

Trooper Christopher Whiteside  
The Light Dragoons  
Trooper Christopher Whiteside, or 'Norm' to his friends, was deployed as part of Emsdorf Troop, a Light Dragoons' Troop operating in the dismounted role as a Fires Support Group for A Company, 2nd Battalion the Mercian Regiment.  
Trooper Whiteside was born on 22nd July 1988 in Blackpool. He joined the Army in July 2005 as an Infanteer in the Queen's Lancashire Regiment. Having served with the QLR for just over one year, he was discharged after suffering a serious knee injury. But still determined to serve his country, he joined up again when fully fit as a Formation Reconnaissance soldier in The Light Dragoons in March 2008.

Trooper Whiteside was on his first tour of Afghanistan. He leaves behind his mother, Diane and her partner Malcolm, as well as younger brother Dan.  
Trooper Whiteside, initially quiet on arriving at Regimental Duty in November 2008, thrived in Afghanistan. His hardworking nature, concern for others and selflessness endeared him to all who worked alongside him. As a small group of Light Dragoons attached to an infantry company, his troop had a very different challenge to the rest of the Regiment, which brought them closer still.  
Lieutenant Colonel Gus Fair, Trooper Whiteside's Commanding Officer, said:  
"Trooper Whiteside had only been in the Regiment for a short time, but had established a reputation as an excellent soldier. Fit, robust and determined, he had all the qualities that mark out a soldier of considerable promise, and he was at the top of his peers. Norm had been tested in some of the most intense fighting ever experienced in Afghanistan for four days prior to his death and had never been found wanting. As part of the Fire Support Group, he had led 3rd Platoon from the front all day during fighting in the heat and demanding terrain. He will be remembered as a soldier at the top of his profession, who gave his all for his friends, and who has been cruelly taken from us."  
Major Paddy Ginn, Officer Commanding A Company 2 MERCIAN, said:  
"Trooper Chris Whiteside was a great lad. He was attached to A Coy 2 MERCIAN for this tour, and it was a pleasure to serve alongside him. He exemplified all that was best in Emsdorf Troop: never flinching from the hard and dangerous job that he loved; and doing it with a smile. He always put others first and was great company, always ready with a joke and a laugh. However tragic his death is for his mates in Emsdorf Troop and the Light Dragoons, this is nothing compared to the grief of his family. My thoughts and prayers are with them in this difficult of times. We will never forget him and what he brought to the Company. God rest, Norman."  
Major Sam Plant, Officer Commanding C Squadron Light Dragoons, from which he was detached, said:  
"Trooper Whiteside was still in his first year as a Light Dragoon at the time of his tragic death. Nonetheless, he had been quick to make his mark on 2nd Troop and throughout C Squadron. It was immediately apparent to all that this young soldier would become central to any team. He was quietly confident and blessed with a great sense of humour that endeared him to all who worked with him. He thrived in a team environment and he enjoyed the absolute trust and respect of his fellow men."  
Trooper Whiteside was quick to display all the skills that mark out a Formation Reconnaissance soldier. His versatility was very much apparent and he was comfortable operating in vehicles and on his feet. He relished the opportunities and challenges that Army life presented to him and his enthusiasm and desire to learn and improve rubbed off on all around him.  
On arrival at C Squadron, he was quickly 'issued' the nickname 'Norm' by the senior element of the Squadron. This led to some confused looks by the younger element of the Squadron as the generation made its presence felt. The nickname, however, stuck and somehow this matched his thoroughly positive and determined approach to life.  
The pain of this terrible loss will be felt by his many Regimental friends and colleagues, but this is

nothing compared to that which will be felt by his family and friends. Our deepest sympathy and thoughts are with them at this extremely difficult time."

Troopers Ashley Cheetam and Steven Ball, friends from the C Squadron (The Legion), the Light Dragoons, said:

"Trooper Whiteside was known to us as 'Norm' or 'Wolfman' on account of his extraordinarily hairy body! He was pretty quiet when he first turned up to the Regiment but that quickly changed when he had settled in. We will never forget him demonstrating his fencing techniques at a Squadron BBQ in Swanton Morley and his 'mushing' at the bar at Warcop ranges.

"He also made nearly all of us look like slow coaches on Squadron Physical Training sessions ♦ he really was uber fit, and could cover a mile and a half in no time. Despite passing his driving test first time, he did not have so much luck with his tracked licence ♦ this took him five attempts! That did not matter though because as soon as he was out on exercise where he was brilliant.

"Norm, you were always up for a laugh and you made us giggle so much. Most importantly, you were a brilliant friend to loads of us and everyone in the Legion will miss you and remember you for ever. Rest in peace, my good friend.

Captain Noel Claydon-Swales, Second in Command of C Squadron, said:

"Trooper Whiteside was part of Emsdorf Tp, C Squadron. A quiet trooper, he had really begun to come out of his shell during Op Herrick 10. A fine swordsman, he hoped to return from Afghanistan and begin training for a possible place in the 2012 GB fencing team at the Olympics in London.

"A hard working and enthusiastic trooper he gave his all to any task he was given. He had much to give and a bright future ahead of him. Ever happy to lend a hand, he had only moments before the incident offered to swap his kit for someone else's. Trooper Whiteside was an example to all to his fellow troopers and he will be missed greatly by all who have had the pleasure to work alongside him.

