

HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY REGIMENT SERVING WITH BRIGADE RECONNAISSANCE FORCE

Lance Corporal of Horse Jonathan Woodgate, aged 27 from Lavenham in Suffolk, was born in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. He attended Great Cornard Upper School before joining the Army Foundation College in 2001. After completing his training, he moved to Windsor and joined D Squadron, Household Cavalry Regiment, and deployed on Op FRESCO and on Op TELIC 1 as a driver in 2 Troop. These tours were followed shortly by Op HERRICK 4 as a gunner for the 1 Troop, Corporal of Horse. After returning home from HERRICK 4, he immediately moved across to B Squadron and started training to deploy again to Iraq on TELIC 10 with the Brigade Reconnaissance Force. He completed Close Observation Training Advisory Course as a team commander and deployed in May 2007.

Recently Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate completed a Formation Recce Crew Commanders' Course finishing in the top three of the course. Shortly after completing the course, Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate went to Canada to take part in two MEDMAN exercises in the OPFOR Recce Company, to gain experience as a vehicle commander. On returning to Windsor he was sent to Command Troop for a few months before rejoining B Squadron shortly before Easter 2009 to prepare for Op HERRICK 11. He completed the Surveillance Reconnaissance Wing course as a Section Commander with a high pass, and also took part in the testing pre-deployment training needed to be part of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force.

Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate was killed by an insurgent's grenade on 26 March 2010 whilst on foot patrol with 4 Troop, BRF, near Sangin. It was to be his last patrol of the tour. He leaves behind his parents and three sisters.

Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate's family said:

"The family are immensely proud to have had a son, brother and friend who was so brave and dedicated to his career. We feel so very, very lucky to have had Jo in our lives. He was more than just a professional soldier...he was a friendly young man with immense charisma, humour and artistic flair whose laid back manner belied a great strength of character, Jo was self-disciplined, focused and carried out his duty to the very best of his abilities."

Lieutenant Colonel Harry Fullerton, Commanding Officer Household Cavalry Regiment, said:

"Lance Corporal of Horse 'Jo' Woodgate was one of our finest soldiers. Known affectionately by his friends and comrades as Woody, he was hugely popular, tremendously capable and a truly consummate, professional warrior. He had packed so much into his life in The Household Cavalry, rising rapidly through the ranks. This was his fourth Operational tour and there are few others of his generation who had done and achieved as much as he had. Ever the volunteer, he served his Regiment with pride and distinction. He thrived on what his career

offered him and he was clearly a young leader who had far to go. Everything he did proved how talented he was.

Everyone wanted Woody to be part of their team and he was always eager for fresh challenges. So it was that he volunteered for a second tour of duty in the elite Brigade Reconnaissance Force. He passed the gruelling selection process with ease, in addition to coming near the top of his recce commander's course. Here was a young man who was destined for the very top. He had spent the last six months in Helmand Province, operating in dangerous environments and situations nearly every day. His courage was undefeatable and he was resilient to the end. His ability to see the funny side of life maintained the morale of his Troop and Squadron. It is a cruel blow that he was killed so near to the end of this tour. Words cannot express how much he will be missed. Our thoughts are with his mother Susan and his family at this most tragic time."

Major Gus MacGillivray, Officer Commanding Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate was a most remarkably happy and enthusiastic man, always with a grin and never with a complaint: he was a joy to work with and a very fine Junior NCO who was enormously liked and respected by all. His loss is tragic and his family, friends and all of us feel it more keenly so very close to the end of the tour, during which he had become like a brother to those around him. Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate was most certainly very talented, and took great pride being in the Household Cavalry and his role in the BRF. He will be so very sorely missed."

Lieutenant Geordie Mackay-Lewis, 4 Troop Commander, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate was killed doing a job that he loved, and commanding a Section in 4 Troop that he was very proud of, and utterly committed. Those who worked with him would agree that he was one of the most professional Lance Corporal of Horse in the Regiment, who no doubt would have gone a long way in the Army. I am incredibly proud to have commanded one of the finest NCO's in The Household Cavalry Regiment. He was the heart of the Troop, and was always looking out for the welfare of the lads, and they in turn would look to him for advice. He set the standard in the Troop and the Squadron, and looked and acted the part in every aspect of his life and career. He was respected and loved by everyone. Woody had a totally unique character. He was intelligent, good looking and had a brilliant sense of humour. He had it all. Whenever there was a roar of laughter from a group of people, it's a sure bet that it would have been one of his jokes.

"During this tour, on two different occasions, members of his Section had been injured by small arms fire. On both occasions Woody displayed outstanding moral and physical courage in extracting and treating the casualties, under heavy fire. This is just one of many examples of how good he was at his job, and how he would always fearlessly put his blokes safety ahead of his own.

