



BORN TO FLY

Lieutenant Marcus Sean Case was killed in a helicopter crash during operations in Afghanistan on 30 May 2011.

Lieutenant Case, 27, was on his first deployment to Afghanistan, as a Heron UAV operator. He was from the Sydney-based 6th Aviation Regiment.

The youngest of six children, Marcus Case was born in Melbourne, Victoria in 1984. He leaves behind his parents and five siblings.

He enlisted in the Army Reserves on 25 June 2002 and was posted to 5th/6th Royal Victoria Regiment.

In 2003, he commenced commando selection and training with the 1st Commando Regiment (1 Cdo Regt) and was eventually posted to that unit and completed an operational tour to East Timor in 2007 as a commando.

In 2008, he transferred to the regular Army, undertaking pilot training at Army Aviation Training Centre, Oakey and was posted to the 6th Aviation Regiment, Sydney the following year.

Lieutenant Case's first deployment was in July 2005, as an infantryman to Malaysia with Rifle Company Butterworth. In January 2011, he was part of the Aviation Battle Group deployed to Queensland to provide assistance after the floods.

Lieutenant Case was keen and motivated, and was excelling as a pilot. He lived life to the fullest, taking every opportunity given to him and making the most of it.

In a statement released on behalf of his Mum and Dad, and siblings Robert, Michael, Jackie, Liz and Chris, the family said Marcus was larger than life. He was a fun-loving but gentle and a much-loved member of the family.

"Marcus was born to fly and spent a lifetime dedicated and focused on achieving his goal of being an Army combat aviator. Along the way, he studied at Xavier College and was a brilliant rugby player, later representing Australia in New Zealand, Ireland, UK and Canada.

"As a reservist, he commenced studies in Science at Melbourne University but

deferred to enter the Army full-time. Shortly thereafter, he began training for the commandos and, as a commando, was deployed to East Timor. Also around this time, he began his pilot training.

"Marcus merged his love of flying into his extensive social life, taking those who would dare for recreational joy-flights at Lilydale Aerodrome. His favourite comment was, "Are you ready for this?" before performing aerobatics to demonstrate his incredible skills.

"Marcus will be sorely missed by his loving and very proud family as well as his large group of supportive friends."

Lieutenant Case had only recently deployed into Kandahar as a UAV operator with the Heron Detachment.

He was taking part in a routine Task Force Thunder mission with the Australian Rotary Wing Group when the Australian CH-47D Chinook crashed. Lieutenant Case was killed and five other Australians were injured.

On 3 June, Lieutenant Case began his last journey home after being farwelled from the theatre of operations during a solemn Ramp Ceremony – fittingly, on an air-bridge next to the Kandahar Airfield, one of the busiest single strip airfields in the world – attended by his Royal Australian Air Force and Australian Army aviation colleagues.

The Commanding Officer of the Heron Detachment, Wing Commander Jonathan McMullan, said Lieutenant Case brought significant experience to the Heron operations in Afghanistan.

"He was a well-respected commando before commissioning as an Army pilot and his soldier acumen was invaluable to me as a commander," Wing Commander McMullan said.

"His loss from our team and the aviation community will be sorely felt."

Following the service and ramp ceremony, Lieutenant Case's casket was placed onboard a RAAF C-130 aircraft and flown to the major

Australian support area at Al Minhad Air Base in the UAE, where he remained under the watchful guard of fellow Australian soldiers until he commenced the next leg of his final journey home.

Lieutenant Case's and Lance Corporal Jones' last flight landed at Tullamarine Airport, Melbourne, on 6 June.

Soldiers from the 6th Aviation Regiment and 9th Force Support Battalion formed an honour guard and bearer party to receive and carry Lieutenant Case and Lance Corporal Jones from the Royal Australian Air Force C-17 Globemaster.

Commander 16th Aviation Brigade Brigadier Greg Lawler spoke highly of the young pilot's service.

"Lieutenant Case paid the ultimate price in service of his country. Today we bring him home to his family so he can be laid to rest," Brigadier Lawler said.

"This is a great tragedy and Australia has lost another hero."

On 10 June, a large gathering of family, friends and colleagues farwelled the Aussie hero at a funeral service at St Bede's Church, Balwyn, Victoria.

