situation. We'll miss you Dave, and your cheeky smile."

Pte. Lewis Barlow said, "His jokes and his ever present morale will be missed but his friendship will be missed the most. My thoughts and condolences go to his family and friends."

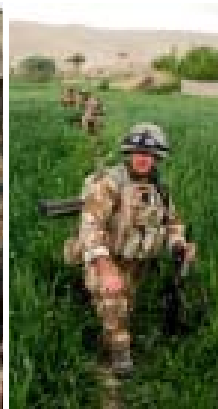
Pte. Lee Cunliffe recalls their time together, "I am truly sorry and gutted about what has happened to Dave. I have lost my best friend. He was an excellent soldier and man. I will never forget him and all the good times we had together."

Pte. Murray's family said, "Private David Murray - A little guy with a big heart. David was the best son, brother, grandson, nephew, cousin and friend that any of us could hope for. Although his time with us was short, he lived every second to the full and taught us the meaning of life.

"David always dreamed of being a soldier like his uncle, papa and granddad. He made us proud, everyday, in everything he did. He was the little guy with a big heart, although he would never admit it. He had the biggest, cheekiest grin that we had ever seen and he always made us laugh with his cheeky way."



FOB Kajaki



The Green Zone Kajaki

## EULOGY

### LANCE CORPORAL JAMES BATEMAN SECOND BATTALION THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT

James Bateman aged 29 was a proud and honest paratrooper, respected for being a gentleman as much as he was for his unbridled energy and professionalism. He was fit and had taken part in amateur boxing at company level. He barely stopped to pause, with unmatched staying power and a work ethic that put most to shame. C (Bruneval) Company was his spiritual home and his return to the company marked a new juncture in his career. He leaves behind his wife Victoria, whom he adored.

His OC, Major Adam Dawson said, "LCpl Bateman rejoined the company shortly before the deployment for the HERRICK 8 tour. I am unable to recollect a soldier more happy to be back amongst his friends, at the sharp end and taking on what he considered to be his core business, his profession and a challenge.

"This... was the life he loved and he had aspirations to join his brother at the SFSG on completion of the tour. He was the first to volunteer, the last to give up and above all extremely proud to be a paratrooper, imbued with the Regimental ethos and dedicated to his friends and his soldiers.

"His death leaves an irreplaceable gap in the ranks of Bruneval Company and a hole in the lives of his friends and colleagues who consider themselves blessed to have known him. A loyal husband and a gentleman."

Sgt. Chris Lloyd, his friend, spoke warmly, "He was the true definition of a paratrooper, fit, strong, full of determination and with a fantastic sense of humour. ...I know that his job was second only to his love for his wife Victoria whom he doted upon. He was a friend as well as a colleague and the platoon will miss him dearly."

Cpl. Adam Ireland said, "His dedication to ensuring their [section] safety is sadly what cost him his life. 1 Section, 8 Platoon and I will never forget the sacrifice you made for us."

Cpl. Gareth Storey, "No matter what problems I had, Jay would always be there to listen and to offer some advice. I will miss his smile and the copious amounts of tea we would have

together trying to put the world to rights."

Cpl. Paul Knapp said, "Jay was a loveable guy,

with the craziest sense of humour you could ever come across. Always willing to help, he had a heart of pure gold... a great character and a true legend."

Pte. Keith Abraham said, "He was so proud to be a paratrooper and epitomised every aspect of what that meant. He would do anything for his men without question and always managed to provide us with morale, whether he meant it or not!"

Pte. Billy Innes said, "He would always be talking to us on and off the battlefield and always had time for everyone."

L/Cpl. Bateman's wife, Victoria said, "I would like to firstly thank everybody for their ongoing support. Secondly, I would like you all to know how immensely proud we are of him and all that he has achieved.

"I know how he loved the Parachute Regiment and I draw comfort from the fact that he died doing the job he loved, for the country he loved, with the friends he loved. He was a loving husband, brother, son and uncle. I would like the lads to carry on the work he was doing. I love him and will miss him greatly. He was our hero."



