A 40-year-old guide was mauled (抓傷、撕咬) to death when he put himself between a group of tourists and an attacking lion at an African wildlife park. Quinn Swales was killed as he led a walking tour through Hwange National Park.

A statement from the park said: “Quinn bore the full brunt (最糟糕的部份) of the charge and, unable to fire his rifle due to the speed of the attack, literally stopped the attack of the lion on his group by placing himself directly in harm’s way.”

The idiom to describe the guide’s plight is “首當其衝” (shou3 dang1 qi2 chong1).

“首” (shou3) is “first,” “當” (dang1) means “to take up,” “to bear responsibility,” “其” (qi2) is “its” and “衝” (chong1) is “rush,” “thrust.” Literally, “首當其衝” (shou3 dang1 qi2 chong1) is “the first to bear the thrust.” It means “to be the first to be affected,” “to bear the brunt (of).”

When a tsunami hit, the village on the seafront “首當其衝” (shou3 dang1 qi2 chong1), it was devastated. When a company suffers a loss and has to lay off some staff, the first group to go may be said to be “首當其衝” (shou3 dang1 qi2 chong1).

And when a lion pounces, the person who is “首當其衝” (shou3 dang1 qi2 chong1) obviously doesn’t stand a chance. To the people he protected, the guide has “壯烈犧牲” (zhuang4 lie4 xi1 sheng1) – died a hero!

Terms containing the character “衝” (chong1) include:

- 直衝 (zhi2 chong1) – to rush or dash forward
- 衝動 (chong1 dong4) – an impulse
- 衝力 (chong1 li4) – momentum
- 衝突 (chong1 tu1) – contradict, conflict