

1ST BATTALION THE 22ND (CHESHIRE) REGIMENT

Lance Corporal Andrew Breeze was 31 years old and from Manchester. He enlisted into the Army in February 1996 and joined 1st Battalion The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment in Ballykelly, Northern Ireland following completion of basic training. He has served in the United Kingdom and Cyprus, and on operations three times in Northern Ireland, twice in Iraq and also in Afghanistan. He successfully completed a Junior Non-Commissioned Officers' Cadre and was duly promoted to Lance Corporal in December 2002.

He deployed to Patrol Base 1 in the Babaji area of Helmand Province in southern Afghanistan in March 2010 with B (Malta) Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) as part of the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles Battlegroup, which forms Combined Force Nahr-e Saraj (South). The company has been tirelessly providing stability and security to the local population whilst promoting Afghan governance and economic growth. B (Malta) Company has improved the quality of the lives of hundreds of local nationals around the villages of Enezai and Char Coucha by providing much needed security and reassurance to the Afghans.

On 12 June 2010, during an operation to clear an area near to Check Point KINGSHILL in order to increase security around the military base, Lance Corporal Breeze was caught in an explosion and was killed in action.

Lance Corporal Breeze's family paid the following tribute:

"We are very proud of a brave, loving and sincere son, brother and uncle. He served for 14 years in the Armed Forces and was recognised as an excellent soldier. The Army was his life. He is going to be desperately missed by his family, friends and his fiancée."

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Hadfield, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion The Mercian

Regiment (Cheshire) said:

Lance Corporal Andrew Breeze joined the 1st Battalion The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment in 1996, and during his time as a Cheshire and latterly a Mercian he deployed on six operational tours, three in Northern Ireland, two in Iraq and finally one in Afghanistan. He was killed whilst clearing an area to give increased protection to

the local community and his fellow soldiers. A dedicated soldier and leader, he understood the risks inherent in his chosen profession, and still continuously deployed in the service of others, selflessly and courageously protecting his mates and the civilian population around him. He was a stalwart of the Battalion, and of the Javelin Platoon. Throughout his service he had been no stranger to danger, and approached his work with discipline and determination, but always

with a ready smile. Known as 'Windy' or 'Breezy' to his many friends in the Battalion, it is perhaps this smile that will stick most in our minds, that and his ability to always see the good in situations and people. He was engaged to be married to Lorraine, and talked endlessly about her and his family. We are proud to say that he is one of ours and always will be, standing firm at all times, and striking hard whenever the enemy threatened. Another Mercian hero - we will remember him. The thoughts of

the Battalion and the Regiment are with his fiancée and his family at this difficult time.

Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Strickland MBE, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion The Royal

Gurkha Rifles Battlegroup said:

We have lost a fine man, and the tragedy of his death spreads far. Lance Corporal Andy Breeze was the man that every company needs; experienced and approachable, he was there for everyone, always. Those who have been soldiers will know the effect of such a character, spreading calm reassurance in times of tension to those who are less certain. He died as he had lived, stepping forward to shoulder the burden of the task in hand, with a smile on his face. His company mourns his loss, but feels more keenly the devastation of the loved ones that he left behind. It was an honour to have served together.

Major Richard Grover, Officer Commanding B (Malta) Company, 1st Battalion The

Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

Lance Corporal Andy Breeze tragically lost his life on 12 June 2010 and his loss has been keenly felt by all within B (Malta) Company. Popular, outgoing and kind hearted, he typified the team work ethic so valued by all in the infantry. A soldier of 14 years service, he joined in 1996 when the Battalion was based in Ballykelly, Northern Ireland. He first joined B Company, but he spent the majority of his time in Support Company as part of the Anti-Tank Platoon, before returning to B Company once more for this tour to Afghanistan. Regarded as 'part of the furniture' of the Anti-Tank Platoon; he was part of the fabric of this Battalion. Immensely popular and a friend to all, his friendly and compassionate manner meant his advice was widely sought, especially by newer soldiers looking for guidance. Always content, never one to moan no matter how hard it got, his nature was to crack on without complaint. This was the measure of the man. He would do anything to help his fellow comrades and would always put himself in a position to be of assistance. His bravery and professionalism were typified by his excellent work only the other week in evacuating a casualty during a sustained contact with the enemy. Dependable and trustworthy, you knew he would always do his best no matter the circumstances.

During his service Lance Corporal Breeze had been on operations in Northern Ireland and Iraq on numerous occasions. A dedicated soldier, this was his life. As a long term member of the Anti-Tank Platoon, he was waiting for his promotion to full corporal; a promotion that was richly deserved following his hard work and potential.

Lance Corporal Breeze will be sorely missed by all in B (Malta) Company, and his spirit will live on in the work we do. We will remember you Mercian brother, stand firm.

Captain Rupert Pye-Watson, Javelin Platoon Commander, 1st Battalion The Mercian

Regiment (Cheshire) said:

Lance Corporal Breeze, or Breezy as he was commonly known, will leave an enormous gap in all our lives. I could rely on him to assist in everything we did in camp and he was totally relaxed in command but this never affected his judgement or command presence.

He had been a foundation of the Javelin Platoon for many years, and was waiting for promotion to Corporal after completing the Detachment Commanders' Course last year. Nothing was too much effort for Breezy, he always sought to achieve things in a cheery and unassuming manner. He was great friends to all those in the Platoon and Support Company alike. He will be greatly missed.

His family were always in his thoughts. He talked about them all the time, and how proud he was. He shall be forever in our thoughts, and our hearts go out to his family and friends at this most tragic time.

Captain Julian Clayton, Company Second-in-Command, Support Company, 1st Battalion

The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) said:

Lance Corporal Breeze was in many ways the epitome of the modern day Infantry Soldier. In his professional life he was extremely dedicated, respected and well liked by all. He was a physically strong man who always led his troops from the front, a classic Infantry Non-Commissioned Officer. In his free time he lived his life to the full, occasionally causing me and his Company Sergeant Major some anxious moments, but for all the right reasons. He had so much potential for the future, and I personally had very high hopes for his career. To say his loss is tragic seems inadequate, but he will be sorely missed by all of us in Support Company. Our hearts and sincere condolences go out to his family at this tragic time. He was such a good lad, it is a very sad time.

Sergeant Robert Carr, B (Malta) Company, 1St Battalion The Mercian Regiment

(Cheshire) said:

Andy Breeze joined the Army in 1996 and joined 5 Platoon, B Company in Ballykelly. He was one of the first people I met when I joined and from the start we became friends. We spent the better part of a decade serving together in 5 Platoon and then in the Anti-Tank Platoon. We served together in Northern Ireland and Iraq, and Andy was one of the best soldiers I have and will ever work with. He liked a drink and we had many drunken adventures across the world. He was part of the furniture in the Anti-Tank Platoon and was always there to give advice to the younger generation, the way only Andy could. He will be sorely missed and the world is now a

darker place without his banter, humour and friendship.

Sergeant Andy Hawkins, B (Malta) Company, 1St Battalion The Mercian Regiment

(Cheshire) said:

Lance Corporal Andy Breeze joined the Cheshires in 1996 in Ballykelly, Northern Ireland around the same time as me. He was a member of B Company for several years before moving to Anti-Tank Platoon, now Javelin Platoon. Andy was great at his job and enjoyed doing it, no matter how bad things were he would never moan or complain, he would just crack on and dig in hard. Andy was due to promote soon, after successfully completing the Javelin Course. I have known you Andy for 14 years now and can't believe you have been taken away from us like this, however now is the time for you to have the rest you deserve my brother. Great lad, great leader, great friend. Andy Breeze RIP mate.