A sniper watches as his mates head for cover

# BRANCH NEWS

## St Michel Parade

This year's St Michel Parade will be held on Sat 27 Sept 2008. The organisers, learning by mistake, got the message that having all events in the afternoon is a no-go. The ceremony in Invalides is in the morning, followed by the AGM.

The Parade forms up at 1700Hrs, starting at 1800Hrs followed by an all-ranks buffet at Invalides the price being an incredible 5 (five) Euros per person. As Didier has to book through his branch, he will need the number of attendees as soon as possible. *Réserver maintenant. Etre rapide!*

## Collections

Four can collections to raise funds for the Branch amassed a sizeable sum of money. This is a sign of the generous spirit of our fellow citizens and it is greatly appreciated. We are indebted to those members who gave and continue to give their time and energy for the branch.

## Playhouse Named

Kelbourne Primary School to which our members kindly donated has in turn shown their gratitude in a fitting manner. They have named the adventure playhouse after a 15 PARA legend - Jake Elliott. ELLIOTT HOUSE will be a source of pleasure to the children for years to come.

## Florida Bound

Jack Whitelaw is off on a well deserved holiday. He has always wanted to go to Florida and now it is finally possible. Here is hoping that he enjoys the trip and manages to resist taking part in the 'gator wrestling.

## Fire

Albert Holt and his good lady were unfortunate enough to have their home burned down. They are now in a bungalow and making it into a new home. We wish them many happy years there.

## VETERANS' DAY PARADE



Buoyed by the success of the above photographs, Jim Bishop is now allegedly looking for a young attractive female model.

## Random thoughts

- 1 The early bird still has to eat worms.
- 2 I signed up for an exercise class and was told to wear loose fitting clothing. If I HAD any loose fitting clothing, I wouldn't have signed up in the first place!
- 3 The worst thing about accidents in the kitchen is eating them.
- 4 Don't argue with an idiot, people watching may not be able to tell the difference.
- 5 Wouldn't it be nice if whenever we messed up our life we could press Ctl Alt Delete and start all over again
- 6 Stress is when you wake up screaming and then you realise you haven't fallen asleep yet.
- 7 My wife says I never listen to her. At least I think that's what she said.
- 8 Why is it that our children can't read a Bible in school, but they can in prison?
- 9 If raising children was going to be easy it never would have started with something called labour.
- 10 Brain cells come and brain cells go, but fat cells live forever.

## LETTER FROM THE FRONT

Alright lads and lassies,

Firstly, thanks for all the support you have shown to all the boys on the front line, in particular B Coy, 2 PARA (INKERMAN). The countless parcels you have sent have been gratefully received and genuinely make a difference. However more pictures of chicks would be appreciated! Ha-ha.

The blokes have been reading the *Slipstream* and have found it reassuring to see that even after serving it's clear "YOU CAN TAKE THE MAN OUT THE REGT. BUT YOU'LL NEVER TAKE THE REGT. OUT THE MAN".

### SITREP, INKERMAN.

As you know the Regt. to date has lost five outstanding soldiers three of which were from this location. It would be fair to say we had a bloody nose. However, knowing as you do the ethos and attitude of the soldiers serving this regiment, we have returned the favour ten fold in true airborne fashion.(I knew the MILLING would come in handy). We hold our heads high and continue to drive forward. The spirit you have shown in the past still runs strong to this day. Be reassured the B Coy Group, 2 PARA will continue to take the fight to the Taliban and no man will rest until the mission is complete. EVERY MAN AN EMPEROR ( both old and new). Hope to speak soon and possibly see you all after the tour thanks again for all your support.

SGT ALLY ROBERTSON  
6 PL. B COY. 2 PARA

ps. Tell Terry McCourt he is putting on too much weight and needs to get on the running machine... from Wee Ally, Mitch and Dave Phillips.

