Acting Corporal Barnsdale, from Tring in Hertfordshire, was 24 years old and joined the Royal Engineers in September 2002. Following his basic combat engineer training in Camberley, he completed his Class 2 air conditioning and refrigeration trade training at Chatham before being posted to Hohne in Germany.

His four years in 26 Armoured Engineer Squadron, part of 32 Engineer Regiment, saw him promote to Lance Corporal and complete operational tours of Iraq and Afghanistan. Posted to 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) in October 2009, he comfortably passed his role-specific training and quickly settled into his new discipline. At the top of his peer group and already an Acting Corporal, he was in line for promotion at the earliest opportunity.

An enthusiastic football player and sportsman, he enjoyed playing the game as much as supporting his team, Queens Park Rangers. A highly professional and sociable individual, he was well-liked by those who knew him. He leaves behind his mother Wendy, his father Stephen, his sister Vanessa and his girlfriend Helen.

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Davis, Commanding Officer, Counter-IED Task Force, said:

"Acting Corporal David Barnsdale, 'Dave' to his friends, was a young, bright and incredibly likeable team leader. He died leading his men in what must be one of the most dangerous tasks in the Armed Forces - that of deliberately searching for IEDs.

"He embodied the finest traditions of a soldier, constantly displaying bucket-loads of grit and determination; he was utterly professional but always with a dash of humility. He was generous to a fault but not when playing cards, where he had a tendency to accuse others of cheating when he was, in fact, the offender!

"Acting Corporal Dave Barnsdale was known as a considerate and friendly man, always willing to pass on his expertise to others, to engage with everyone in conversation and to encourage those around him - nobody had a bad word to say about him.

"He was no stranger to operational duty either, having previously served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and, until today, in the thick of it, helping Afghans and the Combined Forces to rid this land of the improvised explosive device.

"Acting Corporal Dave Barnsdale was an outgoing person and always fun to be around. He was an avid Queens Park Rangers fan, always talking about them, but never able to understand why he was the only one who did so!

"But, at heart, his family was dearly important to him and at weekends he was often to be found travelling to Tring in Hertfordshire to be with his parents, Stephen and Wendy, sister Vanessa,

and his girlfriend Helen. We feel the pain of his loss and pass our heartfelt condolences and prayers to his family and friends."

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Bell, Commanding Officer, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), said:

"Acting Corporal David Barnsdale's loss has been a great shock to the regiment. A young Junior Non-Commissioned Officer with boundless potential and the steely understated determination of a man you know you can rely on in difficult times.

"His operational service has been exemplary, with busy tours of Iraq and Afghanistan showing the breadth of his talents and a level of experience uncommon in a Lance Corporal. It gave me great pleasure to welcome him into the regiment as I knew he would quickly become a valuable asset and I have not been disappointed.

"My overwhelming memory of Acting Corporal Barnsdale will be his irrepressible enthusiasm and no-nonsense approach. Always wearing a wry smile wherever he was and whatever he was doing, always happy to set you straight and voice an opinion, a truly refreshing trait. He had a bright future ahead of him either in explosive ordnance disposal or out in the wider Corps. He was a key player in the regimental dynamic and his squadron will be a lesser place without him there.

"On behalf of the regiment I convey my deepest heartfelt sympathies to Acting Corporal Barnsdale's mother, Wendy, his father Stephen, and his sister Vanessa. David Barnsdale was simply a first rate soldier and leader of men."

Major Rod Brown, Officer Commanding 61 Field Squadron (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), said:

"Soldiers like Acting Corporal David Barnsdale are the sturdy foundation on which the Army is built. His selfless devotion to those under his command and his unique ability to see the good in every situation was equalled only by his professionalism and drive.

"Whenever I asked his Troop Commander, Captain Sinnott, for a Junior Non-Commissioned Officer for an 'opportunity', he would, without hesitation, volunteer Lance Corporal Barnsdale who, with great enthusiasm, would use the 'opportunity' to shine amongst his peers.

"It was therefore an easy decision to award a Junior Non-Commissioned Officer of his calibre the rank of Acting Corporal in order to give him the opportunity to command a search team on operations in Afghanistan. I knew that Acting Corporal Barnsdale would not let me down; it was clear from the start that his team drew great strength from his presence and his Troop Commander understandably had great faith in him.

"A fun-loving and outgoing individual, Acting Corporal Barnsdale contributed a great deal to the personality of the squadron. His inclusive attitude, buoyant personality and lust for a good social have marked his time in the squadron. He enjoyed his sports, especially football, and

contributed to the squadron's sporting successes on a number of occasions in the face of a very competitive field.

"With imminent promotion and a bright future ahead of him, Acting Corporal Barnsdale's death is a tragic loss to his Squadron, Regiment, Corps and Service. I cannot imagine the grief that his family are currently suffering but they should know that our thoughts are with them at this most difficult of times. He will be sorely missed by his friends and colleagues alike."

Captain Luke Sinnott, Troop Commander and Royal Engineers Search Advisor, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) said:

"I count Dave Barnsdale as one of the finest individuals I have ever had the pleasure of working with. He was a rock for his team and a good friend to all of us. He fearlessly led his team in a very difficult environment and I can think of no man I would have sooner trusted with so much responsibility.

"Despite his easy manner he was able to be the strong hand the searchers needed when walking towards dangerous areas, making the way safe for other people and giving them confidence to do their job day after day.

