

1ST BATTALION THE MERCIAN REGIMENT (CHESHIRE)

POLICE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY AND TRAINING TEAM

Colour Sergeant Martyn Horton was 34 years old and from Runcorn. He enlisted into the Army in 1992 and joined the 1st Battalion The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment. He has served in the United Kingdom, Cyprus, The Falkland Islands, Belize and Kenya, and on operations in Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan. Promoted to Colour Sergeant in June 2009 he assumed the role of Reconnaissance Platoon Second-in-Command.

Moving from Support Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) he served with B (Malta) Company during the preparations for, and initial deployment on Operation HERRICK 12 in Afghanistan. He was then selected to command a team to train, advise and mentor the Afghan National Police in Gereshk, Helmand Province in order to further develop their capabilities and promote security and rule of law.

On 23 June 2010, following an attack on a Police Check Point near Gereshk, Colour Sergeant Horton's team, along with the Afghan National Police, deployed as a Quick Reaction Force to support. The vehicle in which he was travelling overturned into the Nahr-e-Bughra Canal. At approximately 2208hrs local, Colour Sergeant Horton died in the incident alongside three of his colleagues from the Police Advisory Team – Lance Corporal David Ramsden, Private Douglas Halliday and Private Alex Isaac.

Colour Sergeant Hortons' sister Caroline has made the following statement:

"Martyn lived for three things - family, Army and Liverpool. He loved fighting for his friends and family. He was a loving dad, brother and son; he touched everyone he met. We will miss his cheeky grin. He will be fondly missed by everyone he knew and sadly died doing the job he loved. Once met never forgotten."

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Hadfield, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Colour Sergeant Horton was one of our very best. He followed his stepfather into the 1st Battalion The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment, and then post-merger served with the 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire). During his career he had served in Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as completing exercises in Canada, America, Belize, Jordan and Kenya. As Second-in-Command of my Reconnaissance Platoon he was of course a highly professional field soldier, and he revelled in getting down and dirty and taking the fight to anyone who stood in the way of him or his men. But he was a friendly and amusing man, always looking for the fun in life, and that he enjoyed his soldiering so much meant that he was rarely without a smile, even under a helmet and with a rifle in his hands. On the night he died

he was heading towards a police checkpoint that was under attack from small arms and Rocket Propelled Grenades; CSgt Horton and his team had had to do this a number of times in the previous days and they had developed a bond of trust with the men there. He and his men had become known as the guardians of the Gereshk City Police, with the insurgents retreating every time they arrived. The loyalty that he engendered in people was inspiring, and these Afghan policemen were no different. Colour Sergeant Horton died as he lived; with his fellow soldiers, and selflessly and courageously defending those who placed their trust in him. He leaves a hole in the Battalion that will be very difficult to fill, but I cannot imagine the loss that his 9 year old son Ethan, his 17 year old stepdaughter Bethany and girlfriend Gemma will feel, along with the other members of his family, and his many military and civilian friends. Like a true Mercian Warrior he willingly took his place in the shield wall and stood firm to protect his fellows, striking hard whenever the enemy threatened. Our thoughts are with his son and his family at this very difficult time."

Warrant Officer Class 1 Darren Williams, Regimental Sergeant Major 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Colour Sergeant 'Bobby' Horton was one of our most professional field soldiers but was never truly comfortable in camp where he was known for being a 'camp tramp'. He was the epitome of a reconnaissance soldier: extremely fit, robust, selfless, courageous, audacious and fiercely loyal with a leadership style that would inspire trust and courage in all around him to 'Stand firm and Strike hard'. Bobby was a party animal and was always at the centre of a wind-up or being the butt of the joke himself; he always did or accepted this with a big smile on his face and it is this that will be missed in the Mess. We have lost one of our true characters and professional soldiers, a great friend and colleague to all, who will be sadly missed. My thoughts are with his family and friends at this very difficult time."

