

# The Royal Australian Artillery **LIAISON LETTER**

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At the time of his too early death Jeff was deeply involved in researching a book to be titled 'Gunners in Vietnam'. He planned that this would provide a record of how the Australian and New Zealand Gunners operated in South Vietnam on deployments and operations from 1965-1971, with some reference to the differing American system and to some of the many people and stories and comical incidents which accompanied the technical side of life. I hope that someone will take up a challenge to complete this manuscript.

Farewell Jeff, thank you for your service to the nation and the Regiment and for your humour and friendship. You will be missed by so many.

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## 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.

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*... 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 ...*

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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 Church 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.

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*... he believed in duty, honour,  
country ...*

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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.

*... a consummate professional  
who loved soldiering ...*

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.

## Memorial Service

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

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.

*He lived an examined life, one full  
of service, accomplishment,  
dedication, belief and love.*

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.

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*... our duty now is to ensure that  
Captain Bryce Duffy's memory  
remains burnished and his  
example burns brightly as  
inspiration ...*

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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.

## Biography - Captain Duffy

Captain Duffy was a member of the Mentoring Task Force - Three and was from the 4th Field Regiment, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery (RAA) based in Townsville.

Captain Duffy is survived by his partner, parents and family.

Captain Duffy was born in Sydney, NSW, in 1984. He was educated in Brisbane. He joined the Australian Defence Force Academy in January 2003 and completed a Bachelor of Science. He graduated from the Royal Military College in December 2006. He was then posted to 1st Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery based in Brisbane.

He served with the 1st Field Regiment between 2007 and 2010. He was transferred to the 4th Field Regiment in Townsville in January 2011 as the Assistant Operations Officer, before his second deployment to Afghanistan in September.

Captain Duffy was a well known and highly-regarded young officer. He was recognised by his commanders for his strength of character, determination and diligence. His peers remember him as an officer who maintained the highest possible personal standards. His selfless dedication to duty was demonstrated by the fact that he had volunteered for his second tour of duty in Afghanistan at short notice, after a fellow officer was wounded in action.

Captain Duffy has been awarded the following honours and awards:

- Australian Defence Medal
- Meritorious Unit Citation - 1st Mentoring Task Force - Afghanistan 20 January to 30 October 2010
- NATO Non Article 5 Medal with clasp - International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)
- Afghanistan Campaign Medal
- Australian Active Service Medal with clasp International Coalition Against Terrorism (ICAT).

During Captain Duffy's service in the Australian Army he deployed on the following operations:

- Operation SLIPPER (Afghanistan) - January 2010 - October 2010
- Operation YASI ASSIST (Australia) - February 2011
- Operation SLIPPER (Afghanistan) - September 2011 - October 2011.

30 October 2011

## Three Australian soldiers killed, seven wounded in Forward Operating Base shooting incident

The Australian Defence Force is mourning the loss of three soldiers who were killed in action when a member of the Afghan National Army (ANA) opened fire with an automatic weapon at Forward Operating Base in southern Afghanistan yesterday afternoon (Australian Eastern Daylight Saving Time).

Seven Australian soldiers were also wounded in the attack.

The incident occurred during a weekly parade held by the 6th Kandak of the Afghan National Army's 4th Brigade and their Australian mentors.

Chief of the Defence Force General David Hurley said both the killed and wounded soldiers' next of kin have been notified.

"It is difficult to find words that adequately reflect the profound sense of sorrow and loss," he said.

"On behalf of the entire Defence community, I extend our deepest sympathies to the three soldiers' families, friends and comrades."

Initial reporting indicated a member of the 6th Kandak turned his weapon on the Australians shortly after the conclusion of the parade.

"At this time the motive for the shooting is unknown but I can confirm Australian troops, including some of those who were wounded, engaged the gunman who was subsequently shot and killed," General Hurley said.

One Afghan interpreter was also killed. Two other Afghan interpreters and an ANA soldier were wounded.

The wounded were treated by Australian personnel at the scene before being evacuated by helicopter to nearby ISAF medical centres for emergency treatment.

As of this morning one Australian soldier is being treated for life-threatening wounds, four are being treated for serious wounds and another two are being treated for minor wounds.

It is likely that the most seriously wounded Australian personnel will be moved to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany in the coming days for further treatment.

Combined Australian and Afghan investigations into the shooting incident are now underway and the Commanding Officer of Mentoring Task Force -3, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Smith, and the Commander of the 4th Brigade, 205 (Hero) Corps of the Afghan National Army, Brigadier General Mohammed Zafar Khan, have moved to the scene.

"Brigadier General Mohammed Zafar Khan ordered the disarming of all 6th Kandak personnel and confined all members to their barracks and enhanced security measures have also been implemented at the base," General Hurley said.

"I also want to assure you that we are taking the necessary steps to protect our Australian personnel on the ground in Afghanistan but it is critical that we show restraint and reserve our judgments until an investigation is complete.

"Our troops in Afghanistan are in shock and they are in pain, but they are tough and resilient Australian soldiers and I know they will find the strength and determination to continue their mission and honour their mates."

Defence will provide updates on this incident as they come to hand.

32 Australian soldiers have been killed during operations in Afghanistan.

209 Australian Defence Force members have been wounded during operations in Afghanistan.

44 Australian Defence Force members have been wounded in Afghanistan during 2011.

**Media contact:**

Defence Media Operations 02 6127 1999

## Minister for Defence - Press Conference, Perth

**TRANSCRIPT (Extract):** PRESS CONFERENCE, PERTH

**DATE:** 31 OCTOBER 2011

**TOPIC:** Afghanistan

STEPHEN SMITH: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I'm sorry to be a bit late.