"Dave had a boundless passion for Queen's Park Rangers football club and carried his club flag everywhere he went. It was always easy to spot his bed space in a room by the same flag hanging with pride from the nearest rail. The avid cards player, he was never without his cards in case an opportune moment arose to start a game of Yuka, because Dave loved company and people loved his company.

"It appals me to loose a friend like Dave and I can not help but feel the world is a lot worse off for losing him. He was the one man I always knew would have a big smile on his face and a good word to say and I can not begin to try and repair the void he leaves behind.

"He was my friend and a friend to many others, but our loss can not compare to that of his family and his girlfriend Helen. I hope they know we are thinking of them during this difficult period. His adopted Search Team family will always honour his memory. Rest in Peace Dave."

Corporal Si Archer a friend and colleague, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) said:

"In the time I have known Dave he was always determined, brave and professional in all aspects of his life; which was sadly cut short. He will be truly missed and it has been an honour to serve with him as a friend and a colleague. Our thoughts will be with his family and friends at this difficult time and I will never forget him."

Corporal Andy Byres a friend and colleague, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) said:

"As a team commander Dave was held in high regard, always professional, considerate and

friendly. All you had to do was ask around to find the true Dave, every man had a good word to say, as his efforts to engage with everyone were second to none. The best Yuka partner anyone could ask for, the Squadron and Army will be a lesser place without him."

Corporal 'Bri' Derrick a friend and colleague, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) said:

"The first time I met Dave was on our B1 Combat Engineer Course. It didn't take long, in fact a matter of days, before we became good friends. Dave and I were in the same section. He was such an outgoing and fun guy to be around. In our spare time after work we would hit the local pub and have a good laugh together.

"I always looked up to Dave for his professionalism and dedication to everything he did. After the course we lost touch, but were soon working together again in the same Squadron doing the same job. Again Dave put his all into everything he did during our training before deploying to Afghanistan.

"You will be sorely missed as a great friend and colleague. My thoughts are with your family and friends at this time."

Corporal 'Foggy' McGuffog friend and fellow Royal Engineers Search Team Commander, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), said:

"I didn't get the chance to work with Dave but I did get the chance to socialise with him.

"Dave was a great bloke and a man who cared about those around him, always asking how they were and making them smile. He loved to go out for a curry and a beer or three either for the crack or to cheer you up. Dave will be sorely missed as a friend and a team commander. It's people like him who are the glue that hold the unit and the Army together."

Lance Corporal Craig Davies, a friend and colleague, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), said:

"Dave was a brilliant friend who led by example in everything he did. My two biggest memories of Dave are playing cards together, and he always seemed to know when I was cheating. He was also a massive QPR fan who took great pleasure in giving me stick when my team, Middlesbrough, were beaten. A legend who will never be forgotten."

Lance Corporal Jones a friend and colleague, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), said:

"From the moment I arrived at the Squadron Corporal Dave Barnsdale was very welcoming. He would approach you and you knew that you could have a good chat about things. Always happy and willing to have a good laugh, all that knew him respected him.

"He knew his job well and this was reflected in the team he commanded. Dave will always be

remembered for his morale amongst the lads. A sad loss for us all. RIP Dave, gone but definitely not forgotten."

Lance Corporal Adam Muirhead a friend and colleague, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), said:

"I met Dave in 2005 when I was posted into 26 Armoured Engineer Squadron at Hohne in Germany, and from my first night in the Squadron bar I knew that Dave and I would be friends for life. I had the pleasure of deploying on Op TELIC 7 and also Op HERRICK 9 with Dave. I will always remember Dave's face when we were stood at the top of the Stratosphere Tower in Las Vegas.

"The look of pure fear in his eyes was almost comical as we were shot up in the air on the rollercoaster. Dave's passion for football and his beloved QPR would match that of any hard-core football fan. Dave was always willing to help those in need and was much liked and respected by all that had the pleasure of meeting him. He will be sorely missed by the Squadron and the Corps. One day we will meet again Dave.

"Gone but not forgotten."

Lance Corporal 'Phil' Studdart a friend and colleague, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), said:

"Cpl 'Dave' Barnsdale, Joint Forces Explosive Ordinance Disposal Group. Friend and Colleague.

"Cpl 'Dave' Barnsdale was a great colleague and outstanding friend. Serving in the same troop as Dave it was easy to see his enthusiasm to help others towards success. He always acted selflessly and was a true inspiration to myself and those around him. God bless you Dave, you will truly be missed by all."

Sapper "Kasper" Mulrooney a friend and Royal Engineers Search Team member, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), said:

"What little time I spent with Dave I will remember for a long time to come. I worked in his team for almost 2 months during pre-deployment training and in that time I knew I was in good hands under Dave's guidance. As a TA soldier I had to work that little bit harder to make my mark in his team, but Dave was always understanding with me and for that I thank him.

"No matter how bone a question I asked, or how funny he found it, Dave would give me a straight answer; after some ribbing.

"My last and fondest memory of this great Royal Engineer Search Team commander will be the lift home he gave me from our Dari course in Waterbeach. On the two-hour drive home, I gained much knowledge from an experienced soldier and got to know him that bit better. He was a fine example of what a man of the Corps should be. He will be missed by all."

Sapper Ben Thompson, a friend and colleague, 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), said:

"Dave was a fantastic friend and one who always kept morale high no matter what situation he was in. My biggest memory of Dave is when we went to KFC and we smashed over £28 worth of food and he was still hungry. Dave was also a beloved QPR fan who you could always enjoy great banter with. We will all miss you Dave and always remember you."