

Trooper Phillip Lawrence  
The Light Dragoons

Trooper Lawrence died in an explosion whilst travelling in a SCIMITAR, or CVR(T), vehicle, as part of a patrol in Lashkar Gah district, Helmand province, while helping ensure the security of an area earlier cleared as part of Operation PANCHAI PALANG (Panther's Claw). He had volunteered to step in to drive for another Troop to fill a temporary manning gap when his vehicle was hit by an explosion, mortally wounding him.

Tpr Lawrence was born on 31st March 1987, and enlisted into the Army in July 2005. After completing recruit training in Jan 2006 he conducted his Royal Armoured Corps training in Bovington before joining The Light Dragoons. Joining C Squadron from the outset, he deployed almost immediately on his first tour of Afghanistan in late 2006, where he quickly learnt his trade in the most demanding conditions. He was a talented, reliable and dedicated soldier.

Tpr Lawrence, from Birkenhead, deployed to Afghanistan this year as part of Emsdorf Troop, a Fire Support Group attached to A Company 2 MERCIAN. For the first three months of the tour he had operated on foot and in Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) in Garmsir, before the Battle Group deployed to the Lashkar Gah district.

Always the first to volunteer for anything, Tpr Lawrence made a name for himself across the Regiment for not only being a surprisingly good dancer, but simply being the most cheerful, helpful and friendly person you could hope to meet. You could not help but like him, and he was universally popular as a result. He was a devoted husband to his wife Amy, and doting father to their baby daughter Jessica.

Lieutenant Colonel Gus Fair, Commanding Officer The Light Dragoons, said:

"Tpr Lawrence was one of the characters that make a family Regiment such as The Light Dragoons so special. Lenny's generous nature, inability to bear a grudge and sheer enjoyment of day to day life endeared him to us all. Everyone counted him amongst their friends, and his loss will hit the Regiment especially hard. He soldiered with great heart, shown both in the boxing ring and on the battlefield. Utterly selfless, he was mortified if he ever made a mistake, and it was impossible not to forgive him immediately as you could see just how much he cared.

"Lenny was devoted to his family, and the pride he took in his wife and daughter shone from him. It fills me with enormous sadness that Jessica, his baby daughter, will not grow up to know her brilliant father, and our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Amy and his mother Gaynor as they grieve this tragic loss. "

Major Sam Plant, Officer Commanding C Squadron 'The Legion' The Light Dragoons, said:

"Tpr Lawrence, or 'Lenny' as he was known by his many friends, was known to all of us as a real contributor. Whatever was going on, Lenny seemed to be at the centre of it - he was forever putting himself forward as a volunteer for both military tasks and other, extra-curricular events. He had an insatiable appetite for life and certainly lived it to the full. There was nothing that he would not do to help out a mate and, in going about his business, he always sought to benefit the team at large. A more decent and selfless man one could not wish to meet.

"It is typical of Lenny that he volunteered to represent C Sqn in the recent Regimental Boxing competition. As was his way, he displayed courage and determination in the ring and this positive approach had underpinned his work in Afghanistan until he was cruelly taken from us. He was dependable and hard working and enjoyed the friendship and respect of all those who had the privilege of working alongside him,

"Lenny was a central player in a very close knit team. The sense of the loss and sadness will be intense for his great many friends and colleagues in The Light Dragoons and we will remember him with immense fondness and respect forever. The sense of loss and sadness, however, will be nothing compared to that of his family. His wife, Amy, and their young daughter Jessica were everything to him. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and the rest of his family at this exceptionally sad time."

Lieutenant Charlie Dunn, Troop Leader, said:

"Trooper Philip 'Lenny' Lawrence was a senior Trooper in 2nd Troop when I arrived at Regimental Duty. It quickly became evident to me what a character and lively personality he was and I instantly took a shine to him. Tpr Lawrence was a true professional and a natural soldier. He set an example to the other Troopers on how to balance being a highly capable and effective soldier but still enjoying all that life has to offer. He was conscientious and reliable and never one to complain about a job no matter how tough. He was a talented sportsman with his

passion in life being football and especially Manchester United even though he was from Liverpool! He was also a talented boxer and last year he boxed in the RAC championships.

