

Guardsman Christopher King  
1st Battalion Coldstream Guards

The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that Guardsman Christopher King, of 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, was killed in Afghanistan on 22nd July 2009, whilst serving on operations in the Nad e Ali District in Helmand Province.

He was serving as a rifleman with Number 2 Company, 1st Battalion Welsh Guards. He was part of a Section of Coldstream Guardsmen who had been attached to the Welsh Guards since the end of last year, and who have been working with 2 Company throughout.

Guardsman King was working as part of a team responsible for the protection of vehicle patrols, which involves checking vulnerable points are clear of danger. On the morning of his death he was on such a patrol on Operation PANCHAI PALANG and was on foot clearing a vulnerable point when an Improvised Explosive Device detonated. He died immediately from the injuries caused by the blast.

Guardsman Christopher King was born on 1st June 1989 in Birkenhead, near Liverpool. He joined the Army and, on passing out of the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, in August 2008, he joined Number 3 Company, 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards. He quickly completed a sharp-shooter's course, and took part in tactical exercises with the Battalion. At the end of the year he took part in state ceremonial duties in London.

In early 2009 he volunteered to serve with 1st Battalion Welsh Guards for a six-month operational tour to Afghanistan. Although his time with the Welsh Guards was short, he had settled in well and quickly become a popular member of his platoon. He had hoped to complete a sniper course on his return to the UK – one of the most demanding challenges he could volunteer for. He had great potential, and will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Guardsman King lived in West Buckland, Devon. He was unmarried.

Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Antelme DSO, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion Welsh Guards, said:

"Guardsman King will be remembered by all his friends within the Battalion as a consummate professional, undeterred by danger or hardship, who brought great spirit and humour to every task asked of him. The words of his brothers-in-arms from the Welsh Guards and beyond are a lasting tribute to this exceptional soldier, fearless character and ever-cheerful friend. Our thoughts are with his Regiment, the Coldstream Guards, his many friends and of course, most importantly, his family who will be feeling his loss so keenly."

Lieutenant Colonel Doug Chalmers MBE PWRR, his battle group commander, said:

"Guardsman Chris King was every inch a Coldstream Guardsman. Although very proud of his own Regiment he had fitted easily in to No 2 Company, 1st Battalion Welsh Guards, earning respect at every turn as a professional young soldier with a resilient sense of humour. He was energetic yet reliable and lived life to the full. We are poorer for his loss and our thoughts are with his family who will miss him the most. We will not forget him."

Lieutenant Colonel Toby Gray, 1 Battalion Coldstream Guards, his Commanding Officer, said:

"From the moment he joined the Army, Guardsman Christopher King constantly showed a desire to challenge himself and improve his professional ability with the aim of becoming the best soldier he could. On arrival with the 1 Battalion Coldstream Guards in August 2008 it was clear that he could not only hold his own amongst a group of experienced soldiers but that he could also lead the way with his dedication and ever present appetite to learn.

"The first real clear evidence of this ability and willingness to subject himself to a challenge came just two weeks into his time with the Battalion when he volunteered to do the sharp shooters course with the aim of becoming a company sniper. A job requiring considerable shooting ability and intelligence, it forms a vital role in the performance of a company on operations. It is testament to his natural ability that Guardsman King passed this course easily, something which not only made him a highly valuable asset throughout his Company's numerous exercises, but also identified him as a future non-commissioned officer.

"Not satisfied with these challenges, on hearing that volunteers were required to augment the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards for Operation HERRICK 10, Guardsman King immediately volunteered. When asked about whether he had thought through the implications of his decision Guardsman King was quite clear; he joined the Army to challenge himself and to be a soldier - Afghanistan would give him that opportunity.

"Guardsman King will be remembered by all the soldiers of the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards as a bright, cheerful and inquisitive young man who dedicated his military life to being the best soldier he could be, putting himself second and seeking out challenges to ensure he got the most from life. My deepest condolences go to his family, his friends and his fellow soldiers from 1st Battalion Welsh Guards now serving in Afghanistan."

