

= Death of Linda Norgrove =

On 26 September 2010 , Scottish aid worker Linda Norgrove and three Afghan colleagues were kidnapped by members of the Taliban in the Kunar Province of eastern Afghanistan . At the time , she was working in the country as regional director for Development Alternatives Incorporated , a contractor for U.S. and other government agencies . After their capture , the group was taken to the nearby Dewegal Valley area . United States and Afghan forces began a search of the area , placing roadblocks to prevent the group from being moved east into Pakistan .

Norgrove 's captors demanded the release of Aafia Siddiqui in exchange for her return . During negotiations , on 3 October 2010 the Taliban released the three Afghans . Five days later , amid concerns that Norgrove would be killed or moved by her kidnappers , the United States Naval Special Warfare Development Group conducted a predawn rescue attempt on the Taliban mountain hideout where she was held captive . US forces killed several kidnappers and three local farmers in the assault . They subsequently located Norgrove , badly wounded , in a nearby gully ; she later died from her injuries .

Initial reports said that Norgrove had been killed by an explosion set off by one of her captors . However , a joint official investigation by the United Kingdom and the United States concluded that Norgrove 's fatal injuries were inflicted by a grenade thrown by one of her rescuers . A February 2011 coroner 's narrative verdict reported that Norgrove died during the failed rescue attempt . In October 2012 , one of Norgrove 's colleagues said in an interview that the captors told Norgrove they had no intention of killing her .

= = Early life , education and work = =

Norgrove was born in Altnaharra , Scotland , in 1974 to John and Lorna Norgrove . She grew up on a croft on the Isle of Lewis in the Western Isles , attending a primary school in Uig . She later attended the Nicolson Institute in Stornoway . Norgrove attended the University of Aberdeen , receiving a first @-@ class honours degree in tropical environmental science ; her coursework included postgraduate research at the University of Chiapas in Mexico and a year of study at the University of Oregon ( 1993 ? 94 ) . She attended the University of London , receiving a master 's degree with distinction in rural resources and environmental policy in 1997 .

In 2002 , Norgrove received a Ph.D. from the University of Manchester in development policy and management . From 2002 to 2005 she worked for the World Wide Fund in Peru , supporting ( and later supervising ) the WWF 's Forest Program in the Peruvian Andes . At the time of her death , Norgrove was working towards an MBA from the University of Warwick through distance learning in addition to her aid work . She worked in Afghanistan ( for the United Nations from 2005 to 2008 and as regional director of an international development company based in Jalalabad beginning in February 2010 ) , Laos ( as an environmental specialist for the U.N. in 2008 ? 09 ) , Mexico and Uganda ( where Norgrove researched the effects of national park management on the indigenous population near Mount Elgon National Park ) .

= = Kidnapping = =

On 26 September 2010 , Norgrove and three Afghan colleagues were travelling in the Chawkey District ( also known as Tsawkey and Sawkey ) of eastern Kunar Province when they were kidnapped by local insurgents . They were ambushed whilst driving on the main highway from Jalalabad to Asadabad , in the Dewagal valley , in two unarmored , unmarked Toyota Corollas . A U.S. military convoy was ambushed two months earlier on the same stretch of road . Norgrove wore a burqa to disguise her foreign appearance .

Dressed in men 's clothing by her captors , she was first taken into the mountains and then brought to the Dewegal Valley in Chowkai District ( which crosses the Korengal Valley ) . U.S. Army troops from Bravo Company , 2 / 327 Infantry , 1st Brigade Combat Team , 101st Airborne Division began a 12 @-@ day search supported by Afghan army , police and commando units under the codename

" Enterprise " . A house @-@ to @-@ house search was conducted and roadblocks posted at the valley entrance to prevent Norgrove 's captors from transferring her eastward into Pakistan . The difficult terrain ( with few roads ) complicated and slowed the process ; however , the search efforts succeeded in containing the kidnappers in the vicinity and several local Taliban members were killed .

