

Lance Corporal David Dennis  
The Light Dragoons

Lance Corporal David 'Duke' Dennis was serving with The Light Dragoons Battle Group, which had begun a clearance operation the previous day, at the time of his death. He had deployed as part of The Light Dragoons' Command Troop and was responsible for ensuring radio communications for the Commanding Officer's tactical headquarters, both on foot and on vehicles.

Having just helped to secure a helicopter landing site for the extraction of casualties from an earlier incident, Lance Corporal Dennis was amongst a group hit by an improvised explosive device, and sustained fatal injuries.

Lance Corporal Dennis was born on 16 May 1980. He joined the Army on 14 February 2003 as a gunner in the Royal Artillery before joining The King's Troop. Having served with the Gunners for just over two years, he was attached to The Light Dragoons for a six-month tour of Iraq in 2005. Having struck up strong friendships over the six months, he applied to transfer and joined the regiment in February 2006. Lance Corporal Dennis was on his second tour of Afghanistan. He leaves behind his mother Adele, of Llanelli, as well as his twin brother Gareth and his fiancée Lisa.

Lance Corporal Dennis was a quietly spoken and popular soldier; fiercely loyal to his friends. He was known throughout the regiment simply as 'Duke' - a nickname of which he was hugely proud. He believed wholeheartedly in what he was doing and would always back himself to the hilt.

Lance Corporal Dennis loved the banter that typifies Army life, and he could give as good as he got, though he had the character to laugh at himself as well. He loved the gym, and would jokingly show off his muscles at any opportunity. He took great pride in mentoring and looking after the junior members of his troop, and he would be one of the first they would turn to for advice and guidance.

Ambitious and determined, Lance Corporal Dennis wanted to pursue the dismounted side of Formation Reconnaissance, and had volunteered to attend Junior Brecon on his return and wanted to serve in the Brigade Reconnaissance Force in the future.

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

"Lance Corporal Dennis was one of a hugely talented generation of Light Dragoons. With tours of Afghanistan and Iraq behind him, he was experienced beyond his relatively junior years.

Duke loved being in the regiment, and the regiment celebrated this popular, genuine and heartfelt soldier.

"If there is any consolation it is that he is reunited with his close friend Lance Corporal Nigel Moffett, whose death earlier in the tour had affected Lance Corporal Dennis greatly. My sincerest condolences go out to his mother Adele, his brother Gareth and his fiancée Lisa. We will remember Lance Corporal Dennis; we will be worthy of his memory; we will continue to take the fight to the enemy that has taken him from us."

Major Rupert Lyon Army Air Corps, Officer Commanding D Squadron Light Dragoons, said:

"Duke was a quietly spoken Welshman who had no problems being the only Welshman in a regiment that recruits from the North East. It was a characteristic that immediately stood him out from his peers and ensured he got the recognition that he deserved.

"He was well known throughout the regiment and was a great asset to have on your side during squadron rugby matches, where he was unstoppable. He was a very capable small arms instructor, and was vital to making sure that the squadron was properly trained for deployment.

"During quiet periods he could often be found in the armoury checking that the squadron weapons were serviceable or otherwise in the gym improving on his already fearsome strength. Our thoughts go to his family and his fiancée Lisa, who he intended to marry on his return from Afghanistan. Duke will be surely missed by all of the regiment but will never be forgotten."

Captain David Ansell, the Regimental Signals Officer, said:

"Duke was a dedicated soldier and an absolute rock, who could be depended on no matter the circumstances. Nothing was ever too much trouble for him, whether it be at work or for his friends. He was an example to us all.

"Duke was a true Light Dragoon and personified everything that the regiment holds dear. He was utterly professional in all he did. He remained flexible and adaptable to whatever came his way, being equally at home in the turret of a CVR(T) [Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked)], top gunning on a Mastiff or in the dismounted role. More than this though, he approached all he did with a desire to succeed. He was an excellent Junior NCO [Non-Commissioned Officer] who was always looking after the needs of others first. His loss is a huge blow to the troop.

"One of life's real characters, he was fiercely proud of his Welsh roots. He was gregarious by nature, and always to be found in the thick of things. Duke's sense of humour and his mischievous streak were well known to all. Whilst losing Duke has had a profound effect on his friends and colleagues alike, it is as nothing to the pain his family and friends will be feeling back home. My thoughts and prayers are with them all at this most dreadful of times."

Corporal Tony Duncan, on behalf of his friends from Command Troop, said:

"Duke was one of the most loved guys in the regiment, and a character that will never be replaced. He will be remembered by his friends as being totally devoted and utterly professional. He loved being a skill at arms instructor, and never stopped reminding us that he was one of the best there was.

"There was more to him than just soldiering though. We will remember him for looking like Freddie Mercury when he grew a moustache and his dodgy dress sense on nights out. No matter how outrageous the outfit, the Duke was always certain that he was the coolest guy out that night.

"Duke was a man that every soldier should aspire to be. He had it all. He was quick-thinking, hard-working, strong, selfless, courageous, and had a great sense of humour. Most of all he was well respected and loyal to all those around him. Our friend Duke will never be forgotten."

Private Mike Devine, Adjutant General's Corps, said

"Duke was one of the good guys in life who you could trust implicitly. I had the privilege to call him my friend ever since we first met in King's Troop RHA [Royal Horse Artillery]. He was a warm and caring man with a large heart who would go out of his way to help anybody who asked.

"With his great sense of humour he was a joy to be around and could brighten up the dullest of days. He loved his job in The Light Dragoons and it was a pleasure to have served with him again. Rest in peace - I'll miss you."