

BRITISH TROOPS KILLED BY US BOMB AFTER RADIO S.O.S CONFUSION

By Daily Express Reporter

THREE British soldiers killed by US "friendly fire" in Afghanistan, died after confusion over grid references, an inquest heard yesterday.

Privates Aaron McClure, 19, Robert Foster, 19, and John Thrumble, 21, were under attack by the Taliban in Helmand when a US F15 aircraft, called to help, dropped a 500lb bomb on them instead of the enemy, half a mile further north.



Privates Aaron McClure and Robert Foster were two of the soldiers killed by US "friendly fire"

Pte McClure, from Ipswich, Suffolk, Pte Foster, from Harlow, and Pte Thrumble, from Maldon, both in Essex, and all serving with 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment, died in the blast on August 23, 2007.

Privates McClure and Thrumble were on the roof of a compound and Private Foster was firing from a window when the order to strike was given.

Sergeant Mark Perren, a forward air controller, passed on the order to the weapons support officer aboard the US aircraft but there was confusion over map grid references. Sergeant Perren's role was investigated but no charges were brought, the inquest at Trowbridge, Wiltshire, heard.

Pte McClure and Pte Thrumble died instantly and were evacuated under mortar fire. Pte Foster asphyxiated under the rubble and was found by a search party later.

Four investigations were carried out into the tragedy, including one by the Americans, whose report was received only on Monday, the inquest was told. The hearing was adjourned until February.