

Sergeant Barry John Weston

Kilo Company 42 Commando Royal Marines Combined Force Nahr-E-Saraj (South

Sergeant Barry John Weston was killed in Afghanistan on 30th August 2011 while leading a patrol operating near the village of Sukmanda. His patrol was participating in an operation to draw insurgents away from the civilian population in order to disrupt their activity and further expand the influence of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. During the patrol, Sergeant Weston was fatally injured by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED).

Sergeant Barry 'Baz' Weston was born in Reading on 27th February 1971. He joined the Royal Marines on 30th September 1991 where he impressed from the outset as one of the fittest members of his Recruit Troop. Upon successfully completing six months of arduous training, Sergeant Weston was passed fit for duty on 22nd May 1992 and joined Mike Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines.

He went on to enjoy a varied career which saw him serve in many operational theatres including Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Iraq. He distinguished himself as a Reconnaissance Operator, Platoon Weapons Instructor and Recruit Troop Sergeant, amongst many other talents.

Sergeant Weston joined Kilo Company, 42 Commando in May 2011 as part of 1 RIFLES Battle Group, Combined Force Nahr-e-Saraj (South) in Helmand Province.

He leaves behind his wife, Joanne, and their three daughters, Jasmine, Poppy and Rose.

Sergeant Weston's family paid the following tribute:

"We are devastated by the loss of Baz; he was a caring, loving husband and son and a devoted father. He died doing the job he loved and we are very proud of him."

Lieutenant Colonel Ewen Murchison MBE Royal Marines, Commanding Officer 42 Commando Royal Marines, Coalition Force Nad-e Ali (North), said:

"Sergeant Baz Weston joined 42 Commando shortly after the start of the tour. He was seconded from 30 Commando, where he had been a lynchpin in the unit and extremely dedicated to his mates and his job. Such was his commitment to the Royal Marines he volunteered, at short notice, to deploy to Afghanistan as a battle casualty replacement.

"Parachuted in as Multiple Commander in to an extremely demanding area with Kilo Company, he rose to the challenge with considerable ease and had an immediate and decisive impact. His passion for the men in his charge was obvious and he looked

after their interests and welfare with a dogged determination; he was like a father figure to them and they looked on him with the utmost respect. One of life's real characters, he will be remembered for his dry, sharp sense of humour and canny ability to make light of the direst of situations.

"A hugely experienced individual and a weapons and reconnaissance specialist of note, Sergeant Weston was an ardent custodian of the highest standards and the finest traditions of the Royal Marines. He was selfless and courageous to the end and when his life was tragically cut short, he was leading his men in an extremely high threat area with his trademark professional dependability. On the cusp of promotion, he still had so much to give and we have tragically been deprived of one of our finest Royal Marines Senior Non-Commissioned Officers.

"Gone but never forgotten, he will be remembered amongst the great and good and his memory will live on forever. Sergeant Weston had two great passions; the Royal Marines and his family; a loving husband and doting father of three, you could never meet a more committed family man. At this unbearably difficult time our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Joanne and his children Jasmine, Poppy and Rose; may they somehow find the strength to face the days ahead."

Lieutenant Colonel James de Labillière DSO MBE, Commanding Officer, The First Battalion, The Rifles, Coalition Force Nahr-e-Saraj (South), said:

"Sergeant Weston had been with Kilo Company 42 Commando Royal Marines, attached to the 1 RIFLES Battle Group in Nahr-e-Saraj (South) since May. He made an instant impression and quickly placed himself at the heart of the team of 'Black Knights' in Check Point SAQRA. The Company has been fighting a constant and pernicious close-in battle against IED layers and gunmen throughout the tour, partnered with the Afghan Police in a crucial area for the Battlegroup's campaign.

"Sergeant Weston showed his natural leadership and grit when the Multiple suffered casualties, guiding and supporting his team during some tough times. His natural character always shone through; enthusiastic always, laughing - almost constantly, he inspired by his selfless example and was utterly dedicated to the men he commanded. He was possessed with the type of humour and approach to life that never went unnoticed and had an instant effect on those around him. He also displayed dedication and commitment that inspired confidence in his men and epitomised the professionalism of the Royal Marines Commando.

