

1st BATTALION, THE DUKE OF LANCASTER'S REGIMENT

COMBINED FORCE NAD-E ALI

Kingsman Ponipate Tagitaginimoce was born in Nausori, in Fiji, on 24 November 1980. He joined the Army in March 2005, initially serving with the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment before its amalgamation on 01 July 2006. Throughout his time in the Army, Kingsman Tagitaginimoce served with distinction, including several operational deployments to Iraq. He was an exceptional soldier, one who thrived in any environment and who was professional to his very core. Experienced, with real dedication to duty and with strong moral values, he was the epitome of a Kingsman - ready to do his duty, to set the best of examples, to put others before himself and with a smile never far from his lips.

Kingsman Tagitaginimoce had only been in the Reconnaissance Platoon for a short period of time, but he had already quickly established himself as an integral, and highly popular, member of the Platoon. His professional skills and tactical knowledge were second to none and he enjoyed the challenges that life in the Battalion's most respected, and physically, demanding role brought. A quiet and thoughtful soldier, Kingsman Tagitaginimoce was an immensely loyal and honourable individual. He was a man whose family and friends meant everything to him. He was a highly accomplished and very talented rugby player; his love and passion for the game well known by all. An outstanding soldier, a gifted sportsman who was at his happiest when with his family.

Kingsman Tagitaginimoce deployed to Afghanistan in March 2010 with the Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment. In the 3 months since arriving in Helmand, the Platoon has undertaken numerous joint security operations with the Afghan National Security Forces in support of the local nationals of Nad-e Ali. As part of a Battlegroup operation to improve security in an area in the Nad-e Ali District of Helmand Province known for a high level of insurgent activity on 15 June 2010, Kingsman Tagitaginimoce was killed in action during an exchange of fire with insurgents whilst trying to better the lives of ordinary Afghans.

Tragically killed doing the job that he loved, Kingsman Tagitaginimoce will be sorely missed by all within the Battalion - there are few like him.

The Wife of Kingsman Ponipate Tagitaginimoce, made the following statement:

A loving husband and a wonderful father who will be deeply missed.

Love always, Laisani.

Lieutenant Colonel Frazer Lawrence OBE, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment said:

Kingsman 'Tagi' Tagitaginimoce was an outstanding soldier and a great friend to many within the Battalion. He died during an attempt to aid one of his comrades. This comes as no surprise as he was an exceptional soldier whose first thought was always for those around him, never himself. He epitomised the qualities of a Fijian Kingsman - strong yet gentle, compassionate, principled and honourable, and with a real sense of right and wrong.

Tagi's performance as a member of the Reconnaissance Platoon in Afghanistan was exemplary - he worked tirelessly for the good of his platoon, the first to volunteer for tasks and always the first to help others. Tagi was softly spoken, unassuming and utterly reliable. His sheer presence calmed those around him and made light any dark period - his good cheer was infectious.

Tagi's death leaves a huge hole in the Battlegroup - the cost is high and painful to all who knew him. He will be long remembered for his love of life, his unwavering loyalty and his comradeship in its purest form. But, most importantly he will be remembered for his dedication and devotion to his loved ones - his wife, children and immediate family meant everything to him.

The whole Battlegroup mourns the loss of Tagi and offers its deepest condolences to Laisani and to all of his family in this dark time - our prayers are with them. No one epitomised the spirit of the Battalion more than Tagi - he was a 'Lion' of a man, he was a 'Lion of England'. We will never forget him.

Major Darren Newman, Officer Commanding Somme Company, 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment said:

Kingsman 'Tagi' Tagitaginimoce was a quiet, gentle man with a dry sense of humour. He was a professional and dedicated soldier who was well liked and respected across the Battalion. Tagi had many friends which was testament to his warm, approachable manner. He would always go out of his way to help others, particularly those soldiers who were new to the Company.

Tagi was extremely impressive during Op TELIC 11 in Iraq where his high level of field skills and leadership stood out and ultimately led to his selection to join the Reconnaissance Platoon. This small platoon is a tight-knit, highly professional unit who take great pride in being the best soldiers in the Battalion. He died amongst friends.

A keen rugby player, he represented Corunna Company and the Battalion on numerous occasions and displayed the same courage and determination on the sports field as his did on operations. He was a devoted husband to Laisani and exceptionally proud of his three children Taniela, Ponipate and Saiasi. Tagi is irreplaceable. He will never be forgotten and will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with his young family.

Captain Mark Saunders, Reconnaissance Platoon Commander, 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment said:

Kingsman Tagitaginimoce was a consummate professional, diligent, hard working and quietly confident, with a keen sense of humour. He was the epitome of a Recce soldier - someone younger soldiers could aspire to

be. He touched the lives of everyone he met and truly reflected the values of the British Army - Loyalty, Courage, Selfless Commitment, Discipline and Integrity. I will remember most fondly his ability to make light of even the darkest situations and his unfaltering ability to motivate, inspire and calm those in his company whenever the situation required it. His death leaves a hole in the Recce Platoon that will be difficult to fill.

Colour Sergeant Richard Shipton, Second-in-Command Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment said:

Kingsman 'Tagi' Tagitaginimoce has been with the platoon since the start of our pre-deployment training, starting with the Light Role Recce course run by the Recce Division in Warminster. The course is one of the

most demanding within the Infantry and he came back with a strong pass. Since then he has been a strong and well respected member of the Platoon by all ranks.

Tagi was an incredibly professional and competent soldier with a gentle nature. Although quiet he had a strong sense of humour and mixed well within the Platoon - he will be sorely missed by all.

During the tour his performance has been fantastic. He was always ready for any task or timeline and always a volunteer. He never once complained at any task given, even when those around were not so forthcoming.

Since Tagi came to the Platoon he has been a pleasure to work with, and his hard work and humour will be missed. Rest in Peace mate.

Kingsman Vilikesa Tuvutoka, Reconnaissance Platoon, Somme Company, 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment said:

Tagi was a true friend - the best one anyone could wish for. He loved to help people and was like an older brother to Fijians joining the Battalion, always willing to help and support. He loved his job and he loved rugby. But, most importantly he loved his family - his beautiful wife and children. No one can replace him and he will never be forgotten by me or any of the Fijians. Tagi was a hero.

Kingsman Jonathon Jenkins, Somme Company, 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, said:

Tagi was a really good friend and colleague. When I first got to the Battalion he looked after me and was like a brother. No matter what people said he was always there for me. The things I will miss the most about him are his dry sense of humour and his rugby skills - he was an amazing player. He always took time to talk to you no matter what. He was a brilliant dad and husband and his family will be very proud of him. I only got to know Tagi in Catterick but he will be sadly missed.

No matter what time it was, day or night, he would always be there for you. I will miss him loads, he was the best friend anyone could have or ask for. He will always be remembered in my soul and always be there in my thoughts.