

CORPORAL ANDREW STEVEN ROBERTS
THE ROYAL LOGISTIC CORPS

23 PIONEER REGIMENT

Corporal Andrew Roberts was a Section Commander in 23 Pioneer Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps. He deployed to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 16 on 11 March 2012 to command an Advanced Search Team, in the Operations Squadron of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search Task Force. As an Advanced Search Team Commander, Corporal Roberts was responsible for leading his men in order to detect Improvised Explosive Devices in high risk areas.

Corporal Roberts' Advanced Search Team had completed in-theatre Role Specific Training before assisting in coaching other teams undergoing this training. On 18 April 2012, Corporal Roberts deployed in support of the 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh to the Nahr-e-Saraj district of Helmand province. Whilst there, Corporal Roberts' team conducted a number of search operations to clear irrigation ditches and enhance the security of operating bases as well as deploying to provide direct Counter Improvised Explosive Device support to British patrols. In leading his team in this role, Corporal Roberts not only facilitated freedom of movement for International Security Assistance Forces and Afghan National Security Forces, but also undoubtedly saved the lives of both Afghans and International personnel.

Corporal Roberts was 32 years old and was born in Middlesbrough. He joined the Army in 1998 and had been serving as a Section Commander in 23 Pioneer Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps based in Bicester, Oxfordshire since 2008. He had served on operations in Bosnia and Iraq and this was his second tour of Afghanistan. He was a very able and plucky sportsman and a highly regarded physical training instructor. He will always be remembered for his trenchant efforts in the Regimental boxing ring and his enthusiastic Squadron PT sessions. He was a 'larger than life' character and extremely well known in the Regiment; his loss will cast a long shadow.

A forthright, determined and professional Junior Non Commissioned Officer, Corporal Roberts leaves behind his parents, Pauline and Stephen, his girlfriend, Paula Ewers, three children Jessica (6), Kyle (5) and Kayla (3) and his brothers and sisters, Tracey, Mark, Darren, Michael and Emma.

Cpl Roberts' children paid the following tribute: "For our brave Dad who went away to build sand castles and stop the bad men hurting people. We love you to the moon and back. You are an angel in Heaven now looking down on us all, we wish yesterday had never happened and you were still here to phone us and take us out. You were the best Dad, we remember all the fun things we did, we will never forget you and will love you forever. You are our Hero and we will pray for you always."

Cpl Roberts' girlfriend, Paula Ewers, paid the following tribute: "Andrew truly was a hero and I'm so proud of what he achieved, he was such a special, kind and caring person. I was blessed to have spent the past two and a half years with Andrew. He made me and my son Josh so happy. I have lost my soul mate and my best friend. The memories I have of our time together I will hold in my heart forever. Sweet dreams my hero all my love always. Paula & Josh."

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Bell, Commanding Officer Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search Task Force, said:

"The tragic loss of Corporal Roberts has deeply shocked the Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search Task Force and I am sure will have a similar effect on his home unit, 23 Pioneer Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps. My thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with his family and all of his friends at this most difficult of times.

"A talented Junior Non Commissioned Officer, Corporal Roberts had leadership qualities in spades. He was fit and determined and set exactly the right example, truly inspiring his subordinates to do their very best. Quite new to the specialist world of Advanced Search, he had taken to this role with gusto and led a highly effective Advanced Search Team. His efforts were making a difference in Helmand Province

"During demanding times, both physically and mentally, here in Afghanistan, Corporal Roberts continually stepped up to the plate and proved entirely worthy of the authority and responsibility bestowed upon him as a Corporal. His upbeat, determined nature balanced with humour, humility and understanding allowed him to command his Advanced Search Team extremely effectively. His team were utterly reliable due to his professionalism and leadership abilities.

"His Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search Task Force have today lost an inspiring and popular junior commander. He leaves a noticeable gap in our ranks here in Afghanistan and will be missed, but certainly not forgotten. His family and friends, and particularly his young children are in our thoughts and prayers at this time."

Major Ben Hawkins, Officer Commanding Operations Squadron, Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search Task Force, said:

"Corporal Roberts was an exceptional character; you never failed to know that he was around. He always had time to flash you his cheeky grin and to share a bit of banter no matter what the time, day or night. He was seldom happier than when busy with his Section, he loved being around them, the mark of a real leader.

