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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

Guy Barnett, Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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In memory of Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG

Today marks 10 years since Burnie-born Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG was tragically killed in action while courageously drawing fire away from his team members during operations against insurgent forces in Afghanistan.

Corporal Baird was one of the most inspiring leaders within 2nd Commando Regiment, where he was chosen to be a leader for representing armed forces values, including toughness, leadership, initiative and compassion.

His personal motto was "Aspire to Inspire" and he was awarded Australia's 100th Victoria Cross and Tasmania's 14th.

Corporal Baird was born a Burnie boy. Growing up, he enjoyed his football and went on to play at a high level in his later years.

His father Doug played for the Cooee Football Club and coached the Ulverstone Football Club before the family moved to Melbourne in 1984.

With football such a part of the Baird family story, it is ironic that a football injury to Cameron's shoulder nearly prevented him from joining the Army and he was twice knocked back from enlisting because of this injury.

On his third attempt, and with the support of his parents, he was successful and was enlisted on 4 January 2000.

Cameron Baird deployed to East Timor and Iraq before leaving the Army in July 2004. He re-enlisted in September 2006 and by mid-2007 was deployed to Afghanistan.

It was on this tour, during a night-time operation on 22 and 23 November 2007, that then-Lance Corporal Baird was awarded the Medal of Gallantry - the nation's third highest award for bravery - for 'gallantry in action during close quarters combat'.

By 22 June 2013 Corporal Baird was on his fourth deployment to Afghanistan and leading his Special Operations Task Group team to attack an insurgent network deep in enemy territory.

The citation continues the story of this day:

'With complete disregard for his own safety, Corporal Baird charged towards the enemy positions, supported by his team. ...Corporal Baird was engaged by enemy machine-gun fire, the bullets striking the ground around him. Displaying great valour, he drew the fire, moved to cover, and suppressed the enemy machine gun position. On three separate occasions Corporal Baird charged an enemy held building...Despite being totally exposed and immediately engaged by enemy fire, Corporal Baird pushed forward. ...For a third time Corporal Baird selflessly drew enemy fire away from his team and assaulted the doorway. Enemy fire was seen to strike the ground and compound walls around Corporal Baird, before visibility was obscured by dust and smoke. In this third attempt, the enemy was neutralised and the advantage was regained, but Corporal Baird was killed in the effort.'

Lest We Forget