

Sapper Elijah Bond of 35 Engineer Regiment, Royal Engineers has died at the Queen Elizabeth NHS Hospital, Birmingham. Serving with the Task Force Helmand Engineer Group, he was a member of a team that was conducting an engineer reconnaissance task in the Deh Adham Khan region of Nahr-e Saraj (North) in Central Helmand, on 6th December 2011, when he was injured in a blast from an improvised explosive device.

His colleagues provided immediate first aid before he was evacuated by helicopter to the military hospital in Camp Bastion, where he received further medical attention. He was then flown under the care of a Critical Care Air Support Team to the Queen Elizabeth NHS Hospital in Birmingham where, on 8th December, he died of his wounds.

Sapper Elijah Cooper Bond

Sapper Elijah Cooper Bond, 24, was born on 10th June 1987 in Havant, Hampshire and grew up in St Austell, Cornwall. He joined the Corps of Royal Engineers in August 2008 and after completing his Phase One training he moved to Gibraltar Barracks to complete his Combat Engineer training. In 2009 he moved to Brompton Barracks in Chatham where he qualified as an electrical and mechanical draughtsman after a complex and academically demanding course.

After two years of extensive training he arrived in Germany in September 2010 to join 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron, a part of 35 Engineer Regiment based in Paderborn. He arrived at an incredibly busy time for the Regiment and was launched straight into Afghanistan pre-deployment training which included a series of exercises and training packages. Not content with this he volunteered for, and excelled at, the General Purpose Machine Gunners' course and showed considerable intellect by completing the Pashtu patrol language course.

With a vibrant personality, he enthusiastically joined in with the lively Squadron social scene; quickly making friends and establishing himself as a character across the ranks. In quieter moments he proved to be an excellent chess player, as many a more senior member of his Squadron found out to their detriment.

Sapper Bond deployed to Helmand Province, Afghanistan with his Squadron which became known as Engineer Field Squadron 1, part of the Task Force Helmand Engineer Group. He was deployed as a Combat Engineer in 8 Troop and based at Patrol Base Clifton in the Deh Adam Kahn area of Nahr-e Saraj District.

He leaves behind his mother, Lizz, and father, Mark, sisters Kimberley and Bethany, and brothers Jose and Isaac. The Family of Sapper Bond have made the following statement: "Elijah Cooper Bond left the world in the way he chose to live his life. He was a beautiful son, amazing brother, a proud uncle and our best friend. From a wicked grin to a righteous smile he could light up a room as much as he lit up our lives, so mischievous and fun yet grounded and down to earth. He will forever be a piece of us and remain in our hearts. We are thankful for the memories we have been given and the precious time we spent with him. We have faith in the

sure and certain knowledge that we will be reunited together again. I hope that we can make him as proud as he has made us, and we, along with Lexi, will remember him with every streak we see in the sky. How many 'bye byes' in the sky".

Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Copsey, Commanding Officer, 35 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Sapper Elijah Bond will be sadly missed by his close-knit Troop and Squadron. His lively and outgoing nature was founded on an inner confidence that saw him excel during his time in the Royal Engineers. He was a rising star within his Squadron and he had a bright future ahead of him. Regarded as a first rate soldier he was notable for his complete reliability, enthusiasm and commitment. It was whilst in Afghanistan that he displayed his true ability, supporting the remainder of his Troop by working selflessly and without complaint; characteristics for which he will be forever remembered.

"Sapper Elijah Bond's friendly exterior belied a soldier who was physically robust, mentally tough, and always intent on doing the utmost for his team mates. It was whilst on an engineer reconnaissance patrol helping to plan vital infrastructure for the local population that he paid the ultimate price. Tragically he gave his life in order to improve the lives of others.

"His tragic and sudden loss has been a huge blow to us all; his presence will be missed by everyone within 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron and 35 Engineer Regiment. We will never forget him, and our thoughts are with his family and friends at this most difficult time."

Major Guy Boxall MBE, Officer Commanding 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 35 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Sapper Bond was one of my most effective and promising young soldiers. He epitomised the Royal Engineer Spirit in so many ways - he was bright, strong, intelligent, caring and always a volunteer, whatever the task. I remember meeting him shortly after he arrived in the Squadron last year - he was polite and respectful, finding his feet in the wide world of regimental life in Germany.

