

RIP SERGEANT MICHAEL DUNN

PICS ADF



At approximately 9.30am on 25 July this year, Sergeant Michael Dunn, a long-serving and highly respected member of the Royal Australian Air Force, was seriously injured in an explosion at Rockhampton Airport while participating in Exercise Talisman Sabre.

Exercise spokesman Brigadier Bob Brown said Sergeant Dunn was inside a hired portable toilet when the incident occurred.

"The Royal Australian Air Force member received immediate first aid from his colleagues and he was taken to the Rockhampton Base Hospital with third-degree burns to his upper body," Brigadier Brown said.

Sergeant Dunn was transferred later the same day to the specialist burns unit at the

Brisbane Hospital, but died there almost a month later, on 20 September.

Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Brown expressed his deepest sympathies and those of the Air Force community to Sergeant Dunn's family.

Sergeant Dunn was highly respected and well liked by his colleagues. Those who visited Mick since the accident were all affected by the courage and determination he showed during his treatment and are extremely saddened by his passing, Air Marshal Brown said.

"Sergeant Dunn served 27 years in the RAAF. Most recently, he was serving at RAAF Base Tindal where he and his family were long-standing members of the Katherine community."

On 5 September, on what would have been Sergeant Dunn's 52nd birthday, Commander Air Combat Group Air Commodore Mel Hupfeld represented the Chief of Air Force at a funeral to honour Sergeant Dunn's life and service, at the RAAF Base Tindal Chapel.

At the funeral service, colleagues paid tribute to his love of Liverpool Football Club and remembered his passion for "football first, then breathing".

An investigation into the cause and circumstances of the explosion at Rockhampton Airport was commenced very quickly after the incident, with the ADF working closely with Queensland authorities. At time of writing, however, details of the investigation had not been released.



RIP CRAFTSMAN BEAU PRIDUE

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Craftsman Beau Pridue, an Australian member of the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) in East Timor died from injuries sustained in a vehicle accident near the town of Baucau on 15 September.

A second Australian ISF member was injured in the accident but was assessed to have minor injuries and a good prognosis for recovery.

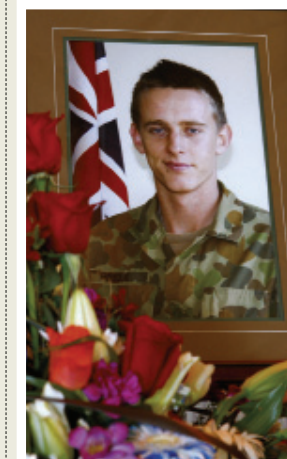
Both soldiers were travelling in an ISF Unimog when the accident occurred.

A medical team was dispatched to the scene by helicopter and a medical officer confirmed that Craftsman Pridue had died in the accident.

Chief of Joint Operations Lieutenant General Ash Power said the incident highlighted the dangers faced by ADF personnel wherever they were deployed.

"This tragic accident has taken the life of another young man serving his nation," Lieutenant General Power said.

Both soldiers involved in the accident



were Army reservists normally posted to the 8th Combat Services Support Battalion in NSW.

In a statement released on their behalf by Defence, Craftsman Pridue's family said they were devastated at the loss of their son.

"Growing up in Newcastle, Beau always strove to be the best he could be.

"He loved his family, he loved his mates and he loved the Army.

"When he was growing up, we would never have thought of Beau as a soldier, but he loved the Army, its discipline, training and spirit.

"We are extremely proud of our boy and we know that we lost him doing a job he loved doing.

"Our son chose to serve in the Army and he was happy.

"[But], as fate would have it, he paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Troops of the Australian-led ISF farewelled their mate at a Memorial Service in Dili on 20 September, and at a formal Ramp Ceremony at the Dili International Airport early the next morning.

In the true spirit of Anzac and, as a special honour to a young soldier who died while serving his country, Craftsman Pridue was honoured with a Haka performed by members of the New Zealand Defence Force.

Craftsman Pridue was returned to his family at RAAF Base Williamtown near Newcastle, NSW, on 21 September, with members of 8th Combat Service Support Battalion forming an honour guard and bearer party.

He was buried in a private funeral service on 27 September.