"He will be sorely missed but our loss is nothing to that of his family, to whom he was so obviously devoted. Our thoughts and prayers are with Joanne and his beloved girls at this most tragic time.

"Swift and Bold."

Lieutenant Colonel Matt Stovin-Bradford Royal Marines, Commanding Officer, 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines, said:

"Sergeant Weston was a pivotal man in 30 Commando. As the Unit's Platoon Weapons Instructor he was relied upon to deliver comprehensive training ahead of the upcoming tour to Afghanistan. An exceptionally proud member of "the best big boys club in the world", he was an outstanding Royal Marines Senior Non-Commissioned Officer. He threw himself into upholding the finest traditions of what it meant to be a Royal Marines Sergeant, professionally and socially. His deployment as a battle casualty replacement to Kilo Company 42 Commando, saw him back where he was happiest, with young Marines, who will have benefitted enormously from his mentoring in the most demanding and testing of environments. His loss will be keenly felt by all the ranks in 30 Commando. We look forward to celebrating his life hard when we return, but our immediate thoughts and prayers are with his family, whose sense of loss and pain is unfathomable."

Major Jase Durup Royal Marines, Officer Commanding Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"Sergeant Baz Weston Royal Marines joined the 'Black Knights' of Kilo Company under extremely challenging circumstances in May 2011. I have no doubt that an individual of lower calibre would have faltered but he took the situation in his confident stride and it was not long before the men of Check Point SAQRA came to rely on him as a father figure. This was unsurprising as this was, after all, what Baz was first and foremost, a loving father to three beautiful daughters. He led his men with the patience and devotion required to endure life in a Check Point and with the tenacity and aggression required to successfully prosecute operations against the enemy. They followed him repeatedly into Sukmanda, the most hostile and violent area in Kilo Company's Area of Operations. It was during one such occasion that Baz made the ultimate sacrifice whilst securing an extraction route out of the Contested Area for another patrol. His loss will be felt deeply amongst his friends across the Corps, of which there are many, and throughout the Company. But it will only serve to strengthen our resolve so that it is not in vain."

"Once a 'Black Knight' always a 'Black Knight'."

Major Simon Westlake Royal Marines, Officer Commanding Logistic Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"Sergeant Baz Weston excelled as a Troop Sergeant in the Commando Training Wing at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines. He was a pivotal character, not just within his Training Team, but across the Wing, and particularly within Chatham Company, where I was fortunate to have him as one of my Senior Non-Commissioned Officers. He was the classic Troop Sergeant, guiding and cajoling both Recruits and

Training Team alike to produce the best of results. Sergeant Weston was a guide, a mentor, a coach and a role model to his Recruits, his Junior Non-Commissioned Officers and his Troop Commander, who I know particularly valued his experience and advice. He was utterly professional and was a consistent upholder of the finest traditions of the Royal Marines. He used his skills and knowledge as a Platoon Weapons Instructor to obvious effect to develop his recruits into capable and confident Royal Marines; he was at home instructing and training the recruits. Always ready with the banter, and with a wry smile on his face, Sergeant Weston was a character and a man who you knew would just get the job done."

Captain Chris Hurt Royal Marines, Second in Command, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines said:

"Sergeant Baz Weston was an outstanding Royal Marines Senior Non-Commissioned Officer who commanded with the deepest of regard for each and every one of his Marines. Joining the Company in May, Baz took over command of Check Point SAQRA during a particularly demanding stage of the tour. He immediately projected his personality and was a huge inspiration, leading his men through some difficult times. With an infectious laugh and cheerful character he would constantly put himself ahead of others, though he was never shy of a good 'drip' or two; always said with a wry smile. His passion and ability for soldiering was un-doubtable, though sometimes blurred by his love for Formula 1 racing, giving myself constant daily reminders of when the next race was to make sure he was not on patrol. He died leading from the front, as was his way. He will be forever remembered as a 'Black Knight'. The Royal Marines has truly lost one of its finest and our sincerest thoughts are with his family and friends, in particular his wife and children, who he spoke so lovingly and fondly of."

