

36 Engineer Regiment

It is with sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the death of WO2 David Markland from 36 Engineer Regiment who was killed in Afghanistan on Monday 8 February 2010.

Warrant Officer Class 2 David (Dave) Markland deployed on Operation HERRICK 11 as a Royal Engineer Search Advisor with the Joint Force EOD Group, as part of the Counter-IED Task Force.

David was born in Euxton, Lancashire in 1973 and was 36 years old when he was tragically killed in an IED blast whilst on a task in support of Battle Group (Centre South).

Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland enlisted in the Army in June 1989, joining the Corps of Royal Engineers as a Plant Operator Mechanic (POM).

As a 'Sapper' he proved himself a highly capable and adaptable soldier who was keen to expand his engineering knowledge.

He rose through the ranks to become a Military Plant Foreman (MPF) in 2005.

An excellent instructor, he had numerous trade qualifications and his passion for instruction was evident in the zest and enthusiasm he brought to every training opportunity.

This was Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland's eighth operational tour of duty during his distinguished 20 year service, having completed five tours in Bosnia between 1995 and 1998, one in Iraq in 2003 and this his second tour of Afghanistan.

He was posted to 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron, 36 Engineer Regiment RE, Maidstone, Kent in October 2007.

Having completed the Royal Engineer Search Advisor course in Spring 2009, he carried out training with the Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Group prior to deploying on Operation HERRICK 11 in October 2009. As part of the Counter-IED Task Force, Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland led a team of Royal Engineer Advanced Search specialists responsible for conducting route clearances in support of the Battle Groups.

Such was the quality of the man that he was recently selected for a Field Squadron Sergeant Major's post which is a rare occurrence in the plant specialist trade.

Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland strove to constantly better himself and having completed a Higher National Diploma in Civil Engineering he was studying to complete his full degree.

A robust and fit individual who had a passion for camping, mountaineering and trekking, Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland loved to organise adventurous training for soldiers worldwide as well as enjoying both rugby and basketball.

A devoted family man, Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland leaves behind his wife Corallee and their two sons Keelen, aged 10 and Logan, aged 7.

Lieutenant Colonel Gareth Bex RLC, Commanding Officer, Counter IED Task Force said:
"Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland was an outstanding Royal Engineer Search Advisor.

"He was a bear of a man, big and bold, but caring and compassionate. Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland was adored by his team; they would have followed him to the ends of the earth, such was the respect and trust he inspired.

"Afghanistan is the most taxing of threat environments and in his 5 months he had met some incredible challenges head on and never once faltered.

"Wonderfully candid I valued his honest advice; there is no place for undue circumspection on operations. His understanding of Counter Insurgency operations was impressive and he had the force of personality to ensure plans were carried through on the ground.

"A most courageous soldier he epitomised the character and bravery so typical of the Counter-IED team.

"He was a jovial and amiable character with natural warmth and magnetism; his loss will be felt keenly by all in the Counter-IED Task Force and the close knit EOD and Search community.

"Having returned recently from leave in the UK he was desperate to get back out on the ground with his team, such was his dedication.

"Although I only knew him for 5 months I will never forget Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland, to say he was impressive doesn't do justice to the man. He had an inspiring effect on all those that he met, a talismanic figure whose mere presence instilled confidence and self-belief in everyone.

"I feel truly honoured to have known this fine man, and am devastated to have lost him.

"My heart goes out to his wife, Corallee and his two sons Keelen and Logan - they can be extremely proud of his achievements."

Major Tim Gould QGM RLC, Officer Commanding, Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group said:

"Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland was a veritable guiding light to all that he served with.

"A man of excellence and of exacting standards; second best just wouldn't do.

"He was new to the 'bomb hunting' discipline, a small and tight knit fraternity; he thrived operating on the front line being at the vanguard of the Counter-IED battle in Helmand, Afghanistan.

"Robust, confident and full of drive, Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland is precisely the type of man you need on operations, a man who could deliver no matter the circumstance; anything was possible when he was around. A man of presence, a man of purpose and a man of pride; Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland was an inspirational figure within the EOD Group.

"We have been rocked to the very core by his cruel and un-timely passing.

"Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland was a superlative Warrant Officer and I speak on behalf of all the EOD Group when I say that it was an honour to have served with him."

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Hulme MBE RE, Commanding Officer, 36 Engineer Regiment said: "I have known Warrant Officer Class 2 Dave Markland for almost 20 years; we have served together in both Germany and the UK, this tragic loss is all the more painful because of this.

"Dedicated, capable and truly professional, Warrant Officer Class 2 Dave Markland cleared every hurdle set him in his 20 year career.

"Trained in almost every aspect of engineering that the Corps could offer, he set his own exacting standards and surpassed them every time.

"Recently selected to be appointed as a Squadron Sergeant Major, he would have undoubtedly excelled in this prestigious post as he did in everything else.

"A friend to all and a mentor to so many, Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland lit every room he entered with his personality, compassion and stature.

"He was a dedicated family man and it is at this difficult time that all our thoughts are with his family.

"A consummate professional in all that he did and an exemplar to those around him, he will be sadly missed.

"The Regiment and the Corps of Royal Engineers are a quieter and much diminished place without him."

Captain Declan Flood RE, Royal Engineer Search Advisor, Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group said:

"Warrant Officer Class 2 Markland was invaluable during our pre-deployment training at 36 Engineer Regiment.

"It is unusual for a single troop to have a Warrant Officer Class 2 and those of us less experienced benefited from his extensive operational experience and knowledge.

"He had real character and will be sorely missed. He was very proud of his team and firmly believed he had the best search team in Helmand - something he liked to remind the rest of us about at every opportunity."