

1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment

Lance Corporal Scott Hardy, aged 26, was born and raised in Chelmsford. A bricklayer before joining the Army, he excelled at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick. He passed out of training in May 2007 and deployed to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 6 only three weeks later.

His age and maturity showed in Afghanistan and he was identified as a soldier with the potential to become a Junior Non-Commissioned Officer. He passed his Leadership Course in the winter of 2008 and was promoted shortly after.

His performance on this course was indicative of the man. In the swirling snow and sub-zero conditions and after four-and-a-half hours of tabbing up mountains he was still there, plugging away with a grim smile on his face. He soaked hardship up and got on with the job.

Lance Corporal Hardy arrived in Afghanistan on 19 October 2009 and was employed as a Section Second in Command in 3 Platoon of A (Norfolk) Company.

Lance Corporal Hardy's family and girlfriend made the following statement:

"Lance Corporal Scott Hardy was a proud professional soldier who courageously gave his life for his Country in Helmand Province.

"He had previously served there in 2007. As an infantryman he brought a passionate enthusiasm to the job of Section Commander. Having already promoted quickly, attendance on his next promotion course had been planned for return from Afghanistan.

"Possessing great inner strength and a powerful personality, Scott could be relied upon, even in the worst of situations, to lift his mens' morale. They loved him - he loved them.

"Whilst being a highly competitive man, his role as a dearly loved son, brother, uncle and partner, developed his gift for attentiveness towards those around him. His young nephews and nieces agreed that his presence, 'brightened a room'.

"His father, brother, sisters and childhood sweetheart, Charlene, feel words fail to express the sorrow only a heart-broken family knows.

"To lose Scott, is to lose a huge part of life itself. But he will always be with us, making us smile, giving us pride and gratitude. We also wish to remember his Viking comrades with heartfelt sympathy. Rest in peace valiant friend."

Lance Corporal Scott Hardy

Lieutenant Colonel James Woodham, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment said:

"Today the Battalion lost two fine young men, killed by an IED whilst conducting an Operation to rid the Taliban from an area to the North of Musa Qal'ah.

"Serving as part of A (Norfolk) Company, Lance Corporal Scott Hardy has been part of a close knit team which has, through hard Infantry graft, created real improvements in the security for large numbers of people.

"This security allows education, development and health care to flourish without the fear of retribution or intimidation. It is painful that such progress comes at such human cost.

"Scott came to my attention soon after I took over command - a big man, with real gravitas and a natural leader of men. He was a stereotypical Junior Non Commissioned Officer - he could have been squeezed out of the mould that has been producing Infantry leaders for generations.

"Always ready to see the bright side of life, always ready with banter when the situation allowed it. Mature and unflappable, he was one of those individuals who takes life in their stride.

"He was earmarked to attend the Section Commanders Battle Course later this year and we expected him to pass with flying colours.

"His performance leading men in the most demanding of circumstances in Afghanistan was notable - he was steadfast under fire and hugely brave. Blessed by a robust sense of humour, Scott was the first to laugh at life's challenges and keep soldiering on.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Scott's family and girlfriend at this tragic time. This man served as a Viking and died a Viking - we will remember his sacrifice for evermore."

Major Stuart Smith, Officer Commanding, A (Norfolk) Company said:

"Lance Corporal Scott Hardy was a larger than life character with a great sense of humour but beside this he was a thoroughly professional JNCO.

"He relished the challenges that came with the role of a light role Infantry Section Commander on Operations. Whether he was engaging with the local nationals or taking the fight to the enemy, his first thought were always for his men and they respected him accordingly.

"With his previous Operational experience in Afghanistan in 2007 and with his current performance this year he had really shown his full potential and was highlighted as a real star of the future.

"Snatched from us at the prime of his life, he will be missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts are with his family, girlfriend and friends at this very difficult time. He has left a hole in our ranks, but I know that he would want A (Norfolk) Company to keep continuing with our mission

in Afghanistan. He was and always will be a true Viking."

Lieutenant Simon Broomfield, Officer Commanding, 3 Platoon said:

"Older than most when he joined up, Lance Corporal Hardy was one of the rocks that 3 Platoon relied upon. He joined the Company half way through Op HERRICK 6 in 2007 and stayed with the 'Fighting Ninth' until he died.

"Due to go on his Section Commanders' Battle Course on return to the UK, he was undoubtedly going to achieve a strong pass - he was a good leader, a man that I trusted.

"Perhaps most impressive was the way he motivated his men. He had a perfect balance of stick and carrot, which was ironic as he had the most striking 'carrot-top' hair.

"He was a huge West Ham fan and loved football. Always smiling, always ready with a joke, he was one of those larger than life characters who was always looking for the next thing to take the mickey out of.

"3 Platoon mourns his loss and he leaves a correspondingly huge hole in the Platoon. Our thoughts are with his family and his girlfriend Charlene."