

40 Commando Royal Marines

Corporal Stephen Curley was 26 years old; he was born in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire. Married to Kirianne, he lived in Exeter with their 5 month old son, William. He joined Royal Marines Recruit Training at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines on 31 March 2003, passing for duty on 17 March 2004.

On completion of training he was drafted to Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines and subsequently deployed to Iraq on Operation TELIC 4 in 2004. 2006 saw his first deployment to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 5, serving with Lima Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines; during which he distinguished himself by saving a fellow marine's life. Further training with 42 Commando, on exercise in Northern Norway provided him with experience of operating in a mountain and cold weather environment.

Established as an experienced and professional marine, he was selected for Command Training, passing his Junior Command Course and promoting to Corporal in March 2009. A keen runner and climber; with a taste for cold weather warfare, Cpl Curley chose to volunteer for the arduous 9 month Mountain Leaders Course, becoming a qualified Mountain Leader (Class 2) in April 2009.

Rejoining Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines in September 2009, he undertook the Advanced Urban Combat Instructor's Course, a role he relished within 7 Troop. In March 2010 he deployed once again to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 12, serving in Sangin as part of the FOB JACKSON Operations Company.

On the late afternoon of Wednesday 26 May 2010, Charlie Company was conducting a foot patrol in and around the Southern Green Zone to reassure the local nationals and understand their concerns. At 1831 hours local in the Sangin area an explosion occurred and as a result Corporal Curley was killed in action.

His wife Kirianne said:

"It is impossible for me to express what my husband meant to me, Daddy to our 18 week old son William and my partner in crime, Stevie was my purpose, what makes me tick.

"A man of few but powerful words when it mattered, he lived by the motto 'If you're not living life on the edge, you're taking up too much room'. This will be forever imprinted on our hearts.

"Stevie was a perfectionist - he prided himself on being the best and the best he was. His professionalism was highly regarded by all who knew him but it was his quirky un-PC one-liners that really caused a stir. Steve loved to make people laugh and laugh with them.

"Stevie was a quietly proud man, proud to be a Royal, proud to be my husband and proud to be a Daddy.

"Steve stood firmly for what he believed in a man who lived by his convictions and fought vehemently for what he thought was right.

"Steve loved his family, and would be so proud of his mother and brother. We will carry your heart with us always. Engraved in my wedding ring the words, Kirianne, my one, my love, my wife. Stephen, sleep well my love."

Lieutenant Colonel Paul James, Commanding Officer 40 Commando Group, Combined Force Sangin said:

"Corporal Stephen Curley was the very best of his generation; bright, fit, charismatic and supremely brave, he was a man who genuinely inspired others. Based with me in FOB JACKSON, I saw in him a selfless, loyal, utterly dedicated and natural leader of men.

"He died on patrol in Sangin leading the men he loved, and alongside the men who loved him. His sharp wit knew few limits, particularly in the gymnasium where he reigned supreme, with both the RSM and I regularly in the firing line. As a marine he was professionally unrivalled – a mountain leader, a consummate tactician and a brilliant section commander who cared passionately for his men.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Kirianne and new-born son William, his family and his friends. He will be desperately missed by everyone in 40 Commando. Corporal Stephen Curley was, and always will be, a Royal Marine Commando."

Major Ed Moorhouse, Officer Commanding Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines, said:

"Corporal Steve Curley is irreplaceable as a man, a leader and a Royal Marines Corporal. He was the most consummate of all round professionals and a man who I can proudly say that I have had the immense privilege to have commanded and worked alongside.

"Fiercely proud of being a Royal Marine and a Mountain Leader, he was a natural leader of marines and had galvanised a group of young men in 7 Troop into an exceptionally strong and dynamic Section who he was proud to call his own. At the heart of this single minded professionalism was his energy and enthusiasm for everything, complimented by an utter vitality for life and the challenges that it brought.

"Nothing was ever too onerous for him and the more austere and challenging the task, the more he would revel in undertaking it; this infectious enthusiasm drove everything that he did, and all ranks in Charlie Company were energised by it. A man with the driest sense of humour and a wry Yorkshire wit, nobody in Charlie Company was safe from a Steve Curley one-liner no matter what rank or status you carried; the Sergeant Major and I speak from personal experience.

"Charlie Company Group mourns the passing of an exceptional young man who has touched us all during his tragically short life; a man who personified everything in the Charlie Company 'Spartan' ethos. I have no doubt that he would have risen to the highest echelons of the Royal Marines and I would have taken great pleasure and pride in championing this ascent.

"Our prayers and thoughts are with his wife Kirianne and his new born son William; I am only saddened that this young man, unlike me, will never know just what a formidable and unique leader of men his father was."

Sergeant Danny 'Smudger' Smith, Troop Sergeant, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"Is it wrong for a Troop Sergeant to be inspired by one of his Corporals? If it is, I am guilty of that. I had the absolute pleasure of working with Steve as a Marine; and then had the honour of instructing him on his Junior Command Course. In true 'Steve fashion' he was among the front runners throughout.

"I was then privileged again to be given Steve as one of my Section Commanders, on completion of his Mountain Leaders Course, for our current tour in Afghanistan. Nothing could have delighted me more. Words cannot explain the immeasurable impact that Steve Curley has had, not just on the Troop, but the whole of Charlie Company, he is irreplaceable.

"Steve was unbelievably good at what he did and without fail he always managed to make the right choice. The men of 7 Troop idolised him, he was their oracle and best friend."