I am sure we are all glad to hear from our friends out in Afghanistan and grateful that they took some of their all too short rest time to contact us. We look forward to seeing them back home soon and no doubt Terry Taliban will breathe a sigh of relief when the *Maroon Machine* leaves.





## EULOGY

### PRIVATE JEFF SEAN DOHERTY

#### SECOND BATTALION THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT

Private Jeff Sean Doherty was an exceptionally fit and strong Paratrooper, proud in his profession and intent on making every moment count. He had boxed at an amateur level for the company at light weight during inter company boxing where he had displayed his hallmark tenacity, strength, speed and courage.

His OC, Major Adam Dawson spoke of his potential and talent, "Pte Doherty was at the top of his game, selected to be lead scout in his section for his maturity, professionalism and innate talent for soldiering. By very nature of his role, he was always to be found at the front, finding the safe route for his team and using his skills to pathfind through the intricacies of the Helmand Green Zone.

"...Proud and strong, light hearted and a liver of life, Pte Doherty will not fade in the memories of the men of Bruneval Company, he will be held as the standard, the epitome of the Paratrooper on operations and the soldier entrusted to keep his section on track. He died as he lived, placing others first and accepting the significant burden of responsibility for his fellow Paratrooper who followed him. I was proud to have known him."

Pl. Sgt, Chris Lloyd said, "...he quickly became very popular not only within the platoon but across the battalion... He was the main deliverer of morale in the platoon and his passing has left a void that will not be easily filled. He will be missed immensely."

Cpl. "Des" Desmond, section i/c said, "Doc's wacky sense of humour and keen work ethic made him instantly likeable, and over the last couple of years we became friends."

Cpl. Adam Ireland said, "Jeff was like a brother and one of my closest friends... He was an ambassador for the Regiment."

Cpl. Gareth Storey recalls, "Doc had the ability to have all those around him, be they close friends or strangers, in complete

stitches... He epitomised what it is to be a Paratrooper and I know that all those who knew him will feel his loss greatly."

Pte. Lee Crudgington recalled, "...he always turned the darkest times into occasions for amusement. ...Jeff was liked very much across the battalion and loved even more by his platoon, we will never forget him, he is one of a kind. *'Every Man an Emperor'*."

Pte. Peter O'Neill said, "He was a real character who was always lifting morale when needed and even when it wasn't. He was and always will be typical of a British Paratrooper. I miss you Doc, see you at the re-org."

Pte. Billy Innes recalls his unique character, "I always loved his ability to switch from the joker of the platoon to the professional soldier; the new lads always looked up to him."

Pte. Doherty's family said, "We would like to thank all those who have sent their kind words following the death of our son JJ. Many of these have come from his friends in 2 PARA who continue to serve in Afghanistan. Our thoughts are with you all and with your families. We also have special thoughts for the families of the other soldiers who have also died whilst serving abroad. This is a terribly difficult time.

"Jeff lived and died doing what he loved and we are proud of him for that. We sincerely hope that his friends can draw strength from his death and we wish them all a safe return home."



2 PARA patrols towards the enemy, Kajaki

## EULOGY

### Warrant Officer 2nd Class Michael Norman Williams SECOND BATTALION THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT



Mark Williams was one of the most experienced, popular and well respected soldiers within 2 PARA, with whom he spent almost all of his 22 year career. He loved his Battalion, soldiering, and his men, whom he led with compassion and constant encouragement. Everyone who talked of him stressed his passionate support for Cardiff City FC.

OC, Major Adam Dawson, said, "Mark Williams had a light heart and a simple touch, able to connect with all around him. Firm when necessary but never overbearing he was renowned for his absolute dedication and loyalty to the soldiers under his command and those lucky enough to call him a friend... He was genuine, uncomplicated, straight talking and honest, a better man could not be found. He died providing over-watch and security for Bruneval Company as it undertook its most challenging operation to date in the centre of the Taliban's heartland beyond Sangin. Whilst we will miss him greatly, we will all be thankful and consider ourselves blessed to have known him."