Major Henry Bettinson, his Company Commander, said:

"Guardsman King showed tremendous spirit by volunteering to serve with the Welsh Guards in Afghanistan. Some might view an Englishman joining a sister battalion, fiercely proud of its Welsh heritage, as a daunting prospect. But Guardsman King was fearless. How quickly he settled into the Company says less about how we welcomed him, but more about how he went out of his way to meet us, his new colleagues. He arrived in the battalion last year and quickly established himself during our pre deployment training as someone who was more than capable of holding his own. He was a robust, energetic, uncomplaining and reliable young man who had a sense of fun. His dry sense of humour often surfaced in conversation. Our thoughts are with

his family at this very sad time. He will not be forgotten as we continue to remember him."

Colour Sergeant Shane Pullen, his Company Sergeant Major, said:

"The Welsh Guards are lucky to have worked with such a fine Guardsman. He was a man who was a pleasure to command. He was a key individual within the close team in which he worked. His character was one that would always keep the morale high during the difficult times. He will be sorely missed by us all."

Lieutenant Charles Fraser-Sampson, his Platoon Commander, said:

"Often seen laughing and joking, Guardsman King was never downbeat and he would use a dry and dark sense of humour to alleviate the danger that is so often faced by Guardsmen on operations. His calm and mature nature gained him instant friendship amongst his Welsh 'Band of Brothers'. He had planned on becoming a coveted sniper, which appealed to his stalking skills, honed as a gamekeeper before he joined the Army. The Coldstream Guards can feel rightly proud of the skills, fitness and attitude that Guardsman King displayed whilst serving with a different Foot Guards Battle Group. His family will no doubt be absolutely devastated by his death, but hopefully in time may take solace from the way in which he served his country. He will not be forgotten by those who fought alongside him."

One of his Section Commanders, Lance Corporal Sam Marsh, said:

"Guardsman King fitted right in to the Platoon despite the fact he was from another regiment. He was a great person to be in command of because he just cracked on with any task you gave him without complaint. He had a unique sense of humour and a brilliant outlook on life. He was an Honorary Welshman."

Another Section Commander, Lance Corporal Scott Powell said:

"Guardsman Christopher King fitted into Number Two Company very well. He was a fit and keen young lad who had a lot of enthusiasm and ambitions in life. He was a good laugh and always brought a smile to my face. When I first met Chris he came across as a quiet lad but a week later he soon came out of his shell and became a popular bloke in the Welsh Guards. He will be sorely missed by me and everyone else that knew him. My heart goes out to all his family and friends."

Guardsman Ben Hellyn COLDM GDS said:

"Chris King was a very close friend of mine inside and outside work. He was the best friend that anyone could wish for. He was a great laugh and had a great sense of humour. We came across to the Welsh Guards not knowing what to expect but I knew as long as the two of us stuck together, with his sense of humour he would make us, the attached Coldstream Guards, feel welcomed and we'd settle in pretty easily. Outside work, he had a passion for his gamekeeping and loved his hardcore rave music. I will sorely miss him and love him forever."

Guardsman Samuel Williams said:

"He was a gleaming bloke. It won't be the same without him. He loved going clubbing. I'm going to miss him and we love you mucka."

Guardsman Steve Goss said:

"Chris King was an awesome guy. I didn't really know him as much as his Coldstream Guards mates, but for the time I did know him when he came to our regiment he was a good lad when he got to know us. He was the one who would take the Mickey out of people. There was so much stuff he wanted to do and become. He liked his bikes and fishing. He was an all-round good bloke. He will be sadly missed and loved by his mates and family and the boys who knew him in the Welsh Guards. King, I miss you pal and the jokes about loud Welshmen."

