



Lance Corporal (L/Cpl) Liam Richard Tasker deployed to Afghanistan on 8th September 2010 as part of 1st Military Working Dog Regiment. Having trained as an Arms Explosive Search handler he was attached to 1st Battalion Irish Guards on 19th February 2011.

On 1st March 2011, LCpl Tasker was taking part in a patrol with his dog, Theo, when they were engaged by small arms fire, during which LCpl Tasker was struck and died from the injuries he sustained. Sadly on return to Camp Bastion, Theo, suffered a seizure and died.

LCpl Liam Tasker was born on the 11th December 1984 in Kirkcaldy, Fife, Scotland. He joined the Army in 2001 and was originally a vehicle mechanic in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. His passion though, was always dogs which led to his transfer to the Royal Army Veterinary Corps in 2007. A trainer who had a natural empathy with dogs, he was a rising star within the Dog Training group. In 2010, he was posted to 104 Military Working Dog Squadron, St Georges Barracks, North Luffenham, Rutland, part of the 1st Military Working Dog Regiment.

From the onset of his operational tour in Afghanistan, he provided strong search and clearance capability for units across Helmand Province. In a short period of time, he had significant success locating Improvised Explosive Devices, weapons and bomb making equipment. His success undoubtedly saved many lives.

Lance Corporal Tasker was an outgoing, jovial and friendly character. He was extremely popular within the Squadron. His easy going, confident approach belied a consummate professional. He always strived to be the best and within the Squadron he was one of the best and he will be sorely missed by all in the Squadron. He can never be replaced and will always be remembered. He was a fun, friendly, talkative character who always wanted the best from his dog, his troops, and himself.

He leaves behind his mother Jane Duffy, his father Ian Tasker, his brother Ian and his two sisters, Laura and Nicola, and girlfriend Leah.

Liam's family said:

"There are 3 words that best describe Liam, larger than life. He lit up every room he walked into with his cheeky smile. He was the best son, grandson, brother and friend you could ever wish to meet. He died a hero doing a job he was immensely passionate about. We are so proud of him and everything he's achieved. Words can't describe how sorely he will be missed.

"Sleep well Liam you are forever in our hearts."

Girlfriend Leah Walters, said:

"LT never met anyone without touching their lives in some way. The amount of support both I and his family have received in the last day alone pays testament to this.

"I am the proudest girlfriend there could ever be and there will be an LT sized hole in my life forever. Sleep well my darling, my soul mate, my best friend."

Lt Col David Thorpe LANCS, Commanding Officer 1st Military Working Dog Regiment, said:

"It is a challenge to put into words what Lance Corporal Liam Tasker meant to those he worked with. To his friends he was a mate who could put a smile on your face; he was that man who you wanted around and who you wanted to spend time with.

"To the 1st Military Working Dog Regiment he was a strong, reliable soldier and an expert 'Dog Man'. He genuinely loved the dogs he worked with and was always able to get the best out of them. He was one of the highly qualified Dog Trainers in Afghanistan and had spent time at our training establishment making sure that the new soldiers coming out of training had the best possible skills and experience imparted into them.

"Epitomising the hardworking, determined and ambitious nature of our very best soldiers, he wanted to go to Afghanistan. He wanted to ply his trade in the harshest of environments, to be outside of his comfort zone and he wanted to be successful. He was. The work he did in his 5 months in Afghanistan saved countless lives, of that I have no doubt. He flew the Royal Army Veterinary Corps' flag high; he led from the front and made us proud.

"Lance Corporal Tasker wanted to go far in the Army and he had all of the attributes needed to be a career soldier, with capacity to spare. His ability to command whilst maintaining his sense of humour had already marked him out as one to watch. His loss has hurt every single one of us today. He will be missed. He will not be forgotten.

"My thoughts and condolences and those of the whole Regiment go out to his family and

friends."

Major Caroline Emmett Army General Corps (Education Training Service),
Officer Commanding 104 Military Working Dog Squadron, said:

"Lance Corporal Liam Tasker was a larger than life character who was a joy to be around. His enthusiasm was infectious and I always enjoyed our frequent talks together. He and his dog Theo were made for each other. LCpl Tasker was one of the best people I have ever known. Kind, with a good heart, he always put others before himself. His professional excellence and positive attitude to life is something that I and others looked up to.

"LCpl Tasker was an Arms Explosive Search dog handler and trainer of the highest calibre. He and his dog had more operational finds than any individual team has had in Afghanistan to date and he saved many lives as a result of this. He was so proud of his achievements and I was so proud of him.

"He died a hero, doing a job he loved and he will be very sadly missed. My thoughts and heart-felt condolences and those of the Squadron go out to his family and friends at this sad time. He will always have a place in our hearts and will never be forgotten."

Major Alexander Turner, Officer Commanding 2 Company, 1st Battalion
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"Lance Corporal Tasker and his faithful search dog Theo, arrived in Number 2 Company to assist us with the hunt for Improvised Explosive Devices: an unseen, arbitrary and lethal threat. The injustice of his passing has devastated us: Lance Corporal Tasker was here to save life, finding explosive devices that kill more farmers than combatants in our area. A natural with animals, he had an affection for his dog that truly was a window to his soul. His fortitude and zeal for that perilous task was humbling: it imbued us all with confidence. He used to joke that Theo was impossible to restrain but I would say the same about Lance Corporal Tasker. At the most hazardous phase of an advance, he would be at the point of the spear, badgering to get even further forward and work his dog. He met his fate in just such a situation - leading the way that we might be safe. That selfless generosity will resonate among us long after his passing - and must serve as a beacon to all. Greater love hath no man..."