"He was a man of many words, which was a reflection of his bubbly character and enthusiasm for life. Only 2 months ago I was on stag with him in an OP during the early hours of the morning and I don't think through that whole period he remained silent. He was good morale for the Troop, always involved in pranks and mischief and he could always be relied on when times were low with witty comments to get everyone laughing. The bar in Castlemartin will not be the same without a topless Lenny dancing away!

"Lenny was a natural father and was so very proud of his baby girl. My heartfelt condolences go out to his loving wife Amy, daughter Jessica and mother Gaynor. They will be in mine and the Troop's thoughts and prayers. Tpr Lawrence's tragic loss now leaves a void within 2nd Troop and his infectious enthusiasm and limitless energy will be sorely missed. It was an honour to command such a true character and a pleasure that I shall never forget. He loved the Regiment and the Regiment loved him, we have lost one of our true characters."

Lieutenant Rowley Gregg Troop Leader, Emsdorf Troop, said:

"Tpr Phillip Lawrence, known as 'Lenny' to most, was a charismatic soldier that always put others before himself. A devoted husband to Amy and a loving father to Jessica who was born late last year, I remember how proud and happy Lenny looked whilst introducing Jessica to the Squadron.

"Tpr Lawrence had many hobbies, at the top was football. He was an avid Manchester United fan who was never to be seen without his favourite home strip; I believe Jessica owned a few strips herself.

"Lenny put his heart and soul into pre-deployment training. A skilful gunner who excelled on a squadron range package in Castlemartin he was keen to put these skills into practice. This was his second tour in Afghanistan, for this reason he was looked up to by his contemporaries for advice and guidance. He died whilst driving a CVR (T). This alone shows his diverse range of his skills as a Formation Reconnaissance soldier and his willing character, always volunteering to help others in need. Above all he was a real team player.

"Tpr Lawrence will be remembered by the lads by his peculiar sense of humour that added to the morale of any situation no matter how serious the occasion. He was never shy to take centre stage, especially when karaoke was concerned. Tpr Lawrence was a Light Dragoon, part of Emsdorf Troop whilst in Afghanistan who was attached to A Company, 2 Mercian. He will be greatly missed by all. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this extremely sad time. Rest in peace 'Lenny'."

WO2 David Rae, Squadron Sergeant Major, C Squadron The Light Dragoons, said:

"Tpr Lawrence, or 'Lenny' as he was affectionately known, has been a 'Legion' lad since he joined the Regiment in 2006. I first met him when I assumed the post as Squadron Sergeant Major in early 2008. I immediately perceived him as a cheeky little Scouser; it was the smile in his eyes and the constant grin which led me to believe he always had something up his sleeve, but he wasn't that way at all.

"Lenny was a grafter and he had bottle, he put his all into everything, especially when wearing his squadron colours in whatever he was doing, whether that be PT or representing the squadron at a sporting event. One event worthy of mention sticks to mind. The squadron needed to win the Dodgeball competition to guarantee an overall victory in the The Light Dragoons sports trophy. Most of the team had been clobbered leaving Lenny and one other to make the almost impossible happen; Lenny was like William Tell with a Dodgeball and despatched the lot of them single handed. We were all amazed, Lenny was proud as punch, The Legion was victorious.

"Lenny was immensely proud of his Squadron and his Regiment and a very caring husband and father. He was extremely mild mannered but also good fun to be around, regardless of the situation he had a smile which was infectious; he was one of life's good guys and a son,

husband and father his family should be extremely proud of, just as we are.

"We have all lost a dedicated and trusted friend and colleague within C Squadron and The Light Dragoons but ultimately our thoughts and prayers are sent to his family and friends, especially his wife Amy and young daughter Jessica who he was devoted to.

"Lenny, you will be sorely missed in many ways but always fondly remembered and will always remain one of us."

Sgt Bell, Troop Sergeant, said:

"Tpr Phil Lawrence, Lenny to all who knew him, joined my Troop in November 2007, just 6 months after completing a tour of Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 5. This gave him experience beyond his young age and stood him in good stead for what lay ahead in all training and eventually this deployment. Lenny was first and foremost a Cavalry soldier. However he showed his flexibility in Emsdorf Troop, by carrying out various tasks from mundane staggings on to crewing a CVR(T) Scimitar, then deploying on foot carrying weight up to 40kg, on patrols lasting hours.

