



A story from the history of Australian Artillery:
Commemorating 150 years – 1871-2021

**Bombardier David Robertson, Medal for Gallantry
20 March 2011, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan
'Anchoring the Moruch clearance'**



Bombardier David Robertson deployed to Afghanistan in October 2010 as part of Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force 2. Deploying from Patrol Base Qareb, he accompanied a patrol consisting of 15 5RAR members and 20 Afghan National Army soldiers to the village of Moruch. While there, the patrol planned to interact with locals and search for caches. In support was an Australian infantry section, an ASLAV and a mortar section.

"The closer we got to the village, the more SIGINT reports we had of the insurgents watching us and preparing for an attack," Bombardier Robertson said.

Not long after engaging with the locals and searching the village, Australian snipers had engaged a number of insurgents who could be seen carrying PKM machine-guns in the next village. This engagement triggered effective small-arms fire from the high ground overlooking the Australians.

Bombardier Robertson, his signaller, Gunner Aaron Costa, two snipers and a MAG-58 machine-gun crew pushed onto nearby high ground that was exposed to the insurgent fire from higher ground, with little cover available. Moving to a small cliff-face only exposed them to fire from another direction. Undaunted, Robertson called in a mortar fire mission; and after one correction and three rounds fire for effect, the elevated insurgent position was silenced. He then turned his attention to the other insurgent machine-gun, opening at three rounds fire for effect, using airburst proximity High Explosive rounds. Both insurgent locations were neutralised within 20 minutes after the first engagement.

The infantry commander ordered the patrol forward to engage the origin of the original engagement at the next village. Remaining in location, Bombardier Robertson called in another fire mission to suppress the RPK machine-gunners on the nearby high ground whilst the patrol searched the village for insurgents and weapons. This suppression continued until sundown when the patrol moved back to the patrol base.

Although Bombardier Robertson said he feared for his safety during the patrol, he was more concerned about his mates. "When the time came, everyone else was relying on me to do my job and I really didn't want to let anyone down."

Sources:

RAAHC, [RAA Liaison Letter](#), Autumn Edition 2013, accessed 19 August 2021

Personal Interviews, WO2 S. Wilson

Robertson, D., Photo supplied

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