



21 March 2015

Guy Barnett, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier

## Conclusion of Operation SLIPPER

Tasmanians have gathered at Hobart's Cenotaph this morning to mark the conclusion of Operation SLIPPER, a commemoration that is being held in every state and territory today.

Operation SLIPPER was Australia's military contribution to the International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan and the International Coalition against terrorism mission across Afghanistan and the Middle East.

The Operation commenced in 2001 and ended on December 31, 2014.

During this time more than 33,000 Australian Defence Force personnel, Australian Public Service employees and Australian Federal Police were deployed to the Middle East.

This came at great expense to Australia with 41 Australian soldiers killed and a further 256 wounded. These are the first Australian combat deaths since the Vietnam War.

The Operation also saw the 100<sup>th</sup> Victoria Cross medal awarded to Tasmanian and former Burnie resident the late Corporal Cameron Baird VC.

In 2013 Corporal Baird displayed incredible leadership and courage, leading a team in an ambush situation where his actions were instrumental in saving the lives of his comrades. It was through this act of bravery, in which he tragically lost his own life, that Corporal Baird become Tasmania's 14<sup>th</sup> Victoria Cross recipient.

Although Operation SLIPPER has officially ended, it is important that we continue to remember and thank the more than 400 serving personal still in the Middle East working to create a stable and secure Afghanistan as part of operations such as HIGHROAD and PALATE II.

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