"In a few short months, I saw his confidence grow, his charisma shine through and so quickly become an inspiration to his peers. He was exceptionally popular and possessed that rare gift of never being down and always managing to find a way to lift the spirits of those around him, even in the toughest of circumstances. He was a trusted and reliable member of a close knit team and lived out the Squadron mantra - 'always say yes, unless the answer absolutely has to be no'.

"He was injured whilst on an important and invaluable task; an engineer reconnaissance patrol for a future project to improve the lives of the local Afghans. The Squadron has been devastated by the loss of a brother. Our thoughts and prayers are with him, his family and friends - his memory lives on, burning brightly in us all."

Lieutenant William Abbott, 8 Troop Commander, 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 35 Engineer Regiment, said:

"The loss of Sapper Bond, one of the most enthusiastic, loyal and charismatic men I have ever had the privilege of meeting, has hit everyone who knew him very hard. He was a pleasure to command. His energy and verve for life were clear to see and rubbed off on whoever he met.

"He loved his job and was thoroughly professional, epitomising what being a Sapper is all about. 'Bondy' as he was known in the Troop, was one of the most charismatic people I have met. Since taking over the Troop I have witnessed him go from strength to strength and quickly become a firm favourite amongst his peers and seniors. He was always to be found with a smile on his face, laughing about something. I spent many a journey around Afghanistan listening to 'Bond FM' whilst he chatted away in the vehicle. The happiest I saw him was when he beat me at chess in four moves and in true Sapper Bond style I never lived it down. He was the life and soul of the party and has left a massive void behind.

"I am honoured to have known Sapper Bond. He was a fantastic soldier and individual and he will be greatly missed. My thoughts and condolences go out to his family and friends. He was the best of us."

Warrant Officer Class Two Steve Driver, Squadron Sergeant Major, 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 35 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Sapper Bond was already in the Squadron when I was posted in this year. I always remember the professional attitude with which he conducted himself. He was one of the characters in the Squadron and whenever I saw him, he always had a smile on his face. He had a real lust for life and was at the centre of everything; you would always know if he was in the room. He loved his job and he would have gone far. He was an outgoing man and he would always engage in conversation and was easy to talk to. The Corps has lost a great bloke and professional soldier. As a soldier and a man I held him in high regard. My thoughts are with his family at this difficult time."

Staff Sergeant Matthew Norman, 8 Troop Staff Sergeant, 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 35 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Sapper Bond, or 'Bondy' to his mates, was a larger than life character and an integral member of 8 Troop. I only got to know him over this short period of time when I became his Troop Staff Sergeant, and for me he was an inspiration. A fully committed, professional and hard working lad, whose selfless commitment was second to none. We have lost a shining light and he will be thoroughly missed by all. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends in this difficult time. RIP

Bondy - gone but never will you be forgotten."

Corporal Adam Cooper, 8 Troop, 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 35 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Bondy was a happy person who enjoyed ribbing his peers, he was always laughing and joking and this is how I will remember him. Charismatic, energetic and full of life he was a young man who brought a lot to the table. As a subordinate you couldn't ask for more, he kept morale high and cracked on with a smile. Bondy will be sincerely missed and my thoughts are with his family."

Sapper Jayson Redshaw, 8 Troop, 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 35 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Bondy was the morale of 8 Troop - making us laugh was one of the many talents he brought to the party, he was everything you wanted in a friend especially good at making a dark time seem like nothing, I just wish he was here now. He was the life and soul of any party and many times we got to experience this, pretty much every weekend we could rely on him to make a difference. You may be gone mate but you will never be forgotten, I can assure you of that. We have plenty of memories to cherish and cherish them we will. We will keep the wolf pack strong - thanks for everything. Rest in peace now mate."

Sapper Pete Broxton, 7 Troop, 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 35 Engineer Regiment, said:

"Bondy was the life of the party, so full of fun and always bringing a smile to everyone's face. He could always get a laugh out of anyone with his witty jokes, and he could do a like-for-like impression of many of his mates, bringing us all to tears of laughter. He was always popular with the ladies with his cheeky smile, bubbly personality and smooth talking. He was a fit, strong member of the Squadron and Troop, liked by all and loved by many; he will be missed more than he could have ever known. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends. Hewas more than my friend; he was my brother, sleep well mate."