



# FALLEN

## Sergeant Shawn Eades

Sergeant Shawn Eades a combat engineer with the 12 Field Squadron, 1 Combat Engineer Regiment (Edmonton, Alberta), age 33, died August 20th, 2008 in the Zhari district of Afghanistan. Sgt. Eades leaves behind his wife Lisa, and daughters Breanna (7) and Niya (4). He was a member of the IABTI, Region VII.

Sergeant Eades was killed by an improvised explosive device while on patrol in the Zhari district of Afghanistan on a notoriously dangerous stretch of highway in southern Afghanistan. This was his third tour of Afghanistan.

Two fellow members of Sgt. Eades engineer reconnaissance team, Corporal Dustin Roy Robert Joseph Wasden, and Sapper Stephan John Stock were also killed by the explosion. A fourth soldier was injured in the attack. They were attached to the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Battle Group while in Kandahar.

The four soldiers were on patrol on Highway 1, in Zharey District, when the explosion occurred. Eades and the other two slain soldiers were part of a tight-knit crew of combat engineers who were en route to a site to survey a route for use in a future operation.

Combat engineers perform one of the most dangerous roles in battle, clearing paths and roadways of mines so infantry and support convoys can move safely through the area. Combat engineers also hunt through vehicles and the countryside looking for planted explosives.

Brigadier General Dennis Thompson, commander of Headquarters, Joint Task Force – Afghanistan (Rotation 5) issued the following statement after learning of the deaths:

“An engineer reconnaissance team is a tight-knit unit and these men were no exception. They were a well-trained highly motivated crew that believed in the mission. As combat engineers, they were proud, resourceful, and armed with the technical knowledge that they generously used to assist the mission in helping the people of Kandahar province. Sergeant Shawn Eades was respected by his subordinates, his peers, and his superiors for his outstanding professionalism and his operational experience and his competence. He was a veteran soldier and this was his third tour in Afghanistan. He was a devoted father who liked to share stories of his children with his colleagues and his friends.”

General Thompson described Eades as a veteran soldier and a devoted father, one who always shared stories of his two children with his colleagues and friends. Eades, who grew up in Hamilton, Ontario, and joined the military at 18, was on his third tour in Afghanistan.

Interviewed before departing for the country in 2005, he told CBC News, “We are just raring to go. We’ve been basically building up to this point for the last 3½ months. We just want to get going, get working on our job and come home.”

Lisa Eades told the Canadian Press that it was her husband’s dream to help people by serving in the military and that he believed strongly in the Afghanistan mission. Still, she said it was hard for him to leave his family, especially his two daughters, Breanna, 7, and Nyia, 4.

“He loved his girls and it was very hard for him to go away,” she said when reached in Edmonton.

# HEROS



WO2 Gary O'Donnell

WO2 Gary O'Donnell GM, 11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Regiment Royal Logistic Corps, age 40, died September 10th, 2008 in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan. WO2 O'Donnell leaves behind his wife, Toni, their children, Aiden, 8, and Ben, 9 weeks, as well as his children from a previous marriage, Cayleigh, 16 and Dylan, 13.

At the time of his death, WO2 O'Donnell was commanding an Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) team within the Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Group who were dealing with a confirmed IED that had been detected by a high risk search team. Their task was to clear a route in a vulnerable area for 5 SCOTS Battlegroup, in and around the Western side of Musa Qaleh. WO2 O'Donnell, who had completed almost 17 years of military service, died as a result of the explosion.

WO2 Gary 'Gaz' O'Donnell, from Edinburgh, began his career in 1992 in the Ammunition Technical Trade and was posted to 3 Base Ammunition Depot Bracht in the British Army of the Rhine. He then undertook a further three tours at Ammunition Depots before being posted to 11 EOD Regiment RLC as a Joint Service IEDD No 1 Operator. Upon entering 11 EOD Regiment RLC as a Sergeant, he was quickly identified as a technician with significant ability and an abundance of potential.

Thereafter he proved his value as an outstanding technician and soldier, undertaking tours in Sierra Leone and Iraq, as well as two tours of both Northern Ireland and Afghanistan, filling the IEDD and Weapons Intelligence Specialist roles. He was the epitome of what the Ammunition Technician Trade stands for with his exemplary service, exceptional high standards and a humbling degree of courage and bravery. His bravery and courage were recognized when he was awarded the George Medal for his work as an IEDD operator with the Joint Force EOD Group in 2006, in Iraq. WO2 O'Donnell had spent the last eight years in the RLC EOD community. The Ammunition Technician trade and the Joint Force EOD Group is an extremely select and intimate group of individuals who have, as in most small units, an exceptionally close bond.

Members of the Royal Engineers Search Team and IEDD team who were with WO2 O'Donnell at the time of his death said:

"An excellent friend and colleague who's humour would never falter. He had an air of confidence that would immediately put everyone around him at ease. As a boss he was professional without compromise and you always knew where you stood. The safety and wellbeing of his team was always in the forefront of his mind. His strength of character was proven on countless occasions and his heroics have saved many lives. His charisma, sense of humour and zest for life will be missed by all that knew him, and he will live on in our memories, as he would say 'Living the Dream'."

Lieutenant Colonel Dave Wilson MBE, Commander Joint Force Engineer Group, said:

"WO2 O'Donnell was an amazing man. Hugely talented and unbelievably brave he was at the very top of his extremely dangerous and difficult trade. It was a trade at which he excelled. It was his passion and he took immense pride in making places safer for other people, the danger to his own life rarely seemed to affect him. If it did, he kept it to himself. He was a real character and a natural leader of men, his big smile often giving reassurance to the less experienced or more anxious. ...Men of this calibre are extremely rare. Extremely professional and highly courageous he was quite simply a brilliant individual. He spoke of his wife and family often and this reflected the love and affection he had for all of them. He was a proud and happy father, husband and family man. Our thoughts are with his family at this time."

Toni, wife of WO2 O'Donnell, said: "Gary was living the dream and we are all very proud of who he was and he will be missed greatly."