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British helicopter pilot shot dead by elephant poachers in Tanzania

JAMIE BULLEN | Saturday 30 January 2016 | 

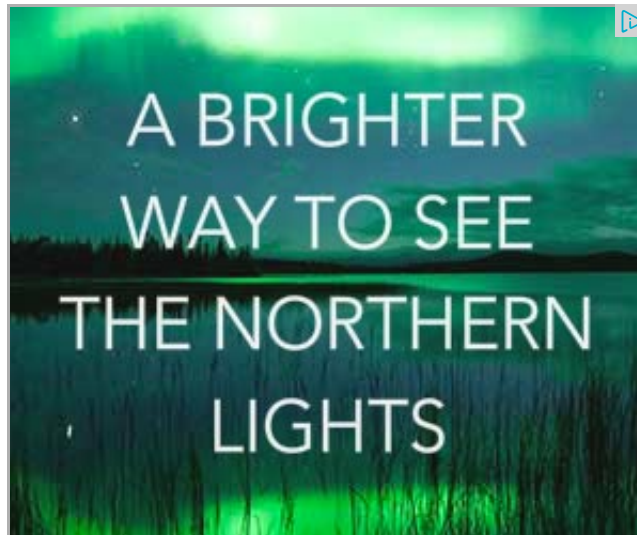


Wreckage: Mr Gower's aircraft was fired on as he tracked elephant poachers in Tanzania *Wildlife At Risk*

A British helicopter pilot has been killed after he was shot at by elephant poachers in Tanzania, a conservation charity has said.

Roger Gower was helping authorities track the criminals on an anti-poaching operation when they fired on his aircraft.

According to reports Mr Gower was 37 and gave up his job as an accountant in London to retrain as a pilot in Africa.



His death was confirmed by the Friedkin Conservation Fund.

In a message posted on its website, founder Dan Friedkin said:
"Roger was killed while piloting a helicopter during a co-ordinated effort with the Tanzanian wildlife authorities to track down and arrest active elephant poachers.

"In the course of this action the poachers fired upon the helicopter and Roger was fatally wounded.

"We are committed to honouring Roger and his work. We are also committed to ensuring that those responsible for this attack are found and brought to justice.

"We believe that Roger can best be honoured by redoubling our commitment to protect elephants and our priceless wildlife heritage.

"This tragic event again highlights the appalling risk and cost of protecting Tanzania's wildlife."

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Tanzanian MP Lazaro Nyalandu said Mr Gower was killed on Friday as he helped locate a group who had killed an elephant in Maswa, an area of the Serengeti in northern Tanzania.

He said: "RIP Capt Roger. You loved our country and I knew you on many flights we took together in defence of our wildlife heritage. Life is precious," he went on.

"Those poachers who killed Capt Roger are coward(sic), evil, and sad people. A fine hearted individual gone too soon, and our hearts are broken.

"Capt Roger's body was flown into Arusha early today, as those who killed him are still at large. Everything must (be) done to bring them to justice."

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "We can confirm the death of a British national in Tanzania and are providing assistance to the family at this difficult time." ■

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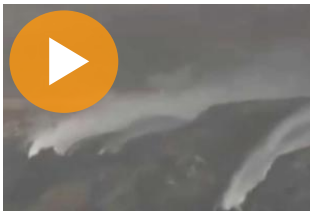


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