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Registered as a newspaper

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Published by Authority

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Established 1665

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# *The* London Gazette

of Thursday 14 December 2006  
Supplement No. 1

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## Honours and Awards

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### MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Whitehall, London SW1

15th December 2006

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross to the under-mentioned:

#### ARMY

#### Victoria Cross

25048092 Corporal Bryan James BUDD,  
The Parachute Regiment (killed in action)

During July and August 2006 A Company, 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment were deployed to occupy once again the District Centre at Sangin. The company's location was constantly under sustained attack from a combination of Taliban small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, mortar and rocket fire. In order to reduce this threat platoons were regularly tasked to conduct security patrols into the urban and rural areas in the vicinity of the District Centre. Given the prevailing enemy activity in the area it was assessed that patrols had a 75 per cent chance of coming into contact with the Taliban—a statistic that was not lost on the men of A Company.

These patrols regularly came under attack and on 27th July Corporal Budd's section identified and engaged two enemy gunmen on the roof of a building in the centre of Sangin. This provoked a fierce fire-fight in which two of Corporal Budd's section were hit. One was seriously injured and collapsed in the open ground, where he remained exposed to enemy fire, with rounds striking the ground around him. Realising that he needed to regain the initiative and understanding that the enemy needed to be driven back so that the casualty could be evacuated,

Corporal Budd led his section forward and assaulted the building where the enemy fire was heaviest. He led this attack under fire and personally killed two of the enemy inside the building with grenade and rifle fire, forcing the remaining fighters to flee across an open field where they were successfully engaged by the rest of his section. This courageous and prompt action proved decisive in breaking the enemy and was undertaken at great personal risk. In inflicting significant losses amongst the enemy and forcing their withdrawal, Corporal Budd's deliberate action and conspicuous gallantry also allowed the wounded soldier to be evacuated to safety where he subsequently received life-saving treatment.

On 20th August Corporal Budd was leading his section on the right forward flank of a platoon clearance patrol near Sangin District Centre. Another section was advancing with a Land Rover fitted with a .50 calibre heavy machine gun on the patrol's left flank. Pushing through thick vegetation, Corporal Budd identified a number of enemy fighters 30 metres away to his front. As he had not been seen by these Taliban, Corporal Budd indicated their presence to the rest of his section and used hand signals to prepare his men to launch a hasty attack. He then led his section on a flanking manoeuvre but the enemy engaged the Land Rover on the left flank and the element of surprise Corporal Budd had hoped to achieve was lost as his own section was also spotted.

Recognising the immediate requirement to regain the initiative, Corporal Budd made a conscious decision to assault the enemy and ordered his men to follow him. As they moved forward the section came under a withering fire that quickly wounded two men and incapacitated a further soldier when a bullet struck his body armour. The effectiveness of the enemy's fire and these losses forced the unwounded members of the section to take cover. However, Corporal Budd continued to assault forward on his own, knowing full well the likely consequences of doing so without the close support of his remaining men.

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He was wounded but he continued to move forward, firing at the enemy and accounting for a number of them as he rushed their position. Inspired by Corporal Budd's example, the rest of the platoon reorganised and pushed forward their attack, killing more of the enemy and eventually forcing their withdrawal. Corporal Budd subsequently died of his wounds and when his body was later recovered it was found surrounded by three dead Taliban. There is no doubt that Corporal Budd first demonstrated conspicuous gallantry in leading the assault on 27th July 2006, an assault which broke the enemy and ultimately saved the life of a wounded member of his section. What is remarkable is that he did this again on 20th August in the knowledge that the rest of his men had either been struck down by enemy fire or had been forced to go to ground.

Throughout his service in Afghanistan Corporal Budd led his section from the front and was always at the point where the action was fiercest. Twice he behaved with the greatest gallantry but his single-handed action on the second occasion and his determination, though wounded, to push on against a superior enemy force stands out as a premeditated act of inspirational leadership and the greatest valour, which cost him his life.

#### CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

St James's Palace, London SW1

15th December 2006

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the posthumous award of the George Cross to the under-mentioned:

#### ARMY

#### George Cross

25087140 Corporal Mark William WRIGHT,  
The Parachute Regiment (killed in action)

From July 2006, a fire support group of 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, consisting of mortars, snipers, heavy machine guns and anti-tank weapons, held a high ridge feature to the south of the Kajaki Dam in the northern centre of Helmand Province. This group was tasked with defending the dam area from Taliban attack. On 6 September Lance Corporal Hale was ordered to lead a sniper patrol down the southern side of the ridge in an attempt to engage a group of Taliban fighters that had been reported to be operating on the principal highway to the east of the ridge. Three hundred metres from his main position Lance Corporal Hale stepped on a mine, which blew off one of his legs. Seeing the mine-strike from the top of the ridge, Corporal Wright gathered a number of personnel and rushed down the slope to give assistance. Fully aware of the risk of entering a minefield in which a casualty had already occurred, Corporal Wright made a conscious decision to enter the mined area knowing he faced a significant risk of initiating a mine. On arriving alongside the injured Lance Corporal Hale, Corporal Wright immediately took command of the incident and directed two qualified medical orderlies to take over the treatment of Lance Corporal Hale. Conscious of the

dangers of operating in a minefield, Corporal Wright ordered all unnecessary personnel to safety and then began organising the casualty evacuation. Realising that Lance Corporal Hale was likely to bleed to death if they attempted to move him back up the steep slope, Corporal Wright called for a helicopter and ordered a route to be cleared through the minefield to a possible landing site. Corporal Pearson undertook the task, but stepped on a mine and suffered a traumatic amputation of his left leg when moving back across the route he thought he had cleared. Corporal Wright at once moved to Corporal Pearson and began rendering assistance until one of the medical orderlies could take over. In doing so, he again took the risk of setting off another mine. Once again Corporal Wright ordered all non-essential personnel to stay out of the minefield and began sending a further situation report to his headquarters. He also ensured that urgently required additional medical items were passed down the ridge to treat those wounded in the minefield. Shortly afterwards a Chinook CH47 helicopter landed to an offset position from the minefield, but as Corporal Wright stood up to begin making his way to the helicopter he initiated a third mine sustaining serious injuries to his left shoulder and chest area and also to his face. This mine also caused chest injuries to one of the two medical personnel. The remaining medical orderly set about treating Corporal Wright, but was himself wounded by a fourth mine blast which blew off the leg of a soldier treating Corporal Pearson. This blast caused further injury to both Corporal Wright and Corporal Pearson and the medical orderly. After the fourth mine blast there were now seven casualties still in the minefield, three of whom had lost limbs. All of those injured, including Corporal Wright, were in very real danger of bleeding to death. Medical supplies were becoming exhausted and initial hope of rescue had disappeared as the CH47 helicopter had had to abort its mission.

Despite this horrific situation, his own very serious injuries and the precarious situation of the others in the minefield, Corporal Wright still strove to exercise control of the situation. He did this despite being in great pain and fully aware that he was in danger of bleeding to death. He gave his identification number and ordered those other injured personnel to do so as well in order to assist with their treatment once evacuated. Until eventually evacuated by an American aircraft equipped with a winch, Corporal Wright remained conscious for the majority of the time that help took to arrive. During this period he continued to shout encouragement to those around him and several survivors subsequently paid tribute to the contribution this made to maintaining morale and calm amongst so many wounded men. Regrettably, Corporal Wright died of his wounds on the helicopter during the transit flight to the field dressing station.

There is absolutely no doubt that Corporal Wright entered the minefield to assist Lance Corporal Hale in the full knowledge of the dangerous situation. He had the option to wait for a mine clearance team to arrive, but decided to take action immediately, realising that conducting a full mine clearance to reach Lance Corporal Hale would take too long and he was likely to die before it was completed. When further casualties occurred he again ordered others to safety, but continued to move around the minefield to control the situation. In doing so

he suffered mortal injury but still continued to demonstrate command presence that was so vital to eventually ensuring that all casualties and members of the rescue party were evacuated from the horrific situation. It is notable that from the time of responding to the first mine strike, Corporal Wright spent three and a half hours in the minefield and that for a significant amount of that

time he himself was very seriously wounded and in great pain. His outstandingly courageous actions and leadership were an inspiration to all those around him during an extremely precarious situation. His complete disregard for his own safety while doing everything possible to retain control of the situation and to save lives constitutes an act of the greatest gallantry.

Published and printed in the UK by The Stationery Office Limited  
under the authority and superintendence of Carol Tullo, Controller of  
Her Majesty's Stationery Office and Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament.  
Price £1.75

ISSN 0374-3721

