

**LIEUTENANT DOUGLAS ANTHONY KEITH DALZELL  
COLDSTREAM GUARDS**

**MILITARY CROSS**


Dalzell was the paragon of a young platoon commander: brave beyond measure, cool under almost unimaginable pressure, devoted to and adored by his soldiers, blessed with limitless offensive spirit and, simply, second to none. After four months in the heart of the fighting in south-west Babaji and countless acts of gallantry and courage, he was killed by an IED on 18 February 2010. Three instances of his extraordinary courage and leadership stand out.

On 26 November 2009 Dalzell led an operation to flush insurgents from Walizi, a village laced with IEDs, where the insurgents held sway and ambushes on British patrols were common. His scheme involved part of his force as an ambush, himself as the bait. Leading a small group of soldiers into the village down an alley towards an insurgent ambush area, an insurgent leapt out forty metres to Dalzell's front, firing an entire magazine at him. Dalzell and his soldiers fired back, driving the ambusher off and into the fire of their own expertly placed ambush. Insurgent activity in Walizi dropped away markedly after this operation. To walk knowingly into an ambush is testament to Dalzell's raw courage; it is a tribute to his leadership and his soldiers' regard for him that they followed.

Four days later Dalzell led a patrol into Padaka, another insurgent stronghold. As they moved forward the soldier just in front of him triggered a bomb. Its blast punched Dalzell to the ground. Staggering immediately back to his feet he found the soldier had lost a leg in the blast. Immediately taking control, Dalzell began calmly to arrange the casualty evacuation. But as the group moved off, one of the stretcher party, Dalzell's platoon sergeant, close friend, confidante and mentor, Sergeant Amer, stepped on a second bomb. Dalzell was again smashed to the floor. The scene he now confronted was appalling: Amer had suffered grievous and mortal injuries, the soldier on the stretcher had lost his other leg, the stretcher party were all wounded and insurgent fire was splitting the air around them. Dalzell rallied his men, directing them into action, controlling their movements to clear a safe route and to fight their way out, sending a stream of calm, clear radio reports to bring in the emergency helicopter. His leadership under such extreme pressure and his indomitable courage in the face of the enemy successfully brought the whole patrol away from the killing area and, in so doing, undoubtedly saved the life of the first soldier.

Once back in their patrol base, Dalzell's first and only concern was for his men. In shock, they were on the edge. Despite losing the iconic Amer, his rock and point of reference, Dalzell, in an astonishing act of leadership, resolved to lead his platoon out on another patrol within just four hours; there was to be no brooding or loss of offensive spirit. An inspired and unfathomably courageous deed.

For his repeated acts of conspicuous gallantry under fire and in the face of the enemy, and for his utterly selfless commitment to his soldiers and his duty, this unique young officer warrants the highest formal recognition. His soldiers will be forever indebted to him; a paragon.



Lieutenant Colonel T W Gray  
Commanding Officer  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards

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