



## CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONAL

**Corporal Cameron Stewart Baird MG** was killed in action on 22 June 2013 while operating as a member of the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan.

**T**he SOTG and the Afghan Provincial Response Company were conducting a partnered operation to disrupt an insurgent network operating in the Khod Valley, which was known to have direct influences on insurgent activity in Uruzgan province.

During the engagement, another Australian special-forces soldier and a Royal Australian Air Force airman operating with the Joint Terminal Attack Control Team were also wounded.

Members of the patrol provided immediate first aid to the casualties who were aero-medically evacuated to the Role 2 Medical Facility at Multi National Base - Tarin Kot, but despite best efforts, Corporal Baird could not be saved.

A member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment based at Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales, Corporal Baird was on his fifth tour in Afghanistan and had also served in Iraq and East Timor.

Cameron Baird, survived by his parents, brother and partner, was born in Burnie, Tasmania, in 1981.

He joined the Army in January 2000 and, upon completion of initial employment training, was posted to the then 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Commando), The Royal Australian Regiment, now the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment, in February 2000.

Corporal Baird was an outstanding special-forces soldier who exemplified what it meant to be a commando, living by the attributes of uncompromising spirit and honour, which in turn earned him the unconditional respect of his fellow commandos.

Corporal Baird's leadership in action was exemplary, constantly inspiring those around him to achieve greater things. He was an extremely dedicated and disciplined soldier, always striving for excellence in everything he did.

Corporal Baird died how he lived – at the front, giving his all, without indecision.

For his actions during close-quarters combat in Afghanistan in November 2007, then Lance Corporal Baird was awarded the Medal for Gallantry.

His citation says in part that during a Commando Company mission to clear and search a Taliban stronghold, Lance Corporal Baird's platoon came under heavy fire and, during the ensuing close-range firefight, a member of his team was mortally wounded.

Displaying complete disregard for his own safety, Lance Corporal Baird led other members of his team forward under heavy fire from machine guns and assault rifles to recover the wounded team member.

He then re-entered the compound and continued to engage the enemy. Even though under constant fire, Lance Corporal Baird continually moved among his team members coordinating their fire, and throwing grenades to neutralise the enemy machine-gun positions.



Once the initial close-quarter battle had ended, Lance Corporal Baird led his team forward and began room-by-room clearances, where he was again engaged by several enemy.

Throughout the action, Lance Corporal Baird displayed conspicuous gallantry, composure and superior leadership under fire. He was personally responsible for killing several enemy combatants during the clearance, ensuring the momentum of the assault was maintained, and undoubtedly preventing further members of his section from becoming casualties.

On 25 June 2013, members of the Special Operations Task Group, the wider Australian contingent and ISAF partners farewelled Corporal Cameron Baird in a solemn Service of Remembrance and ramp ceremony at Multi National Base - Tarin Kot.

He was remembered by his mates and the SOTG as a modest yet inspirational leader and a true modern-day warrior.

Commanding Officer SOTG Lieutenant Colonel J said, "Cam, you were a soldier of the highest order, one never to shy from battle."

"Rest in peace fine soldier and rest in the knowledge that we will honour you through our pledge to continue the mission here in Afghanistan."

His patrol and commanding officer, Major P, described Corporal Baird as a mentor and role model.

"Cam Baird is and will always be one of the most inspiring leaders of men within the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment. There isn't one of us who wouldn't follow Cam into any combat situation," Major P said.

"Although Cam has left us in person, he will forever be a part of this company.

"His moral, physical and mental standards provide a guiding light for each of us to follow. He will never be forgotten."

Corporal Cameron Baird MG was finally farewelled in a moving funeral service, attended by Chief of Defence Force General David Hurley, Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison and Special Operations Commander Australia Major General Gus Gilmore, at the Reedy Creek Baptist Church on the Gold Coast, Queensland, on 5 July.

