

Ministry of Defence confirms the death of Second Lieutenant Max George

In December 2021, 2Lt Max George commissioned into the 5th Battalion The Rifles (5 RIFLES), and as the Queen's Medal Winner. Buoyed by reserve service in his University Officer Training Corps and with Z Company of the 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, he completed the tactics phase of the arduous Platoon Commander's Battle Course with apparent ease, finishing in the top 10. He joined his battalion early, having already gained his range qualifications through reserve service and he proudly took command of 13 Platoon, D Company, 5 RIFLES. Even at this early stage, there was an effortless leadership quality about Max that marked him out. Humble and grounded, he was keen and energetic. His leadership was backed by steely determination and grit; he was tough but compassionate and naturally, his Riflemen loved him for it.

As a Reservist he was exemplary, routinely graded as the best amongst his peers. He led teams on Cambrian Patrol, adventurous training and a military skills competition in Estonia. Max took life and service by the horns and wrestled them to meet his will.

In his tragically short time as a Regular Officer in 5 RIFLES, he had already carved out the strongest of reputations. Admired by all ranks, he was one to watch and the commander against whom everyone else measured themselves. Nothing fazed him; he had already represented the Battalion's Warrior Fitness Team and was the driving force behind a company excursion to London to watch the regimental Sounding Retreat. This sums up Max, utterly selfless, he drew immense pride from helping Riflemen develop and grow. Riflemen do not care how much their officers know, until they know how much their officers care. It was obvious to everyone, not least 13 Platoon, that Max cared deeply and would do anything for anyone. He was therefore instantly respected, admired and loved in equal measure; he was a young man who others naturally gravitated towards, and his loss is thus all the more keenly felt.

Max had a glittering career in front of him, excited by the prospect of an imminent overseas deployment to Canada and whatever might follow.

A remarkable and talented young man who had so much to offer, the Battalion and Regiment will miss him dearly and we send our sincere condolences to all his family and friends.

Lt Col Jim Hadfield OBE, Commanding Officer 5 RIFLES said:

Max was a star that burned bright. Effortlessly impressive, he was a natural commander, who exuded fierce determination matched by selfless compassion. We loved him for it. He stood out, and still stands out; we are so much poorer for his loss. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

Maj Joe Murray, Officer Commanding D Company, 5 RIFLES said:

Max stood out from the crowd, and although he would have innately hated that, it was true. Diligent, bright-eyed, and quick off the mark, he slotted into his role commanding 13 Platoon from the off; we were only starting to understand Max's exceptional potential. Unassuming and meticulous, Max needed very little time to bed into his role.

Jumping feet first into battalion life, Max gripped command of his platoon from the outset. His care for his Rifleman was evident from his frequent and insightful questions about how he could best care for them. Incredibly fit, Max was a natural and immediate addition to the 5 RIFLES' Warrior Fitness Team, demonstrating to his platoon the qualities he expected of them. Max was at the very forefront of his peer group in terms of ability. Marked out at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst for his intellect, all round military ability and practical performance, he was awarded the Queen's Medal, not that he would have let you know in conversation. These qualities were clear from the start and throughout his tragically short time with D Company.

Max's death will leave a gaping hole in 13 Platoon and the wider company, who have benefitted enormously from the care and leadership he was so ably providing. Martin, Vivienne, Claudia and the wider family, our hearts go out to you.

D Company have a time-honoured tradition of maintaining links with those who move on from the Company, in that tradition; 2Lt Max George, once a dog, always a dog.

Lt Joe Hayes, Officer Commanding 14 Platoon, D Company, 5 RIFLES said:

Max George was an exceptional man. I knew Max not only as a fellow platoon commander within D Company but also as a dear friend. Max was an individual who was easy to get along with and someone who I could speak openly with about anything. Max and I shared a brotherhood only few will have the honour of understanding. Platoon Commanders in The Rifles are expected to display humility and a selfless approach to the individuals they command. Max displayed all these qualities. Max was a diligent individual whose attention to detail was remarkable. Anything he set his mind to he excelled at, and this is only further testament to his tenacious character. Max was not only adored by his peers but also the Riflemen within his command. Max loved his job, and this was clear to see by all. Max's drive and determination wore off on all within the chain of command around him; as a fellow Platoon Commander it was clear that 13 Platoon was in safe hands. He made me want to strive to be the

best alongside him.

Max will be sorely missed by the Regiment, his brother officers and the entirety of D Company. "Max George, once a dog always a dog.

Collective thoughts, 13 Platoon Riflemen, D Company, 5 RIFLES:

2Lt Max George had only been with 13 Platoon for a few months but in that time he made a lasting and profound impression on everyone he worked with. Right from the start it was clear that 2Lt George was a highly competent young officer. His rare talent was his interest and dedication to us; the Riflemen he commanded. He knew that he worked for us and not the other way round. This instantly inspired us as a platoon to want to constantly improve and grow, as soldiers and individuals. 2Lt George always put himself out, day and night, to help those around him. He put himself on the same level as those he commanded, never expecting extra treatment, and always repaying favours received.

2Lt Max George wasn't all work though. We had great social events, some that he organised such as our visit to the Regiment's Sounding Retreat or evening trips to Sandhurst to check on the potential officers. We would say he was always 'one of the blokes', a proper Rifleman!

Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace said:

The passing of 2Lt George is an especially poignant reminder, as we mark Armed Forces Week, that our service personnel are always in harm's way working to keep us safe. We are forever grateful.

Max exemplified all the qualities the Army stands for and as the testimonies show, we have lost a bright and talented young man who will be sorely missed. My thoughts are with his family, his friends, and his regiment during this difficult time.