

<p>Trooper Joshua Hammond
2nd Royal Tank Regiment

Lt Col Marcus Simson, Commanding Officer 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, said:

"Trooper Joshua Hammond enlisted in the Army aged 16 ♦ and attended the Army Foundation College in Harrogate to complete his initial training. From Harrogate, having been accepted into the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, Trooper Hammond moved to Bovington to learn his trade as a Challenger 2 tank driver. He arrived with the Regiment in Tidworth in May 2008, shortly before his 18th birthday and within months had deployed with his Squadron to Canada where he spent a happy and fulfilling 3 months training on the Prairie. He quickly established himself as a professional and capable young soldier, full of potential and with a future full of promise.</p><p>
"On his return from Canada, Trooper Hammond volunteered to change Squadron in order to deploy to Afghanistan. He threw himself into life in his new Squadron, the pre-deployment training and his conversion to the VIKING vehicle that he would be operating in Theatre. He deployed with his Squadron to Afghanistan exactly a month ago. In the month he had in Theatre, he proved himself to be a superb soldier. Fit, courageous, and robust, he was the first to volunteer, the first to muck in and the first to offer help to others. But he was so much more than that. For he was at the heart of everything that was going on. He was full of laughter, was always ready to listen and he cared deeply about his mates.

"Known Regimentally as Josh, Trooper Hammond died on patrol doing the job he loved, amongst his friends, the week before his 19th birthday. He was proud to be a Tankie, and we are proud to have served with him. His tragic death has left a vast hole in our hearts - both those in his Squadron in Afghanistan and those of us left behind in the UK. Our thoughts at this time are with his family and friends, but most particularly with his parents and his fianc♦."

Major Charlie Burbridge, Officer Commanding Egypt Squadron, 2RTR, said:

"Hammy joined 2 RTR in May 2008 and it was clear from the outset that he was going to be a fine soldier. He took pride in his fitness and was determined to be the best tank driver he could be. He succeeded. He also succeeded in being admitted into the EGYPT bad tattoo club and very swiftly became a central figure in the squadron.

"Hammy was a quiet, unassuming but highly courageous young man with a roguish sense of humour. Earnest, thoughtful and happy, he was an essential part of my squadron and he died, a week before his nineteenth birthday, doing a fine job as a proud soldier. He had a glint in his eye and a wry smile which always made one feel that you were in on the joke. He was professional and capable and was only just getting into his stride as a soldier. Only days before his tragic death he had said how much he was enjoying the job.

"My words will do little to console his mother or fianc♦whom he planned to marry on his return from Afghanistan but our prayers are for them. Hammy was a Tankie, through and through; I am proud to have served alongside him and we will never forget him."

Lieutenant Terry Newton, said:

"Tpr Josh Hammond was an easy going and popular individual who fitted in exceptionally well within our Troop. He was a jovial character who always had an air of mischief about him that made being his Troop Leader so enjoyable. Josh's performance in Afghanistan was superb and he continually proved his quality as a field soldier. Josh was a quietly courageous character who met adversity with a smile, a murmured joke and a 'can do' attitude. He will be sorely missed by everyone who ever had the privilege of knowing him."

Lance Corporal Chris Burwood, said:

"Josh Hammond was a kind and generous person who wasn't scared to get his hands dirty. He was always the first in every situation whether in the field or in camp. His thirst for adventure was second to none, and even though he was new to the Regiment, he was liked by everyone that knew him.

"Our thoughts at this time are with his family

and friends. Our loss is felt throughout the squadron, and he will surely be missed." Trooper Chris Stone, said: "Josh was among my closest friends in 2RTR, one of a few whose company I could really appreciate. As I am writing this I'm finding it hard to keep my feelings stable and can only imagine the effect this will have on his friends, family and fianc. Its going to be hard doing all the things we planned together and I can't imagine being able to do it without him. "I miss you mate, always will. Chris." Trooper Patrick Flowers, said: "Josh was a nice lad. He was always there to help us out and listen to our problems. Josh was a trustworthy guy, had a great sense of humour, and loved drinking and dancing with the lads. Josh was a remarkable character." Trooper Ben Proberts, said: "Josh Hammond was one of the few great people in this world. No matter how bad times got, he always had something to laugh about. He hadn't he hadn't been in EGYPT long, but the short time of being with us he made a lot of friends, me being one of them. I didn't know him at all before January, but it didn't take long to realise just what sort of person he was. He was only 18 years old, with his birthday coming up in 8 days, but in these short 18 years he achieved what some people could achieve in a lifetime. With a loving fianc at his side, this is a devastating blow. His life will live on in our memory and our hearts. God rest his sole. RIP Josh Hammond." Trooper Adam Minns, said: "Josh Hammond was a brilliant soldier and a one of a kind bloke. We spent three months working together in Canada. Josh helped me prepare my vehicle into the early hours of the morning even though he had his own vehicle to fix. We had some laughs together in Canada. Josh always went out of his way to help his fellow colleagues no matter what the problem was. He cheered me up when I felt down and you could talk to him about anything. Josh was the most trustworthy person and a top bloke to everyone. He will always be in our hearts forever and always." Trooper Tom Henderson, said: "Josh was a true soldier's soldier. An essential member of any night out, boasting vast knowledge of good bars and bad drinks. He was one of the main reasons 3 Troop were banned from ordering Jager bombs at a function in Tidworth having spent 200 of the squadron's money in 10 minutes. At work when I was struggling with a wagon he'd be the first to come over and help me destroy it faster. He joined the Army immediately after school, volunteered for HERRICK, and volunteered to go out on the ground with his troop as a dismount. "He wasn't out here to serve his country, or earn respect, or for the money. He was out here to have an adventure with his mates, to drive a big wagon around a strange country and have a laugh doing it."