I wanted to give you an update on events in Afghanistan over the weekend, the terrible and tragic events. I'll be leaving for the Five Powers Defence Arrangement 40th Anniversary Meeting.

I'll give you an update on events in Afghanistan. As we speak, Defence are releasing the names of the three Australian soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

It's my sad duty to advise you that the three soldiers concerned are Corporal Ashley Birt who was aged 22 years of age; Lance Corporal Luke Gavin who was aged 27; and Captain Bryce Duffy, who was aged 26.

Corporal Birt was born in Nambour in Queensland. He was based in Enoggera in Brisbane, and was part of combined team Uruzgan. Lance Corporal Gavin was based in Townsville in north Queensland. He was born in Manly in New South Wales. Captain Duffy was also based in Townsville. He was born in Sydney, New South Wales.

Defence is, as we speak, providing the full details of the three soldiers tragically killed, so other than again expressing my condolences to the families of Corporal Birt, Lance Corporal Gavin, and Captain Duffy, I'll leave it to Defence's usual procedures to provide the public with the full details of service and the particulars of the three concerned.

This is of course a tragedy for our nation. But it is a tragedy for those three families, and a terrible reminder to the other 29 families who have seen their sons, husbands, brothers killed in the course of our time in Afghanistan.

Can I provide you with an update on other particulars given the interest in this matter-General Hurley has provided an update in the day. General Hurley is now in Singapore in preparation for the Five Powers Defence Meeting.

There are a range of issues which General Hurley and I were asked about yesterday which we are able to address, but as you would appreciate, very many of them remain subject to careful and exhaustive assessment. But can I advise that the offending ANA soldier was engaged and killed by two Australian soldiers. One of the Australian soldiers had been himself wounded in the incident.

The seven wounded Australian soldiers, the seven casualties have since been moved to Kandahar in preparation for their movement to Germany for medical treatment. This is a familiar medical treatment process, but all seven will arrive in the course of the next few days in Germany for ongoing medical treatment.

The 6th Kandak of the Afghan National Army 4th Brigade which was and is based at the forward operating base are no longer confined to barracks, are no longer confined to their quarters, but are engaged in administrative and training issues.

This decision has been made by Brigadier Khan in consultation with Australian command on the ground. It is not proposed at this stage to rearm or reequip the sixth Kandak of the Afghan National Army 4th Brigade. But that is a decision which is expected to be made by Brigadier Khan over the course of the next couple of days. In the meantime Australian personnel are working with Brigadier Khan, with the Afghan National Army 4th Brigade on the ground, planning and working through the resumption of training and mentoring so far as the 6th Kandak is concerned.

They are the most pertinent issues in respect of updating events over the weekend on Afghanistan, and if I can finish my comments in that respect by again expressing condolences on behalf of the government to the families of Corporal Birt, Lance Corporal Gavin, and Captain Duffy.

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## Statement on behalf of the family of Captain Bryce Duffy

Bryce was an exceptional man and a dedicated officer who was an inspiration not only to us, but also to his peers and the men and women he served alongside.

He was a Churchie (former student of the Anglican Church Grammar School), a rower, a surfer, a fisherman, a scuba diver and a much loved member of a very proud military family. He was forever the consummate professional, extremely competent and very well respected by his colleagues and commanders.

He was passionate about what he did, truly believed in his cause, and always strived to serve his country in the best way possible.

He held long career aspirations in the Army, having recently completed the SAS selection course and looking forward to joining their ranks in the near future.

We loved Bryce to the ends of the world and not a day will go by where he is not thought of.

We now request the media to respect our privacy at this very difficult time and provide us with the time and space to grieve.

We will not be making any further comment and thank the media and community for their understanding.

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11 November 2011

## Captain Bryce Duffy farewelled

Family, friends and fellow soldiers gathered on Remembrance Day at Brisbane's Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) to honour the life and service of Captain Bryce Duffy, killed on operations in Afghanistan on 29 October 2011.

Captain Duffy was remembered as an exceptional man and an inspirational officer at the Morris Hall funeral service.

Bryce's closest friends from 4th Regiment Royal Australian Artillery (4 RAA) formed the honour guard and catafalque party while fellow soldiers, relatives, Churchie students and members of the public lined the route into Morris Hall to pay their respects to the fallen.

During a solemn eulogy, Commanding Officer 4 RAA Lieutenant Colonel Charles Weller described Bryce as an officer with unbounded energy, diligence and belief.

"Bryce is one of those magnificent people for whom life is about more than personal advantage - he believed in duty, honour and country, and dedicated his life to them wholeheartedly," Lieutenant Colonel Weller said.

"He was a consummate professional who loved soldiering - his chosen vocation. He accepted its privations and relinquished many of society's luxuries. He was a leader and warrior who was respected and admired by all ranks.

"Our nation is poorer for his passing but richer for his service, we will miss him."

The Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison attended the funeral alongside senior military dignitaries and official guests.

Bryce was serving with Mentoring Task Force Three (MTF-3) when he was tragically killed in Afghanistan. He was awarded the, Australian Active Service Medal with clasp International Coalition Against Terrorism (ICAT), Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Australian Defence Medal, NATO Non Article 5 Medal with clasp - International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Meritorious Unit Citation - 1st Mentoring Task Force.

Captain Bryce Duffy was buried with full military honours at the Mt Gravatt War Cemetery.

**Media Note:** Images will be available at:

<http://images.defence.gov.au/fotoweb/Grid.fwx?archiveId=5003=&search=11121243>