"His dedication to his rehabilitation from a minor injury before the tour was impressive and his efforts were soon rewarded with his recovery and fitness to deploy. He soon earned his spurs as a Search Team Commander both on test tasks and then in the field undertaking a number of high risk and high assurance searches. He was a well respected team commander who had the skill of being able to motivate his

men effectively; deftly choosing his style to get the absolute best out of them.

"He was always the life and soul of the party and would always be at the centre of any activity, normally the ring leader and the one causing all the mischief. His ability to have fun in all circumstances endeared him to all who met him.

"My Squadron has lost a real character, who will be sorely missed, particularly by his exceptionally close team, but also by those of us who have got to know him over the past few months. Our thoughts are with his family at this difficult time."

Major Derren Battersby RLC, Officer Commanding Operations Squadron, 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC said::

"Cpl Roberts was entrusted to lead a team in a highly dangerous role and in a hazardous environment. As the Commander of an Advanced Search Team, he displayed unstinting leadership. He was absolutely dedicated to the men under his charge, and they were devoted to him in equal measure. His energy was infectious and this permeated to every member of his Team. Resoundingly positive, he possessed a keen, dry humour which maintained the Team's morale in whatever circumstance they found themselves.

"He was a strong supporter of the Regiment, the Squadron and the Corporals' Mess. He was immensely proud of the Pioneers and his Team. Throughout his career, whether it was in the field or in barracks, he commanded the respect of all that had the pleasure of working with him.

"The Squadron has lost one of their finest. He will be sorely missed by all of us, but the loss felt by us cannot match that of his family. My most heartfelt sympathy goes out to his family at this most distressing of times.

Captain Andy Shannon RLC, Squadron Second in Command, Operations Squadron, 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC said:

"I have only known Corporal 'Ginge' Roberts for a short period of time, however that time was a privilege. Always smiling, he had an unfailing ability to crack a joke no matter what the circumstances, raising morale on the wettest, coldest exercise. Corporal Roberts somehow combined this with a natural authority that meant he commanded the respect of all around him, the epitome of a Pioneer. In a very short space of time I came to view him as an incredibly important part of a close knit team, one I regularly relied upon and who always delivered. The Regiment has lost one of its finest junior commanders as well as a true friend. My thoughts are with his family at this tragic time, their loss cannot be described. Gone but never forgotten."

Lieutenant Lee Rickards, Troop Commander, Operations Squadron, Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search Task Force said:

"Corporal Roberts was a father who was very proud of his three children. He also spoke of his feelings for his girlfriend Paula and her son. Corporal Roberts will be sorely missed by anyone who was lucky enough to have met him. My thoughts go out to Paula, his children and parents."

Lieutenant Damien Turner, Advanced Search Advisor, 23 Pioneer Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps said:

"Corporal 'Ginge' Roberts was a character who defined The Pioneer. He possessed almost every trait you could ask for in a Section Commander. He was professionally effective beyond any competition, he had a witty charisma that lads simply loved to follow and most importantly he had a true empathy with his soldiers. This was a man who wore his heart on his sleeve, who was honest, caring and altogether approachable. These words cannot do a man of his magnitude justice but I hope they come close. My thoughts are with your children, in whom you live on. Rest easy Pioneer."

Warrant Officer Class One Wayne Fuller RLC Regimental Sergeant Major 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC said:

Corporal 'Ginge' Roberts was one of our very best Pioneer junior Commanders. Fit, keen and motivated, he led from the front wherever possible. An utterly selfless individual, his first concern was always for the men serving with and under him. Cpl Roberts showed his intrinsic ability as a soldier when passing his Search Course, and as the Commander of an Advanced Search Team, operating in the most austere of environments, he prepared his team impeccably for all tasks set. Reliable to the core, he was a true leader, and the epitome of what it is to be a Pioneer Soldier.

Corporal Roberts was always at the centre of Regimental activity, an outstanding sportsman and PTI, he represented the Regiment in the Boxing Ring and at football with real style and a steely determination. He was a soldier who had the capacity to go all the way in any chosen field and his loss will be felt keenly by all members of our close knit Regiment and the wider Pioneer and RLC community. The Regiment is a darker place without him. My thoughts are with his friends, family and girlfriend at this most difficult of times.