"Everyone in the BRF and The Household Cavalry Regiment is devastated by his loss, but this can never compare to what is felt by his family and closest friends, of which there are many. He

has left his mark on so many people. It has been my greatest privilege and honour to serve alongside him. My thoughts are with his family and friends at this difficult time."

Captain Rhys Smith, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Lance Corporal of Horse Jo Woodgate was a key member of B Squadron when I joined in 2007. Already a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, he was respected by everyone. His technical expertise on TELIC 10 were vital to the BRF - indeed, he became the theatre expert in the use of specialist reconnaissance equipment. We crossed paths numerous times after Iraq. His Crew Commanders' Course and my Troop Leaders' Course overlapped for the tactics phase. I remember him being nothing short of outstanding and only just missing out on the top student prize. I was incredibly pleased when he rejoined B Squadron as it took on the role of BRF again for HERRICK 11.

"During the training and then on tour, he shone as an incredibly thoughtful, intelligent, tactically aware and hard working commander. He was one of the key characters of the BRF; although not in my Troop, I was frequently aware of his presence on the battlefield. He was such a prominent figure. The care he would put in to ensuring his men were as well prepared as they could be was exceptional. He was a great leader, with operational experience matched by very few others.

"I will remember Jo as the most stylish soldier I have ever met, and surely ever will. He always looked incredibly sharp. He was a fantastic soldier and a man of great courage and personality. He will always be missed; rest in peace."

Captain Charlie Meredith-Hardy, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Lance Corporal of Horse Jo Woodgate had a very positive and fun loving attitude to life. He was a constant source of morale in the troop and saw the best in people and situations. 'Woody' was an extremely professional soldier, who the lads looked up to and respected. From his commanders' point of view he was utterly reliable, willing to take on any task, and complete it to the best of his ability. He had performed to a very high standard throughout his career and was by far one of the best Lance Corporal of Horse in the Regiment. He wanted to continue his career in the army and I have no doubt that he would have had an extremely successful career. I will remember him as the life and soul of the Troop and Squadron, and he will forever be in our memories."

Captain Robin Bourne-Taylor, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate was one of those Section Commanders that you wish was in your troop. He stood out as a talented and highly professional soldier with natural leadership combined with a sharp attention to detail. He was witty, creative and had a contagious character that would spread through his men. Professional through and through, Woody was destined for a shining army career. His loss has put a huge hole in the BRF and we will all miss him dearly. All our thoughts are now with Woody's family and friends for whom the loss will be the greatest."

Captain Andy Breach, 3 Troop Commander, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"The loss of Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate during the closing of hours of the final 11 BRF Operation has dealt a huge blow to everyone that has shared the hardships of operating in Afghanistan with him. As an outsider to the Household Cavalry Regiment, it was obvious the high regard that everyone from the youngest Trooper to the Commanding Officer held for Woody. His enthusiasm for soldiering was infectious and it is no coincidence that those in his Troop copied his "Ally" kit and shared his love of American war films. He was a central figure in his Troop and the Squadron. The potential he possessed was obvious. As ever, the best are taken from us in their prime."

Warrant Officer Class 1 (Regimental Corporal Major) Daniel Hitchings, Household Cavalry Regiment, said:

"Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate was a soldier ahead of his time. I had the fortune to have served with him during Operation TELIC 10 and even then it was clear that Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate would have a bright and prosperous career. He was a hugely popular character throughout the whole Regiment and consistently excelled on Operations. His sense of humour never faltered and no task was ever far from his reach. The death of Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate is a tragic and untimely loss to the Household Cavalry Regiment and he will be sorely missed by all that knew him. Our thoughts at this difficult time are with his family and closest friends."

Corporal of Horse Craig Harrison, A Squadron HCR, said:

"I've known Jo for years and he was a good friend and an exemplary soldier who could adapt to anything he put his hand too. Once in a lifetime an outstanding soldier joins the army and thank God Jo joined the HCR. You'll be dearly missed and will leave a big hole in the BRF as well as in the Household Cavalry. Rest in peace good friend."

Lance Corporal of Horse James Griffin, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Words will never express the pain of losing Jo as my best friend. Genuinely the friendliest man I've ever known a total gentleman and bloody good soldier. Through the good times to the downright awful times, Jo was always there to talk and laugh it off. Impeccably turned out socially or on the battlefield, his enthusiasm was infectious to all around him. He had damn good taste and a love for whiskey, good whiskey, expensive clothes, even more expensive watches, beautiful women and Rock n'Roll. Jo was a rock star in uniform. And that is how I will remember him. My best friend lived by the sword and died by the sword. He wouldn't have had it any other way."

"To all who knew him, he was a legend. My prayers go out to his family with all of my heart. It's time to kick back and relax now Jo, I will see you again."