Major Paul Dupuy, Officer Commanding Police Advisory Team Gereshk, 4th Regiment Royal Artillery said:

"Colour Sergeant Horton, known as 'Bobby', was an exceptional soldier, truly dedicated and professional. He was brave, completely committed to his men and utterly selfless. He was always calm under pressure and his confidence brought reassurance to all around him whatever the situation. His sense of humour and grin never failed to lift our spirits even in adversity. I have been privileged to have had the opportunity to serve with him - I could not have asked for more. His loss will be felt by us all. My sincere condolences, thoughts and prayers go to his family at this most difficult of times."

Major Robin Barnbrook, Officer Commanding Support Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Colour Sergeant Bobby Horton was a true soldier, a valued friend and comrade-in-arms. An extremely fit and highly professional field soldier, Bobby was not happy unless he was in the thick of the action. Rumour had it that he was frustrated when he first came to Afghanistan because he thought his role would be dull; that soon changed as he led his men from the front through countless incidents in Gereshk in support of the Afghan National Police. He worked

hard and played hard; in fact he played extremely hard and was known and loved for being a bit of a 'social hand grenade'. But that was Bobby all over; a larger than life personality who was the life and soul of the party. He will leave a gap in the lives of those who had the privilege to know him. Bobby often talked of his own mortality; the only solace that I can draw from this tragedy is that he died doing the job he loved amongst the many friends that he held so dear. My thoughts, and the thoughts of his comrades in Support Company 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire), are with his family at the saddest of times."

Captain Ben Stephens, Intelligence Officer, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Colour Sergeant Horton has left a void in the Battalion that will be difficult to fill. He was the absolute epitome of a Cheshire and Mercian soldier. Always involved in high jinx, he naturally became the core element of whichever group he was in. More than anything, he was an extraordinary field soldier, who inspired all around him, irrespective of task or hardship. In fact, Colour Sergeant Horton positively thrived in austere conditions, seemingly getting stronger as the surroundings got worse. I had a natural affinity with 'Bobby' (a name bestowed upon him because of his father who also served with the Regiment) and his propensity to find trouble. His unrelenting love for his soldiers and deepest desire to provide for his family were traits which I truly admired. I can honestly say those experiences I shared with Colour Sergeant 'Bobby' Horton in life and in death will stay with me forever. My deepest sympathies go to his family and many close friends for the sorrow they now face. Bobby you were and always will remain in my memory as Ever Glorious."

Captain Grant Brown, Officer Commanding Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"I first met Colour Sergeant Horton a few years ago and soon realised what a character within the Battalion he was. His sense of humour was legendary and he was the sort of person who was able to cause mischief whilst remaining completely professional. It was not until we began working together that I realised how kind-hearted and caring he was. The welfare of the men he commanded was always his top priority and he was hugely respected as a result. Through troubled times, I relied on him more than he realised. I am eternally grateful for the assistance he gave me professionally, but more importantly, I value the friendship we shared. Martyn was a talented soldier with a huge amount of experience and his passing has left a hole in the lives of all those he came into contact with. As the Second-in-Command of the Reconnaissance Platoon, he shared a close relationship with his soldiers and with me as his commander. It was an honour and a privilege to serve alongside him and he will be sorely missed by us all. "

Captain Julian Clayton, Support Company Second-in-Command, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"I have known Bobby since he joined the Regiment as a young tom, and I knew his father who served in the Regiment before him. I first noticed Bobby when I was Company Quarter Master Sergeant of A Company and he was sent to me as a very reluctant Arms Storeman. He hated every minute of it because to him it wasn't front line and he wanted to be out there with the

blokes. Me and Scooby Doolan used to rip him because his writing was shocking; happier days looking back. Both of us have moved on since then, and it was to my great satisfaction that I found him as the Reconnaissance Platoon Second-in-Command when I took over as Support Company Second-in-Command. Reconnaissance is a job which always suited him. Small teams, maximum responsibility, reduced supervision and the chance to do things your own way - that was Bobby's style. He was happier in the field than in camp, a true recce soldier with an astute tactical brain. He was also without doubt one of the fittest soldiers I knew, able to tab with extreme weight despite his size, and also run with the very best in the Regiment; he had it all. To lose anyone is terrible, but when you start losing people like Colour Sergeant Horton, there just aren't the words. He had such a bright future ahead of him. My thoughts and sympathies go out to his family and friends back home, he will be remembered and acutely missed by us all. God Bless. Sleep well Colour."