= = = Negotiations = = =

It was unclear at first who kidnapped Norgrove and her colleagues . A Taliban commander , the Pakistan @-@ based Mohammed Osman , was reported to demand the release of Aafia Siddiqui in return for Norgrove 's freedom . Siddiqui , known as " Lady al @-@ Qaeda " , had received an 86 @-@ year prison sentence in the U.S. on 26 September . " We are lucky that we abducted this British woman soon after the ruthless ruling by an American court on Aafia Siddiqui . We will demand the release of Aafia Siddiqui in exchange for her " , said Osman .

However , other Afghan sources denied any link to Osman . U.S. military sources identified Norgrove 's captors as Kunar Taliban , and British Foreign Secretary William Hague said they were from a Salafist group affiliated with the local Taliban , known as Jamaat al Dawa al Quran . An Afghan intelligence official later identified her captors as local commanders Mullah Basir and Mullah Keftan . Negotiations for Norgrove 's release were conducted through local tribal elders .

The three Afghans captured with Norgrove were released on 3 October . British Prime Minister David Cameron said that the primary fear was that she " was going to be passed up the terrorist chain , which would increase further the already high risk that she would be killed " . The British foreign office asked the media not to release details about Norgrove 's personal life while she was in captivity to avoid attaching " trophy value " to her kidnapping .

= = = Rescue attempt and death = = =

Intelligence reports indicated that a group of local elders were calling for Norgrove to be executed " like the Russian " ( a possible reference to the Russian war in Afghanistan ) . There were concerns that she might be moved into North Waziristan in Pakistan , about 10 miles ( 16 km ) away . The intelligence prompted British Prime Minister Cameron and William Hague to approve a United States special operations effort to rescue Norgrove during her 13th night of captivity . The operation was spearheaded by " SEAL Team Six " , Navy SEALs from the Naval Special Warfare Development Group .

The SEALs staged a predawn raid on the Taliban hillside compound hideout , where Norgrove was held in a shack , on 8 October 2010 . The stronghold was surrounded by 16 @-@ foot ( 4 @-@ 9 m ) high , 2 @-@ foot ( 0 @-@ 61 m ) thick perimeter walls in a densely wooded area in the village of Dineshgal , 7 @-@ 000 feet ( 2 @-@ 100 m ) up a steep mountain in the Korengal Valley .

At approximately 3 : 30 am 20 SEALs and about 24 U.S. Army Rangers from the 75th Ranger Regiment ( wearing night @-@ vision goggles ) approached the compound , fast roping from two CH @-@ 47 Chinook helicopters . They were fired on from the compound and from a nearby position by Taliban armed with AK @-@ 47s , rocket @-@ propelled grenades and suicide vests . Two American snipers aboard a helicopter killed two guards using sound @-@ suppressed rifles . An AC @-@ 130 Spectre gunship provided the U.S. troops on the ground with close air support , killing two fleeing Taliban . The Rangers secured enemy positions on the nearby hills , and all six Taliban gunmen who fought the U.S. forces were killed .

During the gunfight Norgrove 's captors dragged her outside the building where she was being held , but she apparently broke away from them . Video footage of the raid showed an explosion in her vicinity ; Norgrove was then found , injured , in a fetal position in a gully .

Norgrove was removed from the scene via helicopter and received medical care , but she died . It was initially reported that she had been killed by one of her captors setting off a suicide vest . According to The Guardian , insurgents often put on suicide vests if they think they are in danger of being attacked . Taliban commanders Mullah Basir and Mullah Keftan ( who were holding Norgrove

) were among those killed in the raid , according to an Afghan intelligence official . Other women and children in the compound were uninjured , and no members of the rescue team were wounded .

