

Sergeant Luke Taylor, Royal Marines was killed in Afghanistan on Monday 26th March 2012 by fire from an Afghan National Army soldier. He was serving as part of Task Force Helmand when he was shot and killed at the main entrance to Lashkar Gah Main Operating Base in Helmand province.

Sergeant Luke Taylor, aged 33, joined the Royal Marines in 1997. Over the course of his impressive career, Luke gathered extensive operational experience doing a job that he loved. He readily sought out new challenges and tackled them with enthusiasm and a determination to succeed.

Sergeant Taylor was outstandingly professional. He was a selfless, dedicated and talented Royal Marine who approached everything he did with passion, a keen sense of humour and the desire to excel. A modest and capable Senior Non Commissioned Officer, he was liked and respected by everyone he worked with and was always committed to doing everything he could to assist his comrades in arms. His generous and compassionate nature made him a very popular member of the unit. Although he had arrived in Theatre only four weeks previously, he worked hard to drive the work of his team forward, achieving much in a short time and leaving a legacy that will be hard to match.

Sergeant Taylor came from Bournemouth. He married in 2008 and leaves behind his beloved wife, Nicola, and their young son, Roan. Luke was a devoted husband and father, and often talked of his family back in the UK. He will be sorely missed by his comrades but this is nothing compared to the loss that his family will feel. Our thoughts are with them.

*** Please note that, due to the nature of Sergeant Taylor's work, the following quotes have been anonymised ***

His Commanding Officer said:

"Sergeant Luke Taylor was one of those very unique 'soldiers' who combined the highest professional standards with a completely disarming and relaxed personality. Always an absolute pleasure to work with, you knew that Sergeant Taylor would deliver first time, every time. With a wealth of experience under his belt, he was fearless and would tackle every challenge head on with his usual charismatic but direct approach. He was a natural focal point; those junior would look up to him, those above would listen when he spoke. Physically robust, he was a great sportsman and always lead from the front. And that is how I will remember him

◆ a natural leader, with inspirational flair who was devoted to his family. They are of course, utmost in my mind, at this terribly sad time."

His Officer Commanding said:

"Sergeant Luke Taylor was a formidable character who doted on his family. He always spoke of them and you could tell they were never far from his thoughts. His son, Roan, in particular, was clearly an inspiration to him. Sergeant Taylor was one of my best Marines who took direction and gave me tangible results. Sharp, quick-witted and always ready to volunteer, Sergeant Taylor was an integral member of the team. A natural team player, he was equally adept on his own using his abundant experience and sheer initiative to drive forward. For me, Sergeant Taylor epitomised everything positive about the military

◆ he worked hard and played hard and his efforts here in Helmand will not be forgotten. Those friends and colleagues who remain behind on tour have grown even stronger since his loss and they will remember him in line with the highest traditions of the military

◆ they will deliver the results on operations that he would have wanted and they celebrate his life and mourn his loss when they return. As we soldier on and remember Luke in our own way, our thoughts of course, are with his wife, Niki, and their son, Roan, at this tragic time."

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Sergeant Luke Taylor RM's Commanding Officer

A colleague said:

"Luke was the kind of guy you wanted next to you

◆ regardless of the situation, he was a cool head and a source of endless banter. I never saw him fazed; he just

seemed to "crack on" and many a time dragged those around with him! He had one of those infectious charismas, always able to talk himself out of a situation. For me, like so many, Luke was simply an inspiration. Completely dedicated and loyal to his family, you could just feel the warmth when he spoke of them. And on the rugby pitch he was a master ♦ not just at playing, but leading teams to victory. It is difficult to try and sum Luke up in just these few words ♦we all miss him, but that is of course nothing compared to his devoted wife, Niki, and loving son, Roan. Our thoughts are with them. We will celebrate his achievements and the memories he has given us. Luke ♦ thank you from us all for the good times you gave us and the stories that we will carry on telling long into the future."

The following tributes have been made by former colleagues in the Royal Marines.

A warrant officer class 2 from the Royal Marines:
"Loyal colleague, close friend, training buddy, comedy inspiration. He will be sadly missed but not forgotten."

A colour sergeant from the Royal Marines said:
"It is difficult to summarise in a few words the sorrow and grief felt for Luke's loss. Sadness for his immediate family, Niki and his little bruiser, his Mum, brother and remaining family but also that empty feeling and grief gripping us remaining members of his extended family - the Royal Marines Brotherhood. Many memories all bring a smile and a laugh. Another good bloke taken. Rest easy fella. See you on the flip side."

A colour sergeant from the Royal Marines said:
"Luke, you had a Heart of Oak that came with loyalty and a brilliant sense of humour. These are the traits of an inspired father, loving husband, Royal Marine and quality oppo."
"Stand Easy Royal."

A sergeant from the Royal Marines said:
"Luke, a hoofing Bootneck, hoofing bloke, hoofing mate. Always with a smile on your face and the ability to make us all laugh - you will be sorely missed your friend and brother in arms."

A corporal from the Royal Marines said:
"Luke, a true friend is gone and a legend is born. A hoofing bloke, when Luke talked people listened because nobody could spin a dit like Luke. He lived life to the max, constantly pushing the boundaries, at home learning to BMX with his son Roan, or a complete change in career path, never happy to sit on his 'Globe and Laurels' (he'd rip me for that pun). Always the heart and soul of any party and had everyone around him in tears, and now he's done it again."
"To his wife, Niki, and son, Roan, when Luke and I went away on lads' biking adventures Luke's conversations always came back to home and you guys. I don't think you were ever far from his thoughts and I felt lucky to share them - it was true love in every sense of the word. My heart goes out to you and if there is anything you ever need, it goes without saying, just ask. To Luke's family all I can say is, you did an extraordinary job, my deepest condolences. Love you forever mate."