"Lenny was a devoted husband, father, soldier and friend, and he gave 110 per cent in everything that he did. His devotion to his job was nothing short of selfless, however this did not compare to his devotion to his wife Amy and his daughter Jessica to whom he was totally committed. Lenny was taken from us before his time as a young soldier, husband, father and son. Some comfort can be taken from the fact that he was with his friends when he was taken from us and we will continue the work he was part of, bringing peace to an unstable place. You may be gone mate, but your Memory will live on forever. You will not be forgotten."

Cpl Mark Bowman, Vehicle Commander, said:

"I've known Phil since he joined The Legion back in June 2006. He was a very confident lad which made him stand out amongst his peers; all of which joined for the up and coming deployment to Afghanistan. Throughout his time in The Legion he became a very popular bloke; there wasn't a man to say a bad word about him. When 'Lenny' came to my crew as a driver we would often sit up after stand-to and talk about all the things we would enjoy doing with our families, wives and children when we returned home. It was an honour to have served with you mate, you will never be forgotten."

Tpr James Wright, Gunner, said:

"I met 'Lenny' in the early part of 2008 when I joined C Sqn 'The Legion' and the Light Dragoons; I didn't really know him that well then. He later came to our Troop as a replacement during the recent operations. In the last 4 weeks I learnt so much about him; he was a confident character and always full of morale but mostly he was a great help to me and a good friend. It was a pleasure knowing and working with you Lenny, you will be remembered mate and never forgotten. Rest in Peace."

LCpl Omar Wilson, a friend from C Squadron, said:

"I first met Lenny in 2006 when he came to 1st Troop, C Squadron. We spent 6 months together in Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 5 and he'd been a good mate ever since. He had a heart of solid gold and personality that could get him through anything. He loved being part of C Squadron and The Light Dragoons, and he was really popular with everyone he ever met.

"I will miss you loads mate, and I will never forget all the good times with you and the lads. My heart goes out to his wife, Amy, their baby girl and the rest of his family back home."

Tpr Chris Lewis, a friend from C Squadron, said:

"For nearly two years I had worked with Lenny in the same Troop and, for most of that, we were in the same crew. Unusually, although I was quite a bit older than him, I was the driver and Lenny was the gunner but that did not affect our brilliant relationship. He was always on hand to help out and offer advice and working with him was always a privilege.

"His wife and child were the greatest thing in his life and everything that he did, he did to make them proud. My thoughts are with him and the rest of his family at this time."

Tpr Jamie Coates, a friend, said:

"Tpr Phillip Lawrence, known to everyone as Lenny, will be missed by everyone that knew him. When Lenny was around the troop morale would always be high, as he was the joker and entertainer of the group and would always be laughing. Lenny was happy no matter what."

"Anyone that knew Lenny would know what a kind, caring and thoughtful friend he was. He was friends with everyone, a popular character who was willing to do anything for his friends and family.

"Lenny was never shy and being the entertainer he would always be the first on the dance floor or karaoke. He was the best dancer by far out of his mates and loved to show off his moves, always ending with him doing the worm across the dance floor on nights out. Lenny was a keen sportsman which led him to take part in the Sqn boxing last year. Football was his favourite sport, being the massive Man United fan he was he was always wearing a footy shirt even when we were scuba diving in Malta.

"Having been a close friend to Lenny I have many good memories. I will miss having a kick about and watching the boxing at his house at the weekend. But I will mostly miss his sense of humour and generosity. I think everyone will agree that Lenny was a true friend. My heart goes out to Lenny's family as I know how much he loved his wife Amy and daughter Jessica. He was a proud Dad and would have done anything for his family.

"I can't express how much Lenny will be missed but I know he will never be forgotten and I will remember Lenny as the happy, smiley character he was."

LCpl Charlie Rock and LCpl Alan Cheshire, close friends of Trooper Lawrence, said:

"Lenny was a good soldier with a kind heart and would have done anything for anyone he knew. He was never shy to get stuck in and was also a keen sportsman. He was a great character and was a brilliant friend. He will be sorely missed. We will never forget him."