Captain Jay Rowlinson Royal Army Veterinary Corps (RAVC), Second in
Command 104 Military Dog Squadron said:

"We always looked forward to Lance Corporal Tasker returning from tasking. He would come and brief on his task and how he provided significant assurance to the teams he was working with. He was always hugely animated when he was talking about his dog and the finds that they had whilst forward. A fun character but professional in every way, I have never seen such dedication in a search handler. Extremely popular, with an innate ability to make all around him feel at ease, it is difficult to place into words how much we will miss him."

Warrant Officer Class 2 Adrian Davies RAVC, Sergeant Major 104 Military

Working Dog Squadron, said:

"I first met Lance Corporal Liam Tasker in 2007 just after he had transferred into the RAVC. Even then he was a confident individual as he proved on more than one occasion on the rugby pitch, shame the same could not be said in the bar afterwards.

"Liam was posted to 104 MWD Squadron just as we started pre-deployment training. Despite being new to the Squadron his natural talent and enthusiasm as a dog handler shone through. In barracks or on operations, Liam soon found himself as my 'go to' man; if I needed something doing he was there, unless the Squadron was on Physical Training.

"Liam excelled on operations and with his dog, Theo, proved to be an exceptionally strong search team. The amount of devices and arms uncovered by the team whilst on tour has undoubtedly saved many lives. Liam was well aware of the risks that his job entailed, searching for enemy weapons and IEDs. He loved his job as an Arms Explosive Search Handler, and, in the end paid the ultimate sacrifice.

"Liam can never be replaced both in the Squadron and Regiment. What he managed to achieve on this tour is unlikely to ever be surpassed.

"My heart felt sympathies go out to Liam's family and friends and as the Squadron grieves I know that it is nothing compared to his family.

"Liam RIP."

Sergeant Matt Jones RAVC, Training Sergeant 104 Military Working Dog Squadron, said:

"Lance Corporal Liam Tasker came to 104 Military Working Dog Squadron as we started our pre-deployment training. He quickly showed an abundance of enthusiasm for the job in hand, and a love for training and handling dogs. A gifted and well motivated soldier, Liam displayed all the qualities of an outstanding RAVC soldier both in barracks and on operations. Liam, a veteran of many searches before had undoubtedly saved lives with his Arms Explosive Search dog, Theo. He died doing what he did best; saving lives, denying the insurgents of their IEDs and weapons and letting everyone know this.

"A talented rugby player and passionate man, Liam will leave us with a massive void that will not ever be filled or replaced.

"Rest easy bud."

Corporal Roy Brown RAF Police, said:

"Lance Corporal Liam Tasker was an inspiration to us and all who met him. From the youngest soldier, to the ageing Airman, you could not help but be impressed by his constant drive to get things done. He was a man to be relied upon. He was never afraid to speak his mind, but

never lacked respect for those around him.

"He was an exceptional dog trainer, who showed natural talent from the beginning of his RAVC career, of which he was incredibly proud. We should all learn from this man - his ambition, his drive and his sense of pride. A good friend and colleague, he will be greatly missed."

Lance Corporal Natasha Mooney RAVC, said:

"Liam Tasker was a larger than life character and will be sorely missed. He was an outstanding dog trainer and an even better handler. Theo truly was man's best friend and they rest in peace together."

Private Steve Smith RAVC, said:

"Many things come to me when I think of Lance Corporal Liam Tasker. He was always there when anyone needed help. One of the easiest blokes to talk to, very professional in all he did, although he took everything he did very seriously. He was one of the boys, a true friend to me in the short time I knew him.

"You will never be forgotten my friend BLT. Rest in peace brother."

Private Monique Reynolds RAVC, said:

"Lance Corporal Liam Tasker was a big part of our unit. He was an amazing dog man and he inspired a lot of other dog handlers. Theo and LCpl Tasker did a brave job together in Afghanistan and he saved a lot of lives. I'll miss his laugh and banter, especially when it was about himself.

"Liam, you will be sorely missed. Rest in Peace."

Private Andrew Duffy RAVC, said:

"Lance Corporal Liam Tasker was always fun to be around. You were always keen to work the dogs and you were going to be chief dog trainer. You taught me a lot mate, I'm going to miss you Liam. I can't believe you are gone."

Private Alex Day RAVC, said:

Lance Corporal Liam Tasker, I only knew you for a short time, but from this I can say, you loved your work from the little tasks to the biggest of tasks. You always made us laugh with your larger than life humour, and most of all how much you taught us. There is a big part of us missing now and we will always remember you forever mate."

Private Rosie Jones RAVC, said:

"Liam, it was a privilege to have known you. I hope you are looking down at us, when we are

working our dogs. You helped me and Private Kirton so much with our dogs. You were going to be the Chief Trainer, we joked about. But I believed that you would have made a great one. All our love to you."