



From: Major General N R M Borton DSO MBE
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To all SCOTS soldiers, veterans and families,

After 20 long hard years, we have seen the final stages of the Afghanistan campaign play out. For many of us, this is hard to witness, and for some harder still to reconcile the loss they have borne with how things have turned out. Afghanistan is where we earned our laurels as a Regiment, regulars and reserves, and every Battalion played its part and wrote its own new pages in our long history. It has not come without a price, and my thoughts are particularly with the families of our brave comrades who gave their lives for their friends and for the people of Afghanistan.

We will be exposed now to a long debate in the public arena about whether it was worth it. I say it was; we went primarily to protect our country from terrorism nurtured in Afghanistan, and for 20 years we achieved that mission. But we accomplished much more than that: a generation of young Afghans have grown up learning what it means to live in a democracy, to have access to education, and to experience freedom. This is a priceless gift, and one that is not easily rubbed out by a single military victory.

Finally, we should never stop being proud of what we did. We are soldiers, and we were called to service by our democracy; and we performed that duty with courage, discipline and honour, supported by the bravery and loyalty of our families. We can be proud of that above all; and proud of our comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice. I remain certain that it was not in vain, and fiercely proud of the Regiment's achievements.

We must not stop talking to each other about it and I want us to support one another as a Regimental family. RHQ, the wider veteran community, or your unit can help; do not hesitate to speak to someone if you are finding it hard.

So, hold your heads up and know that you did what was asked to the highest standards, made your families proud, and made lives better. Those are things worth fighting for.

yours aye,
Nick Borton