WO2 Karl Mitchell, said, "...The soldier was one of the most professional men I've ever had the honour of working with. He was always meticulous in everything he did... His knowledge of machine gunning held legendary status within the battalion and the men he trained will carry on his legacy for many years to come. "...My daughter believed he was called 'Little Mark' after Lee Payne convinced her it was his real name. He always took the time out to play with her and I know she will be devastated."

WO2 Martin Thorpe said, "...When my wife and kids came to stay in Brecon for the weekend, he would offer to help entertain my two small children. He would chase them around the mess with the kids screaming "it's the midget". What fun they had! The first thing my kids asked if they came to visit me was "where's the little man?"

QM, Maj. Dave Lee recalled, "He could lighten any moment, even travelling with Colchester Football Club away fans to

watch his beloved Cardiff City play at home... He was a true professional who gave so much."

RSM, Tony Hobbins, said, "Mark wanted to get on that operation. In true Parachute Regiment fashion he wouldn't have it any other way, he gave his all to everything, and was fanatically loyal to The Regiment and the Sergeants' Mess. There is not one person in the battalion who did not like him, and will not miss him."

C/Sgt. Steve Pitt said, "He was a brilliant bloke and really, really popular. He was well respected by everyone and a fantastic soldier and leader, who led from the front, in whatever job he was doing."

Sgt. Stu Hodgkinson, said, "He was the life and soul of the party – always in the middle of the social scene in the Sergeants' Mess, always up for a laugh. Overall, he was a really friendly and nice guy. He'd get on with anybody. He was always eager to be at the front."

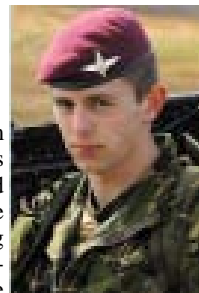
Sgt. Dean Pitcher said, "Mark was a L/Cpl when I joined the battalion in Belfast in 1996. I looked up to him and thought "that's what I'm going to be like when I'm a NCO."

L/Cpl. Gary Houldsworth said "...he was funny, outgoing, courageous, strong and an all-round outstanding commander to work for. He lived and died loving his job. He was so proud to be a Paratrooper and so proud to be doing his job in Afghanistan. ..."



2 PARA Mortars in action, Kajari.

**EULOGY**  
**PRIVATE JOE WHITTAKER**  
**FOURTH BATTALION THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT**



Joe Whittaker (20) of 4 PARA volunteered for OP HERRICK 8 and was mobilised in April 2008, joining 2 PARA in May. He was an outstanding soldier who possessed all the qualities that one would expect from a young paratrooper. He had a flair for life, was fun and had a great sense of humour. His fitness was astonishing, and he possessed the courage, discipline and loyalty of a man many years his age. 4 PARA CO, Lt. Col. Ben Baldwin, said, "Afghanistan was his first operational tour, and he showed no fear when chosen to be part of the Op BARMA team, a job fraught with danger. In fact, Joe relished the chance to be out on the ground and prove himself to his more experienced comrades. Joe Whittaker died a paratrooper. Even at such a young age he displayed all of the attributes specific to men of The Regiment, and we are proud to have known him and to have stood alongside him..."

OC, Maj. Mike Shervington said, "Pte Joe Whittaker joined D Company Group on 12 June as one of a substantial contingent from 4 PARA attached to 2 PARA Battle Group for Op HERRICK 8. He had deployed to FOB ROBINSON with a troop of Scimitar vehicles from the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards to work alongside D Company 2 PARA. His role within his troop was as a member of the critically important IED team. Although I knew him all too briefly he struck me immediately as a man of great spirit, boundless energy and selfless commitment. "His friends tell me that he was always first to volunteer for difficult tasks and it was therefore typical that he found himself doing such an important job for his troop."

Copt. Tim McBride RSDG Tp. Ldr. said, "He was the embodiment of a professional soldier who relished being a paratrooper."

