

# A HARD HITTER

Didds passed away on 2 July 2012 in a place very foreign to most of us, surrounded by his mates, and doing what he truly loved. He was without doubt a hard hitter.

Given how he passed, it would be easy to define him as just a soldier. But, to those who knew him, he was so much more.

Didds was the most loving of husbands and a devoted and very proud father to our children, Elle-Lou and Henry.

Whenever he could, he loved watching the kids play sport and taught them at a very young age to ski.

Skiing was a passion for Didds and each year our family would take a ski trip together come hell or high water.

We will look back at these holidays and cherish the moments we shared with Didds.

Friends and family were so very important to Didds.

His mates really became members of our family, and I know just how hard his loss is for them also.

In this difficult time the support they have shown to the children and I has been unwavering.

Didds was a man who stood by his mates no matter what and I know he will be sorely missed and well remembered by them all.

The men he stood side by side with in the SASR were his brothers in every sense of the word.

He lived his life to the fullest, his enthusiasm and humour were utterly infectious, if you were around Didds you were having a good time. Everyone has a 'Didds story'.

We would like to thank family, friends and the defence community for their support.

— Toni-Ann Diddams, wife of Sergeant Blaine Diddams



Today we lay to rest our eldest son Blaine, who died doing what he loved, what he believed in, in the company of those with whom he shared a special bond.

Blaine couldn't imagine doing anything else, he was living his dream and living it with pride and distinction.

Whilst we are devastated at his loss, we lovingly remember the man who was absolutely focused and driven to be the best he could be in everything he pursued, yet always with that wonderful sense of humour, boundless enthusiasm and perspective that will be sorely missed.

Blaine was totally devoted to his wife and children, to his extended family, and unreservedly dedicated to his mates and to his country.

Blaine's brothers and sisters all

looked up to him as their hero long before he became a national hero.

As parents we are so very proud of Blaine, proud of what he stood for, proud of what he had achieved, proud of who he was.

Our grief has been tempered by the overwhelming expressions of sympathy and support we have received, and we are steeled to face the difficult days ahead by the knowledge that we do not grieve alone.

We would like to thank the Australian Defence Force for their efforts in supporting us through this traumatic time, and in particular the regimental family of the Special Air Service Regiment, the military family Blaine loved so much, and whose support has been unstinting.

— Peter and Cate Diddams, the parents of Sergeant Blaine Diddams

Blaine Flower Diddams was born in Canberra in 1971. He enlisted in the Army on 24 April 1990 and, after completing initial employment training for infantry, was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, in Townsville.

He successfully completed the SASR selection course and was posted to the regiment in 1995.

Sergeant Diddams was a member of the Perth-based Special Air Service Regiment and was deployed as a member of the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan.

When he was killed, Sergeant Diddams was on his seventh tour to Afghanistan and had also deployed on operations to Somalia, East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

Sergeant Diddams, or 'Didds' to his mates, was a devoted family man and a dedicated professional soldier.

Known for his outwards personality and quirky sense of humour, he was

held in the highest regard by his mates and comrades alike.

Commanding officer of the Special Air Service Regiment Lieutenant Colonel J said Sergeant Diddams' pursuit of professional excellence, his devotion to his family, his dedication to his mates and to his country would always be remembered by an eternally grateful regiment, defence force and nation.

"Didds was at the top of his game in terms of command, leadership and tactical acumen, yet he was humble, loyal to the end and respectful of all who contributed to the delivery of operational capability," he said.

Forty-year-old Sergeant Blaine Diddams was shot during an engagement with insurgents on 2 July, while on a mission targeting an insurgent commander in the Chorah region of Uruzgan province, Afghanistan.

He was buried with full military honours at Karrakatta, Perth, on 14 July 2012.