

10 YEARS IN AFGHANISTAN...

Posted by Lucy Aldridge - 2011/10/10 10:51

A TRAGIC LOSS

Rifleman William Aldridge was just 10 years old when live footage of the twin towers was broadcast globally on our televisions and British Armed Forces first deployed to Afghanistan. By the age of 12 he'd joined a Light Infantry Cadet Force, religiously attending every week for four years and making the rank of Corporal before enlisting in the Regular Army aged 16. He passed out from Basic Training in Harrogate and completed his Infantry Training at Catterick by the time he was 17, before joining his Battalion (2 Rifles) in Northern Ireland. He immediately embarked on Pre-Deployment Training, finding himself in Afghanistan just three days after he celebrated his 18th birthday.

On the 10th July 2009 - almost 8 years into the conflict and just under 7 weeks into his first operational tour, William was tragically caught in a daisy chain of IED explosions that took the lives of five men in his patrol group and seriously wounded five more.

William gave his young life attempting to help save his friends caught in the first blast, despite sustaining injuries himself - even calmly taking the time to comfort his Company Major during the ensuing chaos, as he lay wounded beside him. These selfless acts must have taken the greatest courage under conditions of such uncertainty (They are of course, not uncommon among our very bravest men and women of the Armed Forces, they are not always publicly recognised - but are however, outstanding!).

His life was cruelly snatched as the wounded were being casevaced when a second device detonated leaving him with what were later described by the medics at Camp Bastion, as 'unsurvivable injuries'.

THE STATISTICS

As at 19th September 2011, a total of 382 British forces personnel or MOD civilians have died while serving in Afghanistan since the start of operations in October 2001.

Between October 2001 - December 2005 a total of 10 Military personnel suffered injury, categorised as 'Serious' or 'Very Serious'.

Between January 2006 - 15th September 2011 (Centrally available records show that):

1,792 UK military and civilian personnel were admitted to UK Field Hospitals and categorised as Wounded in Action.

3,440 UK military and civilian personnel were admitted to UK Field Hospitals for disease or non-battle injuries.

256 UK personnel were categorised as Very Seriously Injured from all causes excluding disease.

268 UK personnel were categorised as Seriously Injured from all causes excluding disease.

5,021 aeromedical evacuations have taken place for UK military and civilian personnel injured or ill in Afghanistan.

A HIGH PRICE TO PAY FOR 10 YEARS IN AFGHANISTAN (Let's not forget that during this past 10 years our Armed Forces have also been deployed to Iraq (179 deaths) and Libya.... **THE TRUE COST PERHAPS NOT UNDERSTOOD FOR THE NEXT DECADE?**

Rifleman William Henry Aldridge still remains the very youngest soldier to have served and paid the ultimate sacrifice in Sangin, Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

PLEASE HELP US TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING OUR BRITISH ARMED FORCES - THEY GIVE SO MUCH FOR YOU

A huge Thank you to all who have already shared our poster on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/WILLIAM-ALDRIDGE-FOUNDATION/123332677701968> - in remembrance of those who have given their lives and the injured:

http://www.williamaldridgefoundation.org.uk/images/fbfiles/images/10_Years_in_Afghanistan___smallest.jpg

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