

Captain Bryce Robert Duffy

Captain Rob Hartley  
Battery Captain

109th Observation Post Battery



For the first time in recent years 4th Regiment must farewell one of its own; Captain Bryce Robert Duffy killed in action on operational service in Afghanistan on 29th October 2011. This stands as a day that will never be forgotten by Bryce's fiancé, family, friends and the Regimental family as a whole.

Bryce was shot by a member of the Afghan National Army in a Patrol Base in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan while serving with the Mentoring Task Force – Three. It was his second tour in a country where Australian soldiers have engaged in combat for over a decade. The nature of Bryce's service spoke to the nature of the man; he volunteered for a second tour when a fellow officer was wounded in action. Fully conversant with the risk he offered his service readily and with passion - he knew no higher calling than to serve his country fighting alongside his mates in combat. Rather than mourning his loss Bryce would want the memory of his time to be celebrated. Those that remain will endeavour to do him justice in the remembrance.

Bryce was born in Sydney in 1984 and was a proud student of the Anglican Church Grammar School in Brisbane - 'Churchie'. He joined the Australian Defence Force Academy in 2003 where he continued his love affair with rowing, surfing, scuba diving, fishing and of course sampling of the brewed amber nectar. Upon receiving his commission on graduation from the Royal Military College–Duntroon in 2006 he was posted to the 1st Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery based in Brisbane. It was during this initial posting that Bryce developed into the Forward Observer who deployed to Afghanistan with the 1st Mentoring Task Force in 2010 - a tour that was awarded a Meritorious Unit Citation.

In January 2011 Bryce was posted to the 4th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery in Townsville, a location that gave him ample opportunity to sate his thirst for the outdoors and adventure. Bryce spent his spare time in two main endeavours. The first was near-endless training for the Special Air Service Regiment selection course

which he completed shortly before his deployment. The second was spending time on his boat, fishing, mud crabbing and enjoying an icy cold beverage. Of the two, Bryce's fitness was without doubt the more successful of the pursuits as his ute spent more time bogged in the tidal plains of Townsville than it did on solid ground and he spent more time rowing his boat than he did with engines working.

For all soldiers, especially those of 4th Regiment, Bryce's passing is a sombre reminder of the nature of our duty; however, his life was a lesson in care-free enjoyment. Bryce lives on through his fiancé, his parents and two sisters and will be forever remembered by his mates for the way he lived his life, not the manner in which it was taken from him.

*From this day to the ending of the world,  
But we in it shall be remembered-  
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
For he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.*

Rest in Peace Captain Bryce Duffy. Gone but never forgotten.

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## Eulogy

Lieutenant Colonel C.P.H. Weller, CSC  
Commanding Officer 4th Regiment RAA  
Anglican Grammar School, Brisbane  
11th November 2011

93 years ago the guns fell silent on the Western Front and since we have remembered on this day those who have fallen. Today we honour Captain Bryce Duffy of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, another Anzac, who died in the service of his country.

I cannot find better words to define Bryce as an Army officer than Anzac. C.E.W. Bean said *Anzac 'stood and still stands, for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship and endurance that will never own defeat.'* This encapsulates Bryce and his approach to soldiering.

I had the privilege to serve with Bryce this year as his Commanding Officer. He came to 4th Regiment after four years in 1st Field Regiment that included a deployment to Afghanistan.

Bryce is one of those magnificent people for whom life is about more than personal advantage – he believed in duty, honour, country - and dedicated his life to them wholeheartedly. His actions in the Regiment reinforced this. I have three anecdotes about Bryce that I would like to share.

- Bryce prepared for the SASR selection course by training incredibly hard – I had told him that I would let him attempt selection only if he convinced me that he was prepared fully. He was... he completed that most demanding course but was not selected. I will always draw inspiration from his response

to this – mature and reflective without rancour he redoubled his efforts to be the best Officer he could be, which reinforced that he was a man of character.

- Bryce also pushed boundaries for enjoyment. Less well known than his passion for fishing is his penchant for cross country driving in a 2WD ute! Imagine my surprise one Sunday when I heard that seven of my officers had become bogged on nearby tidal flats and required a tracked excavator to get them out... as things had transpired Bryce had been ‘cross countrying’ in the 2WD ute and become hopelessly bogged so he rang a number of mates – all officers in the Regiment – who proceeded in a manner akin to lemming migration to see if they could in their 4WD best him and get him out – alas they could not and Bryce along with excavator was the winner on the day. I was left with grudging admiration for his powers of persuasion and peer acceptance and a concern for the judgement of my junior officers!
- Shortly following selection I asked Bryce if he would replace Lieutenant Jesse Butler who had been wounded by an Improvised Explosive Device in Afghanistan. True to form he volunteered without hesitation. I believe he saw deploying to Afghanistan as his place his purpose, and - as a warrior - he put service before self and went once again into harms way.