Lt. Steve Edwards, 4 PARA said, "He struck me as being a very enthusiastic and optimistic young soldier, refusing to be tainted by cynicism. For Tuesday night training with 4 PARA, he travelled the best part of 200 miles, commuting from Stratford-Upon-Avon to his unit in London."

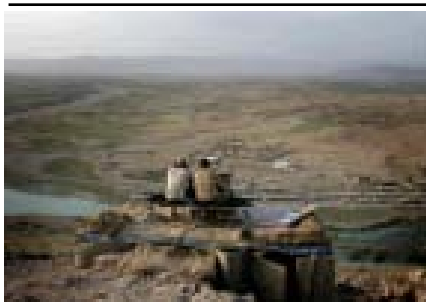
L/Cpl Simon, also from 4 PARA, "He was keen, enthusiastic and eager to get on with the job, never complaining about any task no matter how unattractive the task was."

Pte. Storey, 4 PARA and D Coy Gp. said, "He was a popular and good humoured bloke who oozed confidence, which helped to secure him a place at Sandhurst where he was due to start in May next year. He was sponsored by the Army Air Corps, and dreamed about becoming an Apache pilot".

Pte. Steven Fisher, 4 PARA, was serving along-side Joe, "The thing that always impressed me about Joe was his desire to be the best soldier he could be... Joe will be sorely missed, and he will not be forgotten".

Pte. Richard Thorburn, 4 PARA and D Coy, "I count myself privileged to have known him and admire his courage and willingness to put the job and his mates before his own safety. John 15:13 – Greater love has no one than this; that he lay down his life for his friends. *Utrinque Paratus.*"

Joe's mother, Naomi Whittaker, said, "Joe was a truly wonderful son. He was generous, funny, brave and loyal to his friends. He was doing what he wanted to do and he was immensely proud to wear his maroon beret.... His sister Kate and I will miss him more than words can express. We are so proud of him, his courage and his determination to serve his country."



**The remote OP Sparrowhawk**

**EULOGY**  
**PRIVATE PETER JOE COWTON**  
**SECOND BATTALION THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT**



At 0847hrs, 29th July 2008 a routine patrol from FOB Gibraltar encountered enemy forces and engaged them. During the engagement, Pte. Cowton was seriously wounded by a blast and sadly died.

Pte. Peter Joe Cowton, aged 25, joined The Royal Rifle Volunteers (RRV) in January 2004 and after completing two tours of Iraq, he enlisted as a regular soldier in 2007.

Pte. Cowton's parents said, "Peter was proud to serve his country, having already served in Iraq whilst a member of the Territorial Army. He was so 'Proud to be a Paratrooper' as we, his parents, and family were. His short regular army career will not be forgotten, and his 'Red Beret' will have loving memories in our home. "We are so proud of you."

CO, 2 PARA, Lt. Col. Joe O'Sullivan said, "Pte. Cowton was an experienced soldier and 9 Platoon's lead scout. He had served in Iraq as a reservist before joining 2 PARA last year and had already spent three months on operations against the Taliban near FOB GIBALTAR, in the Musa Qal'eh Wadi and further north in the Upper Sangin valley."

OC, Maj. Adam Dawson said, He was a lynchpin in 9 Platoon, with his previous military experience... His was the role of Lead Scout, a role usually reserved for the best private soldier with considerable years and experience behind him... He was the eyes and ears of the platoon; the trigger man who kept his fellow paratroopers safe by his initiative and guile. "In this role, he found himself at the front, fighting through a Taliban position, giving the enemy cause to turn and run. "In their wake, they had left the most cowardly of devices that initiated as he led his platoon onto dominating ground from where the enemy could be suppressed."

Capt. Nick Mys, said, "His team spirit was unmatched and he was continually putting others before himself. He enjoyed being part of his platoon and was deeply bonded to his colleagues, who in turn respected him massively."

Sgt. Simon Connor said, "He was absolutely at ease with his fellow Paratroopers, whether

soldier or officer; he had time to spare and to invest in the well-being of others – he took an interest and his humanity was one of his most endearing qualities."