"As a Troop Sergeant, you are expected to be the man the guys look to for advice, so why did I always find myself looking to Steve? Steve was unbelievably good at what he did and without fail he always managed to make the right choice. The men of 7 Troop idolised him, he was their oracle and best friend. I have never met another man with such an amazing sense of humour, every bad situation could be made into a hilarious joke which of course meant he had a natural ability to pick the lads up when the chips were down.

"The tragic loss of our closest brother has left an immense hole in a very tight Troop. It is a fact that 7 Troop has evolved around Steve Curley and has adopted his professionalism and skills; this is his true legacy to us. Steve was a best friend and a true Spartan and will always remain a fantastic role model to myself and the boys.

Corporal Dave Martin, Section Commander, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"From the day I met Steve Curley, when he welcomed me to 7 Troop, we were always in competition: in the gym, in the field, tactics, shooting, who had the best tan, who was more essence; however everyday he would just be that little bit better than me. With that cheeky smile and cutting sense of humour he would make me laugh constantly. He was a great soldier, but more than that he was a great friend. Rest in Peace."

Corporal Carl Saunders, 1 Troop, Alpha Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"What can be said about Steve that people don't already know? Sitting writing this I honestly don't believe any words can do him justice, his actions and personality speaks louder than words ever could. I've had the pleasure of knowing Steve as a friend for over 5 years and I believe that I am a better man for knowing him.

"Ever since HERRICK 5 his professionalism has shone through, always leading from the front. Physically he was leaps and bounds ahead of everyone else, surprising when you consider how short he was! Speaking to him after he successfully passed his Mountain Leader's 2 course he simply described it as, "just phys in the bag". He leaves behind a beautiful wife and child whom he loved very much. Sleep well mate, a true legend, I'll miss you."

Lance Corporal Luke Metcalfe, Section Second-in-Command, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"As a Section Second-in-Command, Steve was someone I looked up to through his professionalism, the way he dealt with situations and just his general jokey character. He was by far one of the best Bootnecks I've ever come across and it made perfect sense to me that he was a Mountain Leader.

"There is now a massive gap in 7 Troop, as a Section Commander and a friend. Even though for much of the time you could just hear his ridiculous northern accent and jokes, he always made sense to me and I learnt from him continuously. I'll miss our nights out in Taunton, and our flat in Norton Manor Camp will never be the same again. Rest in Peace Steve Curley you'll be sorely missed."

Marine 'Dougie' Douglas, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"No words I write or say can even come close to describe the man Steve was. Although I knew Steve for only a short time, such was the effect on people that he had, I know it will last a lifetime. Steve was not only a hoofing Bootneck on Operations, he was a great mate. He was by far the biggest character in our Troop and he will always be missed. Rest in Peace Steve we will miss you always."

Marine Dan Gaul, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"Steve was an incredible soldier that you could always rely upon. Every time I went on patrol with him in Sangin, I felt as safe as I possibly could; he was hoofing at his job and always looked out for the lads. He would never let his guard down on patrol, he was like a robot that never switched off. A true Bootneck through and through; Rest in Peace Steve you won't be forgotten."

Marine Chris McCallum, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"On meeting Steve he immediately made an impact on you. His attitude was completely

professional no matter what he was tasked to do. You felt at ease being led by him, and would follow him to the end of the world. He was a true Royal Marine and bled the Corps Colours. Rest in Peace Steve; father, husband and Bootneck."

Marine Ashley Palmer, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"It was an honour to work with Corporal Steve Curley as he always knew what he was doing in any situation. He was a highly professional Bootneck and an inspiration to us all. He was always smiling and bringing morale to the lads whether ashore, or sunbathing with his socks on, so he could look more tanned and essence. He was a great character, I looked up to him in everything that he did and I will miss him as a great soldier and a friend. Rest in Peace Steve Curley."

Marine James Twigg, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"Steve inspired confidence in us all through his character and professionalism. It was reassuring having him as your leader out on the ground in Sangin. He always made sure you were okay while doing his job to the highest standard."

Marine Rory O'Farrell, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"In the short time I have spent in Charlie Company, I realise how big a part Steve played in 7 Troop. He was extremely professional and a proud man and always taught the lads new and better ways to soldier. Steve knew when to have a laugh and when to soldier; just Steve alone was enough morale for the lads to get on with the day ahead. Steve will be missed and never forgotten, as everyone says, Steve was the Charlie Company Spartan; Rest in Peace Steve."

Marine Adam Gunningham, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"I couldn't have asked for a better Corporal, he was an inspiration to me and made me a better soldier. Steve was a very proud man who always spoke his mind, no matter what he was thinking. He always looked at the funny side of things and was a constant source of morale around the Troop whether ashore or in a ditch somewhere on Dartmoor. I had the upmost respect for Steve and he will always be in my thoughts, as will his family. Rest in Peace Steve Curley, I'll always remember you."

Marine Rob Maltby, 7 Troop, Charlie Company said, 40 Commando Royal Marines:

"Steve, a Bootneck through and through. A friend, loved by all that met him. He was a larger than life character and respected by all for his professional attitude to every situation, whether it was ashore or at work. I am a better Royal Marine for knowing Steve and will miss him greatly. Rest in Peace Steve Curley I will always remember you."

Marine James Clare, 7 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando Royal Marines said:

"I first met Corporal Steve Curley when I joined 7 Troop, Charlie Company late last year. It was

very evident early on, that through his professionalism and larger than life character that he was a highly respected Section Commander and Mountain Leader. I have become a better Royal Marine through working with Steve and he will certainly not be forgotten."