Gunner Aaron Carmichael, 40 Regt RA, said:

"I didn't know Chris for long, however in the last 3 days we had returned to Bastion and I had spent a lot of time with him there. He was staying in the same room as me so we often talked at night about home, friends and work. Guardsman King was full of life with a lot of great banter and laughs in him and he was always showing why the lads liked him and enjoyed his company. When on patrol, he was always working and he always showed absolute professionalism in everything he did.

His friends from Number 3 Company back in the UK paid the following tributes.

Sergeant Richard Gundill, PI Sgt No 9 PI, 3 Company, 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards said:

"Guardsman Chris King joined the Platoon in August 2008 in Windsor and as soon as he joined he made an impact with his humour and having the crack with the boys and recounting his funny stories of his weekends. He was a keen soldier in the field and was selected to do the sharpshooter course – he even raised a few eyebrows in the Sniper Platoon. He was a good shot and his field craft was 'on the ball' – possibly because he had been a gamekeeper before joining up. On TESEX [Tactical Effects Simulation Exercise] he was deployed as a member of the Fire Support Group - he was in his element. The rest of your old Platoon feels your loss very deeply but are resolved to carry on doing the same good work you had started. God bless you and our thoughts are with your family at this sad time."

Guardsman Don Wall said

"Chris King will never be forgotten. One of my 5 best friends – we went through training together, we got off the train in Windsor and joined the Battalion together, we stood outside Buckingham Palace and St James' Palace together and we complained on exercise together. Love goes out to his family who have lost a brilliant brother and son. I'll always have you in my heart Chris. RIP."

Guardsman Chris Fletcher said:

"I knew Chris from the second day of training – the second day was due to him being late! That sums him up really – chilled out. He never rushed and never stressed. He took life on the chin and cracked on. We went through training together, on the town together and on to Battalion together. He was in my Platoon in 3 Coy and my close circle of friends. Chris King was constant morale no matter how bad it got – it was an honour to know him and be his friend. Chris was a great bloke who I will always miss and never forget."

Guardsman Sean Sykes said:

"My most distinct memory of Chris was his dry and often cynical sense of humour. Chris had a way of seeing the lighter side of all the Army threw at him and carried out his duties with a steadfastness that not only singled him out as a superb Guardsman and soldier, but also as a dependable and loyal friend. My thoughts are with his family at this time. He will be sorely missed. RIP Chris."

Guardsman Daniel Tomelty said:

"Chris will always be a great friend of mine. Anyone who knew him would instantly want to spend more time with him because he had a great sense of humour and a spark about him to make anyone feel better about themselves. I first met him at Catterick and he passed out a few weeks before me – but then I met up with him when I got to Battalion. That was good because I was nervous about going there – but knowing Chris was there made it a lot easier for me. I will miss him."

Guardsman Richard Pinkney said:

"Chris King was a good friend and a good soldier; I knew him from the first day of training and since then he never ceased to amaze me. He always brought morale to the lads when they were down and was always up for a little bit of banter. He was a true character and will live on in our lives and will never be forgotten by those who were around him. RIP Chris."

Guardsman Andrew Nichols said:

"Chris King was a great friend and a great soldier. When morale was low he always managed to get the lads laughing and smiling again. Everyone in 3 Company loved him, and will miss him – he will never be forgotten. RIP Chris."

Guardsman Damien Mclean said:

"Gdsm Chris King was a good mate and a pure good soldier – he had such charisma. My condolences go out to his family and friends – we have lost a good friend and an asset to the Battalion – he will be sorely missed."

Guardsman Nick Witham said:

"Chris was one of the funniest, charismatic members of the Company – and he was brilliant

banter and morale for the lads. His original wit and ability to make jest of bad situations will be sorely missed by everybody. He will never be forgotten."

Guardsman Ricky Hudson said:

"A good bloke and a great friend you knew how to have a laugh with the lads no matter what was going on around. The Welsh Guards were very lucky to have had you – rest easy RIP Chris King."

Guardsman Grant Feast said

"Chris was a great friend and would always be the one to make the lads laugh – no matter what the situation. He will be sorely missed and never forgotten."