

Guardsman Michael Roland, 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards died on Friday 27th April 2012 as a result of a gunshot wound sustained in Afghanistan. Guardsman Michael Roland deployed to Afghanistan on 3rd April 2012 as a Rifleman in Number Three Platoon, part of The Queen's Company Grenadier Guards. He was based in Main Operating Base Price near Gereshk in the Nahr-e-Saraj North District of Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

On 26 April 2012 Guardsman Roland deployed with his Company on a three day operation to disrupt insurgent activity in a contested area in the north of Nahr-e-Saraj District. On the morning of 27th April 2012 he was fatally wounded during an exchange of small arms fire. He was extracted back to the hospital in Camp Bastion but sadly he died of his injuries.

Guardsman Roland was born on 5th August 1989 in Worthing, Sussex. After joining the Army, Guardsman Roland attended the Combat Infantryman's Course at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick. Upon completion of his training in November 2009 he moved to Nijmegen Company, Grenadier Guards in London. He spent a year conducting public duties at the Royal Palaces and participating in state ceremonial tasks. Guardsman Roland joined 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards in November 2010 and was placed in The Queen's Company. His first year in the Battalion included field training in the UK and an exercise in Canada. From September 2011 he undertook six months of preparatory training for his first tour of Afghanistan, before deploying in early April 2012.

Guardsman Roland's family paid the following tribute:

"Michael was a loving and caring son loved by his huge extended family and friends who are devastated by their loss. We are still coming to terms with losing him. Michael always wanted to join the Army and was so proud to be part of Queen's Company Grenadier Guards. Michael loved us all so much; with us he was not big and tough just gentle. We will miss him so much."

Lieutenant Colonel James Bowder MBE, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, said:

"Guardsman Roland's death is a tremendous loss to a close Battalion. Sparky, diligent and super-fit, he was a terrific soldier with a bright future. That he achieved so much in his short life is testament to his drive and ambition. He was an absolute pleasure to command and will be missed hugely by the Battalion and the Regimental family as a whole.

"We are all extremely proud of Guardsman Roland's selfless commitment to this important mission. Moreover, we are resolved to finish the job that he so bravely started. Finally, our prayers are with his parents, girlfriend and broader family; we share their great sense of loss and will never forget this most extraordinary of Guardsmen."

Major Piers Ashfield, The Captain of The Queen's Company, said:

"Guardsman Roland was one of the leading lights of The Queen's Company. His stoic devotion to duty and the generous friendship he offered to all those he met epitomised the man for whom no hardship was worthy of complaint. Guardsman Roland leaves behind a Company who will continue to cherish memories of shared laughter and happiness. The Queen's Company offers its most heartfelt condolences to Guardsman Roland's family and friends."

Lieutenant Alex Budge, Platoon Commander, 3 Platoon, said:

"Guardsman Roland epitomised a Grenadier Guardsman. Fit, tenacious and a character; he was liked by all for his sense of humour and respected by all for his skill as an infantry soldier. I would say he was one of the best Guardsman in the Company. His passing brings sorrow to us all, but we can take comfort that he died doing a job that he loved."

Sergeant Archer, Platoon Sergeant 3 Platoon, The Queen's Company, said:

"Guardsman Roland was a young and dedicated soldier who put his job before anything else. A fit, keen soldier and loyal to the end, Guardsman Roland was the template to which all Guardsmen should aspire. Never in trouble and never late, he was a model Guardsman who will truly be missed within the platoon. My deepest sympathies go out to his loving parents, who we are all thinking of at this difficult time."

Lance Sergeant Hendy, Section Commander, The Queen's Company, said:

"Guardsman Roland was a character to say the least, forever talking about himself in the third person which always made me laugh. He was my point man in the Section during pre-tour training, and was point man in the multiple out here. He was given this position for good reason. He was one of the fittest men in the platoon, very trustworthy and brave. He did everything to the best of his ability and would surely have gone a long way in the Grenadiers."

Lance Sergeant Mooney, Section Commander, The Queen's Company, said:

"Guardsman Roland was part of both my platoon and the Company Search Team. He knew he would be at the front of patrols and searching compounds. Even knowing the tasks he would be given would place him in danger, he never complained or even mentioned it for that matter. He was an integral part of the team and the platoon. He will be sorely missed by all members of The Queen's Company. Gone, but never forgotten."

Lance Corporal Clarke, Fire Team Commander, The Queen's Company, said:

"Mike was a caring bloke. He had so many ambitions. He took part in so many activities and was always up for a good laugh and a fair few beers with the boys. He was never afraid to lead the way, and we had a lot of good times together."

Guardsman Wates, Guardsman in The Queen's Company, said:

"Guardsman Roland was always happy to help and give good advice. He made me feel very welcome on joining the platoon, and I'm going to miss him very much."

Guardsman Churchill, Guardsman in The Queen's Company, said:

"Guardsman Roland was a pleasure to work with, as well as being a good friend. Everything he did, he did to the best of his ability. A true soldier who will be missed."