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Briton Slain in Airport Was to Get Married

By Roland Oliphant

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Gordon Cousland, 39, visited Russia regularly as a property consultant.

A Briton killed in the bombing at Domodedovo Airport was a regular visitor to Russia who was looking forward to getting married in the spring and raising his infant daughter, his brother said Tuesday.

Gordon Cousland, 39, was a property consultant with CACI, a British marketing and IT consultancy, and one of 35 people killed when a suicide bomber blew himself up in the airport's international arrivals hall Monday.

It was the first time that Western expatriates have been killed in a terrorist attack in Moscow since the Dubrovka theater siege in 2002.

Cousland is survived by a 6-month-old daughter and was due to marry in April, his older brother Robin said by telephone from the family farm in Lincolnshire, east England.

Robin Cousland described his growing fears when he heard about the suicide bombing, but received no reassuring phone call from his brother.

“We knew he was flying in to Moscow yesterday, and we heard there had been an explosion. Normally he would phone home, or at least my father, when he got somewhere, and we never heard anything,” he said.

“As time went on we got more and more worried, and we contacted his work. They had tried to contact him as well. They couldn't get hold of him; he was supposed to meet somebody there who he didn't meet.”

The bad news arrived hours later from a diplomat at Britain's Foreign Office.

“As time went on we eventually heard from the U.K. Foreign Office that he'd been confirmed dead late last night,” Robin said.

Cousland was the only British citizen killed in Monday's attack, the British Embassy said. Another victim earlier identified as British, Kirill Budashev, turned out not to be a British national, the embassy said.

The youngest of five children, Gordon was thought of as “always the baby of the family,” his brother said.

“He was about seven years adrift of everyone else, and we all tried to look after him a bit, I think. This has come as a terrible shock to us,” Robin said.

Brought up on the family farm in Lincolnshire, Cousland made himself a career in London as a property consultant. “He went away to university to study agriculture and economics, and he went down the kind of economics side of agriculture rather than the working side,” said Robin, who still runs the family farm.

His business training eventually led him to CACI, where he worked as a property consultant specializing in Eastern Europe. “He sometimes regarded the traveling as a hassle, but he loved the challenge of it,” Robin said.

CACI praised Gordon Cousland as "instrumental in setting up our European business" and a prominent expert in the property industry.

“He had tremendous energy and enthusiasm for his clients' projects and will be sadly missed by colleagues, friends and associates alike,” the company said in a statement.

The company declined to comment on its specific activities in Russia, but a Russian-language brochure on Cousland's LinkedIn page said it is involved in developing retail properties in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Robin Cousland said he understood that his brother would be repatriated to Britain for burial once Russian investigators had finished their inspection.

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