Captain Chris Armstrong Royal Marines, Intelligence Officer, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"A supreme professional and consummate leader, Sergeant 'Baz' Weston was the epitome of a Royal Marines Senior Non-Commissioned Officer. Fearlessly loyal to his men at Check Point SAQRA, his keen wit and humour was a constant reminder to his Multiple and the wider Company of one of the key tenants of Commando Spirit - 'cheerfulness in the face of adversity'. Whether it was a story about his garden shed or the mischievous deeds of his children back home, Baz could be relied upon to lighten the most dark and difficult of situations. Utterly devoted to his family, the fondness and warmth with which he spoke of them makes his loss all the more tragic and our thoughts are with them. Baz represented the very best of Kilo Company and his loss shall not be forgotten."

Captain Tommy Roberts Royal Marines, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines, said:

"The sad loss of Sergeant Baz Weston will resonate throughout the Royal Marines. A

well known character and good mate, he will be remembered for being one of the Corps' 'Victor Meldrews'; his dry sense of humour and dour character delivering some classic 'one liners', and not always at the most appropriate time! I am sure he developed his character during those long dark ski patrol epics we shared as team members in the Brigade Patrol Troop many moons ago in Norway.

"A social beast, it was always a joy to share a wet and listen to Baz's dits - lately directed towards the challenges of being an extremely busy Unit Platoon Weapons instructor at 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines. On meeting him recently in theatre, he had a renewed spring in his step in his role as a Troop Sergeant in Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines; a job he performed with his relaxed yet passionately professional approach.

"Baz will be missed; a diamond lost from our Corps but never forgotten. Baz and his family will always be in our thoughts. Per Mare Per Terram, Rest in Peace Royal."

Warrant Officer First Class Phil Gilby Royal Marines, Regimental Sergeant Major, 42 Commando Royal Marines said:

"Sergeant Baz Weston was the epitome of a Royal Marines Senior Non-Commissioned Officer. He was totally professional and dedicated to the job he loved and the Marines he worked with.

"Despite the extreme danger he faced that day, he tragically died leading his men from the front, something he had done day after day since joining Kilo Company in May 2011. Baz was widely respected, not just by the Multiple he worked with, but by the entire Royal Marines family.

"He will be sorely missed by all that knew him and his loss will be felt across the entire Commando. Our thoughts, prayers and condolences are now with his family, especially his wife Joanne and their three children, Jasmine, Poppy and Rose."

Warrant Officer First Class Neil 'Pea' Peacock RM, Regimental Sergeant Major, 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines said:

"I knew Sergeant Baz Weston for a number of years, as a Reconnaissance Operator Marine, and as a Platoon Weapons Instructor Sergeant. A happy and amiable man, he was also known for his Olympic ability to drip. He has always been an industrious worker, content to beaver away on projects, eating in to his own time whilst letting others take the glory. Baz was an instantly likeable character and an unfeasibly fast runner. His size and shape baffled many as he left them for dust, myself included. Like all Bootnecks, Baz played as hard as he worked, and drank with both hands. Always there the next day, bright eyed and ready to lead the pack. We crossed paths recently in Bastion and we spoke three words each, "living the dream", both in question and answer. He was dedicated to his family and was often seen with his daughters in tow; Jasmine and Poppy must be able to recite Pamphlet 21 by now.

Having just added to his family with a new daughter, Rose, this loss is even more crushing. A good friend to many; he has many brothers across the Corps who will always remember him. Rest in Peace Royal."

Warrant Officer Second Class Jay Reed Royal Marines, Company Sergeant Major, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines said:

"I have known Baz "Wets-on" Weston for over 15 Years; we served as young Marines in Brigade Patrol Troop (BPT) as part of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force. To become and remain a member of BPT required exceptional soldiering skills and physical fitness; Baz had those qualities in spades and it was this professionalism that he used to attempt to make Afghanistan a better place. It was in BPT where I got to know his dry sense of humour and all of his other outstanding qualities. One memorable moment was during a Winter Deployment in Norway, whilst on a six man reconnaissance patrol. Owing to a broken radio, we had to ski for three days through horrendous sub-zero, snowy, windy and mountainous conditions to get back to our emergency rendezvous 60 kilometres away. At least he had a smile on his face, when we got in the bar after a hot shower! Baz, you will not be forgotten. Our thoughts are with you and your family at this difficult time.