Lance Corporal of Horse Daniel Ridge, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Jo, a best friend that I'll never forget. As a boy I met at 17 to a man that will live forever. Both

at work or out, you, me and many others created memories that will surpass our lifetime.

"At work you set a standard amongst our peers with professionalism and experiences that no-one could compare with, yet a modesty and coolness taken in your stride, while you and everything around you was immaculate.

"Out of work your personality attracted everyone that men and especially women found hard to resist. Often with the two of us going out we would never be alone. Your eye for looking your best, carried where ever we went with impeccable style and the charisma of a true gentleman, made you so loved; making friends in a moment that would last forever.

"Being so talented and succeeding in everything you did from soldiering, drawing, to being a friend, brother and son. Jo Woodgate, a friend that I looked up to so much and stood beside so often."

Lance Corporal Ronnie Rincon, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Lance Corporal of Horse Jo Woodgate, my best friend, and I'm sure everyone else's, because that's the type of guy he was; not one bad bone in his body. The most genuine person I will ever come across.

"As for being a soldier, he was up there with the best, his professionalism was unmatched. I never once saw Jo switch off, you knew when you were with him everyone would be ok. Jo will always be with me and whatever I decide to do I know he will be watching over me and make sure I give my all. My love and condolences go to your family Jo, and if I can do anything for them I will always be there."

Lance Corporal Simon Collinson, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"I have known 'Woody' for 3 years since we deployed to Iraq in 2007 for our last BRF tour. But it has only been over the last year and a half working as his section 2IC that I've come to know him well. He was always the icon of fashion, both in Windsor and by his ever present campaign to look that tad 'Allier' than the rest of us out on the ground, which in typical Jo style he pulled off. Jo was at the centre of troop banter and morale, and someone all could turn to. No words of mine can ever sum him up, or ease his family's grief, but Woody bud, you may be gone but you will never be forgotten. Recon. Rest in Peace."

Trooper Thomas O'Callaghan, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"I have known Jo for about 2 years, but had gotten to know him well over the past year and a half, especially the last 6 months. He was always a laugh to be around, except for first thing in the morning when you had to wait for him to crack the first joke. Jo was someone who everyone could turn to and ask advice. Jo always took pride in his appearance and was the best dressed man in the Regiment, and the 'alliest'. He also had the looks to pull off whatever he was wearing. I'm going to miss doing our Maverick and Goose impressions in front of the wagon. You will never be forgotten, you were a good friend."

Lance Corporal Robert Parry, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"I first met Woody when we went to Afghanistan in summer 2006. His vehicle drove over a mine and he managed to have a laugh about it. He had told me about the incident in Iraq with the A10 and I remember thinking; how does someone so young have all this happen to them, and yet remain so calm and strong? But that was Woody; he didn't let anything get him down. I was privileged to be in his team for TELIC 10. The only reason I got through COTAC was because of Woody. I could see him struggling with the PT but he never gave in and he still had the courage to help me. I couldn't sum Woody up in a word, a sentence or even a whole page; I don't have the words to do him justice. He was everything I would have liked to have been and more. Even though he was younger than me I looked up to him and respected him greatly. A brilliant soldier and a lovely person who always had time for anyone, I will always remember Jo Woodgate and the world is a better place for having had him in it. My thoughts and prayers go to his family."

Lance Corporal Clive Hall, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Lance Corporal of Horse Woodgate was a great friend of mine, who will surely be missed. He was the most genuine guy I have ever met who also had a great sense of humour. Jo, you will always be in my heart with unconditional love."

Lance Corporal of Horse Andrew Wilkinson, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Woody, there will never be another like you, and although I rarely showed it, I thought of you more of a brother than a best friend, more part of me than family. The world is a dark and scary place without you mate, especially as I have no one to turn to for style tips anymore! Rest in Peace mate, you've lived for all of us."

Lance Corporal Nick Gardyne, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Woody, There is so much I can say and tell about you. I remember the first time I met you, on HERRICK 4, 2006, as your 'crow' driver, I walked into an ISO and saw you in your aviators looking 'ally' as ever. You were always the man or soldier I could go to for advice, about kit, skill and drills. I count myself lucky to have been in your Troop twice out of three tours. The men would look to you for inspiration and the latest squaddie fashion. To me, you are not gone; you will always be there watching our backs, so rest easy, I look forward to seeing you in the future."

Trooper Aiden McAuliffe, Brigade Reconnaissance Force, said:

"Jo Woodgate or 'Woody' was an inspiration, his endless humour, witty comebacks and general banter kept the troop in high spirits throughout the tour. I remember him and me flawlessly quoting lines from all the old classic war films and using those quotes on tour whenever we could. You will be sorely missed by all of the BRF; you epitomised all the qualities of a Recce soldier; one of the very best. It was an honour serving with you. Rest in Peace."