WO2 (SSM) Kevin Prevett, Squadron Sergeant Major, Operations Squadron, Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search Task Force said:

"Corporal Andrew Roberts or as we all knew him 'Ginge' will leave a deep void amongst his team and those he touched with his superb sense of humour. He led his team with pride, swagger and vigour. Ever the professional he was admired by his young team and the wider Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search community within the Task Force. I will always remember his willingness to volunteer for any job that would improve the welfare of the soldiers who served under him. He leaves behind three

beautiful children Jessica, Kyle and Kayla that I feel I know through many a late night chat about life. His character was fun, passionate, filled with laughter, professionalism and compassion; qualities that made him the excellent leader he was. We will never forget him."

WO2 Kwan Cheung RLC, Squadron Sergeant Major Operations Squadron, 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC said:

"Corporal Roberts was one of the best Section Commanders that I have had the honour to serve with. He struck the right balance; diligent and forward thinking he was always able to step up and to ensure things were moving in the right direction. He was passionate about his men, always looking out for them and seeking to ensure that they were prepared and always fit for task. He had unbelievable amounts of morale which was infectious - he always tried to make things better for everybody.

"Corporal Roberts was a fine sportsman, representing both the Squadron and the Regiment in the boxing ring year in and year out, and always doing so with real style, grit and panache. He was at the very centre of Sqn activity; he was incredibly fit, strong and driven and he will be missed terribly.

"Cpl Roberts it is an honour to have known and to have served with you, never to be forgotten."

Corporal Andrew 'Stevo' Stevenson, 23 Pioneer Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps said:

"I have had the pleasure of knowing Corporal Roberts for a long time. We both worked as Physical Training Instructors together. He was a very fit lad who represented the Regiment at boxing and cross-country. It always surprised me how little effort he seemed to have to put in to do so well.

"A very well liked and outgoing bloke, who was never worried about telling people how it is and a devoted father to his three kids that he could never seem to spend enough time with.

"He was always happy to help out anyone, or take the mick out of anyone, but he was also always happy to help out a friend when they needed it. So many people are going to miss him, as he brought so much laughter wherever he went."

Lance Corporal Andrew 'Wildy' Wild, 23 Pioneer Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps said:

"Corporal Andrew Roberts was a strong, down to earth soldier. It seemed like he was everywhere, all the time and always adding laughter and fun wherever he went. He had a great, keen attitude to life. He loved his fitness, but still approached the world in a light-hearted way. He was relaxed, chilled, but knew when to be serious at the same time. I never heard him speak ill of anyone, and deep down I knew he was a soft and fluffy bloke!

"Ginge, red and green went through your veins. Rest in Peace, Pioneer."

Private Cayah 'Robbo' Ware-Roberts, 23 Pioneer Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps said:

"I first met 'Ginge' in 2008 when I got to the Regiment and deployed with him on Op HERRICK 10. He was the sort of bloke that if you needed something and he could help, then he couldn't do it readily enough. He loved sport, he was involved in Regimental football and boxing, despite getting routinely beaten around the head in boxing. He always seemed to be the first to volunteer, and I'll remember him most for the way he could make me smile after taking my chips at Poker."

"A true friend and Pioneer all the way to his core."

Corporal Carling, Search Troop, Operations Squadron, 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC said:

"I'd known Corporal 'Ginge' 'Robbo' Roberts for a long time. He was one of the very best. An outstanding physical training instructor, boxer and footballer, he was respected and loved by us all. A family man, Robbo doted on his kids endlessly, immensely proud of them. My thoughts are with them and his family. Rest easy Robbo, see you in 'Ye Olde Pioneer'."

Lance Corporal Payne, Search Troop, Operations Squadron, 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC said of him:

"'Ginge' was one of the nicest, most down to earth blokes I ever had the pleasure of serving with. Always laughing and joking, he'd defend his beloved Middlesbrough Football Club fiercely. My fondest memories of him always involve the quick witted comments he'd throw out at the guys when they were ripping him for supporting Middlesbrough. 'Ginge', you will be sorely missed mate. We'll have one for you and our deepest sympathies are with his family at this incredibly difficult time."

Lance Corporal Whitear, Search Troop, Operations Squadron, 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC said of him:

"'Ginge' Roberts always lived life to the full, always happy no matter where we were, if morale was low, he would pick it up. Some of my fondest memories as a Pioneer are with 'Ginge'; he was immensely proud to wear the Red and Green of a Pioneer. 'Ginge' had time for everyone, especially his kids and family. We have all lost a brother but they have lost even more. My most heartfelt sympathies are with them. We'll have one in 'Ye Olde Pioneer' mate."