"Once a 'Black Knight' always a 'Black Knight'."

Warrant Officer Second Class Jason Burns Royal Marines, Air Defence Troop Sergeant Major, 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines, said:

"The tragic loss of Sergeant Baz "Wets On" Weston will resonate loudly around the Corps; a larger than life character whose presence would always bring a smile to those around him, especially when in full drip mode. As the Unit Platoon Weapons Instructor he was always professional and available to assist others in all areas of training throughout the months preparing for operations. Keen to be a part of it, he always wanted to be with the lads, epitomising the Royal Marines ethos in his unique way. Personally, I will miss the walks to school in the morning when we had a late start and at the end of the day when we had an early finish, both holding onto pushchairs, exchanging stories of past, present and future. Always parting company with a smile and a "see you tomorrow Royal".

"My thoughts and condolences go out to his wife and family through this difficult time. Per Mare Per Terram. Once a Bootneck, always a Bootneck."

Colour Sergeant Steve Barrett, 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines, said:

"I helped Baz prepare 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines and 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines for Herrick 14 during their Pre-deployment Training. One of the highlights was looking forward to his briefings; someone had always upset him and it was always their fault and he loved to tell us how he had debriefed them

in true Bootneck fashion. We all used to laugh at the way he would rock up in his white van complaining every time he ran a range. Why did he have to have all the 'range mongs' on his range all at the same time? I loved the way he always moaned about Officers, but every Joiners and Leavers he would turn up dressed like one with his chad mess trousers and his shoes straight out of Primark. You have given me some good laughs and some good memories. Rest in Peace Baz."

Colour Sergeant Darren Johnson, 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group Royal Marines, said:

"Sergeant Baz 'Wets-On' Weston, a real Bootneck's Bootneck! Always there at the fore to laugh, spin a dit and of course drip with Olympic ability. Having served with Baz in 42 Commando as both Marines and Corporals, we shared the highs of operational tours in Ireland, and the lows of the Junior Command Course - not to mention some awesome runs ashore. He is unforgettable and definitely one of a kind. Words cannot describe the loss to the Corps and the wider Royal Marines family. Thoroughly professional at work and play, he will be sorely missed.

"See you on the 'Re-Org' Royal!"

Sergeant Iain McDonald, 45 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"It is with great sadness to hear of the loss of Baz, a good old fashioned Bootneck. He set the standard high as a true professional as both a Troop Sergeant, and as a Platoon Weapons Instructor. He was a real inspiration to all those he worked with and will be sorely missed. Over Baz's long career in the Royal Marines he has had a profound influence on so many people. My memories of Baz will be of a professional individual who was always cheerful in the face of adversity. Many people in the Corps will have Baz to thank for their own careers in the Royal Marines."

Sergeant Gavin Bage, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"Sergeant Weston brought his great personality and hard working nature to Kilo Company early on in the tour. Baz was a key figure within his Check Point and was always recognised by his outrageous laugh that would echo around the compound throughout the day. Not only loved by the men of Check Point SAQRA, but also the Afghan National Police, with which he shared a love, hate relationship. He was always first to offer assistance to anyone who needed it. His selfless attitude and enthusiasm motivated everyone around him. He will be deeply missed by the Black Knights of Kilo Company and throughout the Royal Marines. Our thoughts are with his family and friends who he leaves behind."

Corporal Dearan Withall, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"Thinking about Baz, two memories stand out automatically; his overwhelming love for his beautiful family and his infectious laugh. Baz would follow you around the

Check Point, even into the shower and tell you how amazing his wife was, followed by some story about his girls. His devotion to them was amazing. If you were not present in Baz's company, you could hear him laughing and chuckling to himself, often about the smallest of things which would shortly be followed by the sound of others laughing. Baz was so much morale in the Check Point. He would always have a witty comment to make or something funny to say when we were having a bad day. We cannot believe Baz is gone; he is going to be missed. Our thoughts are with his family who he cared about so much."