Cpl. Paul Knapp said, "Naturally, when he first came to 2 PARA we ripped into him about transferring from another infantry regiment, but he took it on the chin and strived to impress us on numerous pre-deployment exercises – which he did every time."

Cpl. Lewis said, "Pete was one of the most professional, keen and motivated paratroopers that I have had the privilege of serving and fighting alongside."

LCpl. Christopher Pendle, said, "He died in the manner he lived; professional and brave, with his mates around him. My heartfelt sorrow goes out to his friends and family back home."

Pte. Mark Matthews said, "... it was easy to see how dedicated he was to the job. He was soon known as an experienced soldier through his military skills and knowledge of the Regiment."

Pte. Kristian Williams, said, "When someone was struggling or was in need of help he would be the first one to volunteer to help them out."

Pte. Michael Bunce said, "Whenever there was a job needed doing, he was the first to raise his hand. Whenever there was a point to be made, he was never afraid to give his opinion."

Pte. Dean Rogers said, "My opinion of Pete has never changed in the time that I have known him. He excelled as a soldier and would always put others first."



**2 PARA advance with mortar support, Kajaki**



## Wha's Like Us?

Scottish Inventors and Inventions



The average Englishman in the home he call his castle slips into his national costume, a raincoat, patented by chemist Charles Macintosh from Glasgow, Scotland.

En-route to his office he strides along the English lane, surfaced by John Macadam of Ayr, Scotland.

He drives a car fitted with tyres invented by John Boyd Dunlop, veterinary surgeon of Dreghorn, Scotland.

At the office he receives the mail bearing adhesive stamps invented by John Chalmers, bookseller and printer of Dundee, Scotland.

During the day he uses the telephone invented by Alexander Graham Bell, born in Edinburgh, Scotland.

At home in the evening his daughter pedals her bicycle invented by Kirkpatrick Macmillan, blacksmith of Thornhill, Dumfrieshire, Scotland.

He watches the news on television, an invention of John Logie Baird of Helensburgh, Scotland, and hears an item about the U.S. Navy founded by John Paul Jones of Kirkbean, Scotland.

Nowhere can an Englishman turn to escape the ingenuity of the Scots. He has by now been reminded too much of Scotland and in desperation he picks up the Bible, only to find that the first man mentioned in the good book is a Scot, King James VI, who authorised its translation.

He could take to drink but the Scots make the best in the world.

He could take a rifle and end it all, but the breech-loading rifle was invented by Captain Patrick Ferguson of Pitfours, Scotland.

If he escaped death, he could find himself on an operating table injected with penicillin, discovered by Sir Alexander Fleming of Darvel, Scotland, and given chloroform, an anaesthetic discovered by Sir James Young Simpson, obstetrician and gynaecologist of Bathgate, Scotland.

Out of the anaesthetic, he would find no comfort in learning that he was as safe as the Bank of England founded by William Paterson of Dumfries, Scotland.

Perhaps his only remaining hope would be to get a transfusion of guid Scottish blood which would entitle him to ask:

### 'Wha's Like Us?'



Time for a brew at OP Sparrowhawk

# FREE FRENCH FISHING FOLLY



Col. D. Jacir

It was in 1943 that, as a member of the recently formed SAS, I was on manoeuvres in Scotland. The survival course involved iron rations of which the main element was pemmican, a source of food distinguished more by its dietetic than its gastronomic appeal. We were (after all it was one of the qualities we were chosen for) an inventive group and it didn't take long to discover that trinitrotoluene, provided one did not include a detonator, made an excellent fire lighter when all one had was a heap of wet bracken getting wetter by the minute in the rain. The end of the salmon season had been good to us and I can recommend camouflage netting as an impromptu tool for the military poacher. Grilled salmon made a nice change from the awful, pemmican based rations.