Warrant Officer Class 2 Matt Henry, A Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"I have known Bobby since he joined the Battalion, more so when I joined A Company in 2000 and we were in the same platoon. I will always remember Bobby as the life and soul of the party. He was a massive character in the Mess and a night in the bar was not the same without him. I will remember you as a man who always had a smile on his face, who loved to have a laugh and loved the banter. You will be really missed and my thoughts are with your family."

Warrant Officer Class 2 Anthony Higginbottom, Company Sergeant Major B (Malta) Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"What can I say about Colour Sergeant Martyn 'Bobby' Horton. He had three loves in his life; his kids, Liverpool FC and living in bushes. Bobby was a true professional Infantry soldier. He loved his job and always wanted to be in the best platoon. Bobby was like a wildcat, he loved living in bushes. He was a Team Commander in Close Observation Platoon for two years and then became Platoon Sergeant and Second-in-Command of the Reconnaissance Platoon. He was not one for the parade square but put him in a bush and he would be in his playground. Bobby, you will always be admired for your courage, robustness and professionalism. I will always remember you and Recon will not be the same without you. The Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess will be a very quiet place without you propping up the bar. You will live on in our memory, but for now, you rest mate."

Colour Sergeant Neil Vickery, Second-in-Command Fire Support Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"I've known Bobby since I first joined the battalion in 1994. Right from the start, he was and always will be a constant source of inspiration to me. An 'A1' soldier, second to none." Sergeant Scott Jessop, A Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said: "I've known Bobby well for about 10 years. When I first met him he gave the impression of a 'jack the lad', and that was one of his many qualities. He always wanted to joke around and he made other people laugh; a morale booster who was good to be around. I had the pleasure of working alongside Bobby in Ballykinler, Northern Ireland and he was one of those characters

who was well motivated and professional. He was never the best turned out but that was part of his overall persona. What he lacked in dress sense, he made up for in professionalism. If I was half as good as Bobby, I would be happy. Even though I was older than him, I looked up to him as an exceptional leader who will be sorely missed. You will never be forgotten, and you will always be in my thoughts."

Sergeant Richard Kershaw, A Company, 1St Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"I first met Bobby when I joined the battalion in 2001. He was a Lance Corporal at the time and straight away Bobby was someone I looked up to and still do to this day. He was a great friend and someone you could always talk to, whatever the problem. I will miss him very much and I will never forget him; a true friend. My heart goes out to his family, especially his children Ethan and Bethany. I hope in time, they all get over this tragic loss. I will miss you Bobby."

Sergeant Mark Lomas, Sniper Platoon, Fire Support Company, 1St Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"When I first heard of your loss, my heart sank low. You were always having a laugh and were always game for anything. You were a true Battalion character who everyone got to know and love. The banter with you was second to none and you were always there to cheer lads up who were down. You were a proud father and you loved your white van too. I will miss you. Rest in peace friend, always in my heart."

Sergeant Andy Hawkins, Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Bobby Horton was an honest man who would tell anyone how it really was. If he had something to say then he would just say it. Bobby, I have known you for many years and you have been like a big brother to me as of late. You always stayed focused when times were hard and always made me laugh when the chips were down. Now, unfortunately, you cannot do that anymore, but don't worry Bobby as I will try my best to be as good as you. My recon hero, my 2IC, my mate Bobby. Rest now brother."