= = Joint investigation = =

British Foreign Secretary William Hague announced Norgrove 's death . In a written statement , he said that after receiving information on her location it was " decided that , given the danger she was facing , her best chance of safe release was to act on that information . " Prime Minister Cameron defended the rescue attempt : " Decisions on operations to free hostages are always difficult . But where a British life is in such danger , and where we and our allies can act , I believe it is right to try . "

On 10 October , an unnamed Afghan intelligence officer said that Norgrove was killed by a grenade thrown by one of her captors . The following day , Cameron said that new information indicated Norgrove may have accidentally been killed by a U.S. grenade . The Prime Minister said in an interview , " Linda could have died as a result of a grenade detonated by the task force during the assault . However , this is not definite . " A U.S. military statement read , " Subsequent review of surveillance footage and discussions with members of the rescue team do not conclusively determine the cause of her death " .

U.S. President Barack Obama promised " to get to the bottom " of the failed rescue attempt . General David Petraeus , commander of the NATO security force in Afghanistan , ordered an investigation into the incident . U.S. Major General Joseph Votel ( then Chief of Staff of the U.S. Special Operations Command ) and British Brigadier Robert Nitsch ( Head of Joint Force Support , UK Forces Afghanistan ) were appointed to lead a joint UK and U.S. investigation . It was reported on 12 October that the results were expected within days , and Norgrove 's family was kept informed of the investigation 's progress .

Whilst the military investigation was conducted , Norgrove 's body was returned to the United Kingdom on 14 October on a Royal Air Force flight to RAF Lyneham . A humanist funeral ceremony , attended by hundreds of people , was held on 26 October at the Uig Community Centre in the Western Isles . Norgrove was buried at Ardcoil cemetery .

On 2 December Hague announced the results of the joint investigation , which concluded that Norgrove was accidentally killed by a grenade thrown by a U.S sailor . Hague said to the House of Commons , " A grenade was thrown by a member of the rescue team who feared for his own life and those of his team towards a gully from where some of the insurgents had emerged . When the grenade was thrown no member of the team had seen , or heard , Linda Norgrove . " Navy SEALs did not immediately notify senior officers about throwing the grenade ; this breached military law , and a number of sailors were disciplined .

A post @-@ mortem examination of Norgrove 's body was conducted by British coroner Russell Delaney on 19 October 2010 . Detective Chief Inspector Colin Smith of the Metropolitan Police told an inquest , opened 22 October in the Salisbury coroner 's court , that the examination identified the cause of death as " penetrating fragment injuries to the head and chest . " In February 2011 the coroner recorded a narrative verdict confirming the earlier military investigations ' findings that Norgrove was killed by a member of the U.S. rescue team , noting that a gunshot wound to the leg Norgrove received during the rescue did not contribute to her death . In October 2012 Abdul Wadood , Norgrove 's colleague and fellow captive , told the BBC that she asked the kidnappers if they were going to kill her : " Linda asked the abductors when they were planning to kill her and then the abductors talked to her in a very soft language and they told her and assured her that she would not be killed , because that was not their purpose to kill her ? all they wanted was to release some of their prisoners , in the end she would be released when this deed is done . "

= = Tributes = =

James Boomgard , regional director for Development Alternatives Inc . ( the company for which Norgrove worked when she was kidnapped ) , released a statement : " We are saddened beyond

words by the death of a wonderful woman whose sole purpose in Afghanistan was to do good ? to help the Afghan people achieve a measure of prosperity and stability in their everyday lives as they set about rebuilding their country . " United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator Robert Watkins praised Norgrove : " She was a true advocate for the people of Afghanistan and was dedicated to bringing improvements to their lives " , and " her spirit and compassion will be greatly missed " . First Minister of Scotland Alex Salmond said , " Ms. Norgrove was a dedicated aid worker who was doing everything she could to help people in Afghanistan ? hopefully that legacy of service in a humanitarian cause can be of some comfort to her loved ones in their time of grief " .

Norgrove received the 2011 Robert Burns Humanitarian Award posthumously for her work in Afghanistan . Her family has established the Linda Norgrove Foundation to continue her relief work .