The end of the salmon season came, however, and one cold winter's morning we decided to try another means of procuring a little more palatable protein. We had an inflatable boat and pushed it out onto the nearby loch. There was one of those strange fogs which hang low over the water; if you stood up you could see for, well, yards. When you sat down the horizon closed in to the end of the boat, the fog as thick as Woodbine smoke in a NAAFI bar. We headed out into deep water and took out a lump of explosive (there was no shortage of that at least) and a

2 minute pencil detonator. Throwing it into the loch we rowed back to shore as fast as possible. We were only half way there, however, when it went off, the explosion showering us and the landscape with pieces of wood and bits of fish flesh, none however in anything approaching edible condition. Some of the bits of fish did seem rather large however and excited surprised, as well as disparaging, comment from our disappointed fellows but it was only later that I learned that this loch was special. They had said it was called Loch Ness, indeed it was marked as such on the map, but nobody had thought fit to enlighten the French contingent of the existence of a monster. Still less did the map, old as it was, say "monsters be here".

I fear the worst and pangs of guilt haunt me still as I peruse the papers in the news-less summer "silly season" when articles crop up about yet another expedition coming up with "No concrete evidence to prove the existence of an exceptionally large life-form in the loch."

I'm sorry if nobody's seen it since 1943 but you must understand. It wasn't really my fault, and we were awfully hungry ...

*Colonel Jacir is President of ANAP, the Association Nationale d'Anciens Parachutistes, and has been for many years on the "Commission de la flamme" which organises the daily "reanimation de la flamme" ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Contributed by Didier Luis*

## JUST FOR FUN

Bono, the lead singer of the band, U2, is famous throughout the entertainment industry for being more than just a little self-righteous and for his humanitarian work.

At a recent U2 concert in Glasgow, Scotland, he asked the audience for complete silence. Then, in the silence, he started to slowly clap his hands, once every few seconds.

Holding the audience in total silence, he said into the microphone, Every time I clap my hands, a child in Africa dies.'

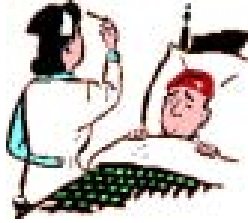
A voice from the front of the crowd pierced the quiet.....

'Well, f\*\*kin' stop doin it then, ya evil b\*\*\*\*rd!'. ☹

## Diary Dates

JANUARY	
11th October	PRA Regional meeting <i>Nottingham</i>
9th November	Armistice Day Parade <i>Glasgow</i>
11th November	Central Station Parade <i>Glasgow</i>
15th November	Scottish Regional PRA Meeting <i>Perth</i>
25th December	Give Davie Howie lots of prezzies!

# SICK PARADE



The following members are suffering ill health:

- ❖ Jack Noon
- ❖ Sam Bovill
- ❖ Davie Bothwell
- ❖ John Bryson
- ❖ Davie Mc Illroy
- ❖ Jack Burke

John entered Erskine Hospital in June and we hope he is settling in well. Jack has had his heart operation and is recovering.

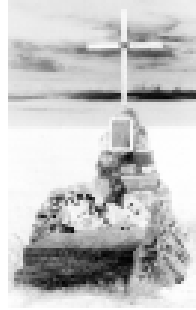
All the members wish you well and hope to see you back "on parade" soon. If anyone knows of a member who is ill, or suffering financial problems, please contact the Welfare Secretary.

Thank you to photographer **Richard Pohle** of The Times for his kind permission to use photographs of 2 PARA from his Afghanistan portfolio. These photos and more are his copyright and may be viewed at:

<http://www.richardpohle.com/index-slides.html?gallery=Afghanistan+2008>



# LAST POST



**Jack Elliot**  
**Bob Falconer**

*May the defence of the Most High be above and beneath, around and within us, in our going out and in our coming in. In our rising up and in our going down, through all our days and all our night, until the dawn when the Son of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings for all the peoples of the world. Through Jesus Christ our Lord*

*Amen.*

*The Parachute Regiment  
&  
Airborne Forces Collect*



Farewell to Jack "Big Jake" Elliot

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Thank you to all our contributors.

**Deadline: 27th November 2008**