The Ministry of Defence has confirmed the death of Staff Sergeant Olaf Sean George Schmid, of the Royal Logistic Corps, in Afghanistan on the afternoon of Saturday 31 October 2009.

SSgt Schmid died instantly following an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) explosion in the Sangin region of Helmand Province.

At the time he was commanding an Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) team who were dealing with a confirmed IED.

Working in concert with an Advanced Search team he was conducting a manual route search to clear devices in the vicinity of the Forward Operating Base and was defusing the device when it initiated.

SSgt Schmid was born in Truro, Cornwall on 11 June 1979. He was married to Christina (Chrissy) and had a step-son Laird, aged five. They lived together as a family in Winchester.

An Ammunition Technician (AT) by trade, SSgt Schmid served much of his career at the Commando Logistic Regt and thrived in 3 Commando Brigade, the ethos there suiting his thirst for soldiering.

He sailed through the ranks and was selected for promotion to SSgt in April 2008. SSgt Schmid was posted to 11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps as an AT Senior Non-Commissioned Officer at Alpha Troop providing close IEDD support to Special Forces and Police Tactical Firearms teams; an area in which he continued to thrive.

He had a natural aptitude for IEDD and made steady progress through the numerous courses that an AT has to go through to become a High Threat Operator. He successfully passed the High Threat IEDD Course earlier this year which qualified him to operate in Afghanistan which is considered very much the pinnacle of any AT's operational career.

SSgt Schmid arrived in theatre on Op HERRICK 10 in June 2009, thrown in the deep-end participating in Op PANCHAI PALANG during the summer. During the course of his tour, he attended 41 tasks, rendered safe 64 IEDs and attended 11 finds of bomb making equipment.

Lieutenant Col Robert Thomson, Commanding Officer 2 RIFLES Battle Group said:

"SSgt Oz Schmid was simply the bravest and most courageous man I have ever met. Under relentless IED and small arms attacks he stood taller than the tallest. He opened the Pharmacy Road and 24 hrs later, found 31 IEDs in one go on route SPARTA. Every single Company in 2 RIFLES adored working with him.

"I adored working with him. No matter how difficult or lethal the task which lay in front of us, he was the man who only saw solutions.

"He saved lives in 2 RIFLES time after time and for that he will retain a very special place in every heart of every Rifleman in our extraordinary Battle Group. Superlatives do not do the man justice. Better than the best. Better than the best of the best. Our thoughts and prayers are with his beloved family."

Lieutenant Colonel Gareth Bex RLC, Commanding Officer Counter IED Task Force said:

"SSgt Oz Schmid was a brilliant IEDD operator and a superb soldier. We loved him like a brother; he was a much adored member of our close knit family.

"His example will urge us on with greater determination as we continue the C-IED fight he fought so valiantly. He had such a bright future ahead of him in a career that he so blatantly loved; the Army has been robbed of a superb talent.

"With his tousled hair and boyish grin his effervescent presence was always good for morale and he had an infectious enthusiasm.

"Once met, never forgotten his wicked sense of humour was legendary; he received so many accolades from the Battle Groups for his professionalism, courage and vibrant personality.

"It was an honour to serve with him and a privilege to have been his Commanding Officer. He will be revered for ever in 11 EOD Regiment RLC as a hero and an inspiration to all who follow him; he takes his rightful place alongside recent fallen comrades WO2 Gaz O'Donnell GM+Bar and Captain Dan Shepherd.

"SSgt Schmid stood proud amongst some formidable men serving here in Afghanistan; the tag 'legend' is frequently bestowed nowadays but in his case it is rightly justified - SSgt Schmid was a legend.

"His courage was not displayed in a fleeting moment of time; he stared death in the face on a daily basis. Many soldiers and ordinary Afghans owe their lives to SSgt Schmid's gallant actions and his sacrifice will never be forgotten."

Lt Col Nicholas Kitson, Commanding Officer 3 RIFLES Battle Group said:

"The minute I met SSgt Schmid only a few weeks ago on a heli pad with my predecessor here, CO 2 RIFLES, it was clear that he was a legendary figure.

"Full of boundless energy and humour, loved and respected by all, he was both our greatest source of morale back in the FOB and our most precious military asset in the deadly cat and mouse game we play daily with the insurgent bombers.

"He exuded confidence and professionalism but was self-effacing and modest in the extreme,

always ready to make fun of himself and have a laugh with all around him.

"He is this Battle Group's first loss and although he has been with us (or more accurately we with him) only a few weeks, it is the most painful of first blows.

"He has saved many lives and he made the ultimate sacrifice doing just that. He will be impossible to forget and will be sorely missed by all. He will, though, remain an inspiration to us all. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family; we share their grief."

Major Tim Gould QGM RLC, Officer Commanding Joint Force EOD Group said:

"SSgt Oz Schmid was a man of extreme courage who revelled in this the most challenging and dangerous of environments.

"To see him out here in Afghanistan was to view a man very much in his element; he simply loved what he did, in fact, you would swear that he was born for it.

"An enigma when I met him; a pleasure to have known him; an honour to have served with him; a travesty to lose him.

"A superlative individual, a soldier of the very highest calibre, who will be deeply missed. In all my time in the Army, I have never met, nor am I ever likely to meet a man like SSgt Schmid again; he truly was a once in a generation phenomenon."

SSgt Shaun Marsh, Royal Engineer Search Advisor said:

"Oz was a very professional person, both with work and socialising aspects. He loved his job and has been operating for four months in Afghanistan, all over the province including on Panchai Palang.

"My team and I have been working with him for two months now. He was an inspiration to the team; full of knowledge and mostly his bubbly charisma and sense of humour.

"Oz was bubbly all the time, from first light to last light. He loved working with 2 & 3 RIFLES for their professionalism and also enjoyed working in the Sangin area.

"He will be missed by us all and many others. Our thoughts go to his wife and son and family. God let him rest in peace."