Lieutenant Rowley Gregg, his Troop Leader, said:

"Trooper Whiteside, Norm to the lads, was a very popular member of my Troop. His enthusiasm and lust for life was testament to his character. Whatever he put his mind to he did to 100 per cent. Above all his positive manner and the attitude with which he expressed himself was exemplified by this constant smile and air of happiness. Trooper Whiteside was a real pleasure to be around and to work with. It was obvious that he was extremely proud to be in the Army and in the Light Dragoons.

"Afghanistan was for Norm a perfect environment to prove his soldiering skills. He adapted to the environment and tempo of this busy tour with a desire to succeed. He was part of the Troop's sniper team and a key asset. Trooper Whiteside was an extremely talented sportsman. He excelled at fencing and his ambition to represent the Army. Judging by his character, I'm sure he would have gone far in this field. Trooper Whiteside died doing the job he loved. At all times he acted with dedication and loyalty to his friends and his Regiment, and for this reason he will be sorely missed. It was a privilege to work with Norm, and our thoughts are with his family at this sad time. We will never forget him.

Lieutenant Charlie Dunn, a Troop leader in Emsdorf Troop, said:

"Trooper Chris Whiteside arrived at the Regiment in November and was put straight into 2nd Troop who was busy in pre-deployment training for Op HERRICK 10. He quickly got the nickname 'Norm' after the Ex Manchester United Footballer as Whiteside was a bit of a mouthful for the boys!

"He was a highly capable young man who quickly got to grips with life in the Troop as we prepared for Operations. He was an incredibly fit individual who loved the challenge of a demanding Squadron PT session. His passion in his life was fencing and had hoped to gain a place in the Regimental and Army team on his return from Afghanistan. His enthusiasm was infectious and never batt an eyelid at any challenge that was thrown his way.

"He excelled at the all the dismounted tasks that the troop was given and it was

obvious to me what an incredibly gifted young soldier he was. He had recently been operating as the spotter for the Emsdorf Troop Sniper. During training last week in Bastion he excelled himself and resulted in the Sniper pair being one of the top shots in the Battle Group, a further illustration of his ability. I have no doubt in my mind in saying that he would have had an excellent career ahead of him in the Light Dragoons and it is a tragedy that a young and gifted life has been cut short. My thoughts at this moment go out to all of his family and friends at this time who are grieving the loss of a fine young soldier. He was a lovely young man, a real asset to the troop and will be sorely missed by all who had the pleasure to have known him.

Sergeant Keith Bell, Troop Sergeant 2nd Troop, C Squadron, Light Dragoons, said:

"Norm had wanted to join the Infantry and had attended training at ITC at Catterick. However through injury he had to pull out for one year. He then turned his hand to the Light Dragoons. Norm was a quiet lad, who had mates in every Troop. Once told to get on with a job he wouldn't hesitate to put 100 per cent into it. He was looking forward to the challenge that Afghanistan had to offer. He was selected as a spotter and sniper as he was a very good shot; he relished this challenge again putting 100 per cent into it. He was then chosen for Emsdorf Troop FSG (Fire Support Group) attached to A Company 2 MERCIAN. Norm died on the battlefield doing what he loved, pushing forward, and taking it to the enemy with his mates beside him. Rest in Peace.

Troopers Jamie-Lee Coates and Edward Jenkins, his friends, said:

"Christopher Whiteside was known to all his mates as Norman. When Norm first got to the Regiment he was a very quiet lad and very shy. But it didn't take long for him to come out of his shell. The first time we saw this was at a Squadron barbecue when he had a few beers and showed off his fencing skills with a broomstick making everyone laugh and entertained for the evening. Norm became a very likeable person and good for morale. He would do anything for anyone and always put his mates first. He was a keen and enthusiastic soldier and very hard working, never down and always smiling. Norm would always say that he was 'living the dream'. From all his mates he will always be missed.

Trooper Karl Leech, a friend from training, said:

"Chris 'Norman' Whiteside was a good mate and an outstanding soldier. I went through training with him and he always had a smile on his face and would listen to anyone who needed to talk. Ever when times were hard, Norm would never complain about anything. I have many good memories about Chris that will never leave me. He will be remembered and sorely missed by everyone that knew him."

Trooper Stephen Crossman a friend in the Light Dragoons, said:

"Trooper Norm Whiteside was a brilliant mate, someone who would do anything for you without asking for anything in return. He was a talented fencer with ambitions of making the Army team and then on to the Olympics. He was a quiet and gentle soul and was liked by all who knew him. He was always proud to be a soldier and loved the job he did. He always met you with a smile and never failed to make you laugh with his bad jokes and sense of humour! Norm, we'll never forget you, all our prayers are with your family and friends back home. We all miss you dearly mate."

Trooper Martin Watson a friend in the C Squadron, The Light Dragoons, said:

"Trooper Chris Whiteside, also known as Norm, was an excellent mate. He always wanted to try new things and was always the first to volunteer. He was a great soldier and died doing the job he loved. His top ambition was to be a fencer for the Regimental team. He was a great fencer and always kept on top of his fitness. He will be dearly missed by the regiment and especially me."