



MEDIA RELEASE

VICTORIA CROSS AWARD

Thursday 13 February 2014

Lyons Liberal candidate Guy Barnett has welcomed today's announcement by Prime Minister Tony Abbott of the awarding of a posthumous Victoria Cross to Burnie-born soldier Corporal Cameron Baird.

The late Cpl Baird, a member of the 2nd Commando Regiment based at Holsworthy Army Barracks, was killed on operations in Afghanistan on 22 June 2013. He also received the Medal for Gallantry (MG) for actions taken in combat in 2007 in Afghanistan.

Mr Barnett said Cpl Baird will be the 14th Tasmanian to receive Australia's highest military honour.

"When you consider that Cpl Baird is only the 100th Australian to be so recognised, it highlights the incredible valour Tasmanians have demonstrated in many theatres of war, he said.

"Tasmania punches above its weight when it comes to bravery in wartime. 14% of Victoria Cross recipients come from Tasmania but we only have 2.5% of the Australian population. This is an amazing contribution in which all Tasmanians can be proud.

"Harry Murray VC of Evandale is Australia's most highly decorated soldier and a statue of him was unveiled by the then Governor-General in February 2006.

"The first two Australian born soldiers to receive the Victoria Cross were Lieutenant Guy Wyllly and Trooper John Bisdee both of Tasmania.

"Their stories are told in my book '**Our Heroes-Tasmania's Victoria Cross recipients**', produced with the support of the Tasmanian RSL, now in its third edition.

"Tasmanians to receive the Victoria Cross, and the locations of their memorials are as follows:

Sergeant Percy Statton – Zeehan Primary School

Lieutenant Alfred Gaby – Scottsdale Primary School

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Tasmanian
Liberals

Sergeant Stanley McDougall – Dover RSL Sub Branch

Sergeant Lewis McGee – Ross Cenotaph

Sergeant John Dwyer – Alonnah, Bruny Island

Lt Col Harry Murray – Evandale

Trooper John Bisdee – The Hutchins School

Lieutenant Guy Wylly – The Hutchins School

Captain Percy Cherry – Huonville Primary School

Sergeant John Whittle – Cygnet Primary School

Corporal Walter Brown – New Norfolk Primary School

Lance Corporal Sidney Gordon – Hobart Anglesea Barracks Memorial Garden

Captain James Newland - Hobart Anglesea Barracks Memorial Garden

“I encourage all Tasmanians to visit these memorials to show their respect for the service and sacrifice of these brave soldiers.”

Mr Barnett described Cpl Baird – who was on his fifth tour of duty in Afghanistan after having previously served in Iraq and East Timor - as a proud and highly decorated soldier who served his country with great distinction.

“At the time of his passing a Defence Department biography of Corporal Baird said: ‘He died as he lived - at the front, giving it his all, without any indecision’ which is an incredible tribute to an incredible young man,”

Mr Barnett expressed his condolences and best wishes to Cpl Baird’s family on this bittersweet day.

Mr Barnett has also been an active campaigner for the awarding of a posthumous VC to Latrobe World War Two hero Teddy Sheean.

Our Heroes - Tasmania’s Victoria Cross recipients book is available from the Longford RSL, Wellington Street Longford or upon to request to Guy Barnett. Our Heroes can also be downloaded from www.guybarnett.com.au

FURTHER INFORMATION GUY BARNETT 0428 622 333