Corporal Mathieu Fox, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"The lads will miss Baz a lot. He was great morale, and kept the lads going and their heads up. He always had a smile and had a hoofing laugh which was contagious. He always 'spun dits' about his wife and children, laughing and giggling. He was so proud to be a husband and father. Baz will always stay in my memories as someone to look up to, a good leader and a great friend. Baz will be missed greatly and my thoughts are with his family."

Lance Corporal Robert Hill, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"For the short time I knew Baz Weston, he immediately made an impact on the lads. His personality was infectious and he was a large character amongst a strong group of guys. His laugh could be heard for miles and was so unique that it could be classed as his callsign. This was usually preceded with a typical Baz Weston verbal smashing, for example; my new nickname of 'Chunk'. Baz was a family man, and prided himself on being so. He was never too far when you needed advice, if you were willing to go through the smoke screen of banter first. He gave me advice on my new baby daughter which I'm thankful for. He would speak of his family as Royalty and they obviously meant the world to him. Baz was a leader, a confidante and a protector. He will be missed by many."

Lance Bombardier David Heydenrych, 148 Battery, 29 Commando Royal Artillery, said:

"I first met Baz as a member of my training team when going through my All Arms Commando Course at Lympstone. Of course, if I had called him 'Baz' back then it would probably have meant a dip in the river! It always came across that he was putting in everything he could to ensure we were getting the best training he could provide, so that when we walked away from his course we walked away with a deserved pass. Just over three years later, I find myself at Check Point SAQRA under Baz's command and thinking back to training, I realised that I was in safe hands. It was a privilege to get to know Baz on a personal level. At any time of the day his distinct laugh could be heard throughout the Check Point. He kept morale up and the lads ticking over through the hardest of tasks. I'm forever grateful to have worked with him, and hopefully to have learnt from his experience in the job. He will be sorely missed."

Marine Michael "Barry" Bulman, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines said:

"Sergeant 'Baz' Weston - the best word I can use to describe him would be 'Morale'! Whatever mood you were in or whatever was going on around us you could always look to Baz to put a smile on your face! He was a great Sergeant but also a great friend and would do anything he could to make life for us at Check Point SAQRA as comfortable as he could. During the last few weeks he started dripping about the start of Big Brother, but you would always find him first to be sat in front of the TV with a wet watching it! Baz will be sorely missed at the Check Point and throughout the Corps. Rest in Peace mate."

Marine Stephen Harrington, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"I didn't know Baz for long, but I looked up to him as he always had such good morale, his unique laugh would constantly fill the Check Point. His passing has left a massive hole in the Check Point and he will be sorely missed. My thoughts go out to his family."

Marine David Fairbrother, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"What a hoofing Stripey! His unmistakable laugh will always stick with me, whether it was one of his own jokes, or about the new Big Brother! Baz looked out for the lads everyday. He always checked we were doing our jobs correctly, suggesting new ways to increase our safety levels at Check Point SAQRA. I got told last week that SAQRA means "Bolder" in Pashtu - I couldn't think of a better Sergeant to run a Check Point with such a name. There are so many dits from the last 4 months, I could never put them all in. His last words were spoken to me just before he died, and they couldn't sum up this hoofing bloke any better. He said: 'Dave, nice one. Just keep those arcs to the South, push up a metre if you can't see the objective compounds.' His professionalism in any situation was always a clear sign of how good a Royal Marine he was. Our thoughts are with his family and children."

Marine Andrew Ross, Kilo Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"Baz Weston, the big friendly giant with a laugh that could be recognised throughout, and a unique smile to raise the morale of anyone he was near. Baz was a great bloke, and a top class Troop Sergeant; always working with the lads to produce the best possible outcome. Baz was a big man with an even bigger heart; always expressing his feelings for the ones he loved the most. Baz was married with three beautiful little girls. He was so proud of all his family and always showed us pictures of them. Baz was an extraordinary bloke to whom no one could compare."