Sergeant David Davies, B (Malta) Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Colour Sergeant Martyn Horton was such a good friend to me from the first time that we met; he would always go the extra mile. He was one of the straightest talking, most professional men - a true field soldier. Martyn's sense of humour was one of his strong points and he would always lift the lads and get the absolute best out of them. Everyone will miss you so much Martyn, you are a Battalion personality and your passing will be a loss to every single person who has had the privilege to meet you. My thoughts are with your family, I will never forget you. Rest in peace my friend."

Corporal Simon Done, A Company, 1St Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Bobby was an inspiration to everyone in and out of work. A devoted father and someone I've looked up to throughout my career. You were always there to talk to and your cheeky grin made everyone smile, it also meant you were usually up to something, being the prankster you were. You were the friend everyone wanted to have around, and the leader to have when things were hard. You are the heart of the Battalion, the perfect warrior, keen, robust and always positive. It was my absolute honour and privilege to call you my friend. Loved by many, respected by all, you will never ever be forgotten my friend. Rest in peace, 'til we meet again. "

Corporal Richard Billows, A Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Colour Sergeant Horton was and still is one of the few men I could call a true friend. I first met Bobby, as he was known to us all, when I joined the Battalion in Cambridge. Bobby was full of life and nothing and no-one would ever faze him. He was always one for a laugh and a joke but knew when to turn it on when it came to work; a true professional. Bobby was a devoted father to his children Ethan and Bethany. You could see how proud he was when he spoke of them. My heart and prayers go out to his family at this sad time. I will never forget you Bobby and I know I will see you again one day. RIP my friend."

Corporal John Dare, Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Colour Sergeant Martyn Horton was not just my Platoon Second-in-Command, he was a loyal friend who took time to look after me when he didn't need to; that was the man he was. Scruffy in work, but the most professional soldier that I have had the privilege to know. When I think of you, I think of all the times that you have made me laugh; this is how most people will remember you. A straight talking man who always said what he felt, but knew how to put it. I remember last year both of us on the Reconnaissance Commanders' Course, we complained from start to finish but along the way we had a lot of good times. Martyn my friend I will always remember you. "

Lance Corporal Alexander Vickers, Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Martyn 'Bobby' Horton is someone who I have always aspired to be like after working under his command and alongside him for most of my career. Not a barracks soldier, he lived to be out in the field, confident, calm and commanding the natural respect of his men, who would follow him anywhere. He devoted his life to the Army and his children who he would talk about endlessly with great pride. Without doubt the best soldier I have ever had the privilege to serve with and a great friend who looked out for me during hard times. You will be missed by us all that knew you."

Lance Corporal Shawn Mills, Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Bobby, I remember the first time I met you, I was a candidate for the Non-Commissioned Officers' Cadre at the end of Op TELIC 4 and I was placed in your section. I immediately

thought of you as someone who could teach me the no-nonsense way of doing things, and give me more confidence to become a professional soldier, a better soldier. Going out on the town was always bound to be eventful with you around, no matter where it was. I remember the way that you never liked being told you were wrong or losing a bet (especially when it involved 20 quid on the Derby - thanks). However, there were always a good number of times that you were right. I just wish you were right when you used to say that you would die when you were older. Bobby, I will always remember the friend that I once had that would always be there for me whether it was for a lift home, or for some Mercian shorts. Bobby, I will always remember the friend I spent 3 weeks getting drunk with in Australia, and also on a New Year's Day hiding on some hill in Ireland, both complaining that it was very cold for five hours. Bobby, you were a great inspiration in my life so far, you have made me a better man just by being you. I am pleased to be able to say I worked alongside you, and I am honoured and proud to have called you my friend. Bobby, I will always remember you."

The Police Advisory Team Gereshk, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

"Bobby was an outgoing, friendly guy with a great sense of humour. Always up for a laugh, Bobby could make light of any situation and never failed to provide morale. Never one to stand back on the sidelines, he was a highly professional and pro-active commander who wanted to take the fight to the enemy and win. He was a man who was always ready to make the most out of any situation and always led from the front. Stand Firm Strike Hard!"