I know from Major Phill Hickey, his Battery Commander there, that Bryce marked his time in Afghanistan with unbounded energy, diligence and belief. Even though only there for a short while he contributed to the mentoring task force tangibly.

Bryce was a consummate professional who loved soldiering – his chosen vocation. He accepted its privations and relinquished many of society’s luxuries. A leader and warrior who was respected and admired by all ranks Bryce epitomised Teddy Roosevelt’s man in the arena where:

*It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.*

Serving with Bryce was an inspiration, a privilege and a pleasure. Our nation is poorer for his passing but richer for his service. I will miss him.

We shall remember him.

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Memorial Service

Saint Barbara’s Day 2011 at 4th Regiment RAA  
Lieutenant Colonel C.P.H. Weller, CSC

Captain Bryce Duffy was killed in action on 29th October 2011 in Helmand Province Afghanistan while serving with MTF 3 as a Joint Fire Team Commander. Today, on Saint Barbara's Day we have gathered to honour him. We honour his service that he gave our nation willingly and unreservedly. We honour his sacrifice as our brother in the profession of arms.

Captain Duffy's death is a tragedy - of that there is no doubt – his life was anything but. He lived an examined life, one full of service, accomplishment, dedication, belief and love. It is here on his life, his achievements and his character that we should focus and find inspiration. For there is much to be found.

Aristotle said that *'we are what we repeatedly do – excellence, therefore is not an act but a habit'*. By this measure Captain Bryce Duffy exhibited professional excellence in all that he did.

*In his dedication to duty,  
In his indomitable spirit,  
In his belief in his Army and commitment to his nation,  
In his passion for his profession  
And in his willingness to accept its hardships and privations.*

For Bryce there was no act rather he believed that to be an Australian Regular Army Officer this was ***who you were***, how you behaved and what you did.

Captain Duffy approached his time in this Regiment with great vigour and immense focus. As the Assistant Operations Officer he was dedicated – even though as a hard charging young warrior more at home in the field – what the Americans would call a 'Muddy Boots Soldier' - the job, an unglamorous staff position that requires unrelenting graft in the engine room to make the Regiment work, was perhaps not his preferred option. Regardless he produced fine results, made all the more impressive by his other consuming job - training for the SASR Selection Course. On Friday many of us had a taste of that training with the PT session we did based on one of his workouts around and over Brigade Hill.

To his tremendous credit he was one of the few who completed that most arduous course but he was not selected for service with SASR. The true test of character is not how we act when all is well, rather what we do in times of trial and trepidation. Captain Duffy reflected on this rebuff, and responded by redoubling his efforts to be the best Officer he could be, which reinforced that he was a man of character.

True to form when I asked him if he would replace Captain Jesse Butler who had been wounded in action he did not hesitate. He believed in our endeavours in Afghanistan and that as a soldier and a warrior his place was to the fore. So once again he put service before self and went into harm's way.

Our Adjutant Captain Dan Groves spent some time with him in Tarin Kowt and described him as happy as a pig in the proverbial and at his professional home. Even though only there a short while he contributed to the Mentoring Task Force tangibly.

Captain Duffy was admired and respected as a consummate professional here and overseas. Fit, tough and courageous he was a fine leader and for my mind an inspirational Officer not because he courted attention but rather because he did his

duty without fanfare - letting his actions speak for themselves – and they did. I think that our Army and Country are in safe hands because of young people like Bryce.

If you can judge a person by their friends then Bryce is judged favourably. Bryce's friends – both soldiers and civilians - are an impressive, fiercely loyal group who loved their mate and knew that he would always be there for them.

There is no doubt that he loved his family and was loved completely in return. Rarely have I heard such poignant and heartfelt words delivered so eloquently as by his sisters, Cassie and Sam at his funeral. Their love for their brother and courage to express it so well is extraordinary. Spending time with his parents Kim and Kerry I witnessed their strength and dignity and I saw the well spring of the fine man and officer with whom I was privileged to serve.

To you all I very glad you are here and I hope the Duffy's will remain a part of this Regiment in the years to come.

For those of us in the Regiment our duty now is to ensure that Captain Bryce Duffy's memory remains burnished and his example burns brightly as inspiration for the way we should approach our profession and executed our duty. His name will rest gently with those other Anzac's of the Regiment on our Honour Board.

Captain Bryce Duffy a fine officer, fierce friend and much loved son and brother – you filled Kipling's unforgiving minute with than 60 seconds worth of distance run. We are all richer for having served with and known you.

We shall remember you.