

**AUSTRALIAN ARMY
AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS FOR AUSTRALIA
CORPORAL BENJAMIN ROBERTS-SMITH VC MG**

Citation

For the most conspicuous gallantry in action in circumstances of extreme peril as Patrol Command, Special Operations Task Group on Operation SLIPPER. Second-in-

Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in 1996. After completing the requisite courses, he was posted the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment where he saw active service in East Timor. In January 2003, he successfully completed the Australian Special Air Service Regiment Selection Course.

During his tenure with the Regiment, he deployed on Operation VALIANT, SLATE, SLIPPER, CATALYST and SLIPPER II. Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for his actions in Afghanistan in 2006.

On the 11th June 2010, a troop of the Special Operations Task Group conducted a helicopter assault into Tizak, Kandahar Province, in order to capture or kill a senior Taliban commander. Immediately upon the helicopter insertion, the troop was engaged by machine gun and rocket propelled grenade fire from multiple, dominating positions. Two soldiers were wounded in action and the troop was pinned down by fire from three machine guns in an elevated fortified position to the south of the village. Under the cover of close air support, suppressive small arms and machine gun fire, Corporal Roberts-Smith and his patrol manoeuvred to within 70 metres of the enemy position in order to neutralize the enemy machine gun positions and regain the initiative.

Upon commencement of the assault, the patrol drew very heavy, intense, effective and sustained fire from the enemy position. Corporal Roberts-Smith and his patrol members fought towards the enemy position until, at a range of 40 metres, the weight of fire prevented further movement forward. At this point, he identified the opportunity to exploit some cover provided by a small structure. As he approached the structure, Corporal Roberts-Smith identified an insurgent grenadier in the throes of engaging his patrol. Corporal Roberts-Smith instinctively engaged the insurgent at point-blank range resulting in the death of the insurgent. With the members of his patrol still pinned down by the three enemy machine gun positions, he exposed his own position in order to draw fire away from his patrol, which enabled them to bring fire to bear against the enemy. His actions enabled his Patrol Commander to throw a grenade and silence one of the machine guns. Seizing the advantage, and demonstrating extreme devotion to duty and the most conspicuous gallantry, Corporal Roberts-Smith, with a total disregard for his own safety, stormed the enemy position killing the two remaining machine gunners.

His act of valour enabled his patrol to break-in to the enemy position and to lift the weight of fire from the remainder of the troop who had been pinned down by the machine gun fire. On seizing the fortified gun position, Corporal Roberts-Smith then took the initiative again and continued to assault enemy positions in depth during which he and another patrol member engaged and killed further enemy. His acts of selfless valour directly enabled his troop to go on and clear the village of Tizak of Taliban. This decisive engagement subsequently caused the remainder of the Taliban in Shah Wali Kot District to retreat from the area.

Corporal Roberts-Smith's most conspicuous gallantry in a circumstance of extreme peril was instrumental to the seizure of the initiative and the success of the troop against a numerically superior enemy force. His valour was an inspiration to the soldiers with whom he fought alongside and is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.

Personal Biography
Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith, VC MG

Benjamin Roberts-Smith was born in Perth on 1 November 1978. He enlisted in the Australian Army on 11 November 1996. He completed his training at the School of Infantry, Singleton, New South Wales. In 1997, Corporal Roberts-Smith was posted to the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) where he served as a Rifleman in C Company, before advancing on to be a section commander in Direct Fire Support Weapons platoon. During his tenure with 3RAR, Corporal Roberts-Smith deployed twice as part of the Rifle Company Butterworth Malaysia, and conducted two operational tours of East Timor including INTERFET in 1999.

In 2003, Corporal Roberts-Smith completed the SASR selection course and was selected to commence the Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) reinforcement cycle. On completion of the reinforcement cycle, he was posted to 3 Squadron, where he served as a member of the Tactical Assault Group West and the Contingency Squadron. While with 3 Squadron, Corporal Roberts-Smith was a member of a number of training and assistance teams throughout South East Asia. He was deployed on operations to Fiji in 2004, and has also deployed on Recovery Operations, as well as a number of personnel security detachments in Iraq throughout 2005/2006.

2006 saw Corporal Roberts-Smith deployed as part of the Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) in Afghanistan where he was subsequently awarded the Medal of Gallantry. He was again deployed with the SOTG in Afghanistan in 2007, and on his return was posted to Operational Support Squadron as a member of the Selection Wing where he took part in the training of SASR Reinforcements.

In 2009, Corporal Roberts-Smith was then posted to 2 Squadron where he deployed as a patrol second in command to Afghanistan. Upon his return, Corporal Roberts-Smith completed the SASR Patrol Commanders Course, and in 2010 was again deployed with the SOTG in Afghanistan. For his actions carried out within Tizak, Afghanistan, he was invested with a Victoria Cross by Her Excellency the Governor-General of Australia at Campbell Barracks, Perth on 23 January 2011. Corporal Roberts-Smith is currently posted to the Special Air Service Regiment. He is married to Emma, and they are the proud parents of Five Month old twin girls, Eve and Elizabeth.

Note: *CPL Roberts-Smith VC MG and CPL Donaldson VC are both Serving members of the ADF and are the first two recipients of the recently instituted Australian Victoria Cross. Until 1991 Australian Servicemen were awarded the Imperial / British Victoria Cross; WOFF Keith Payne VC OAM being the last Australian Serviceman to be awarded the Imperial / British Victoria Cross. The Australian Victoria Cross was instituted in the Australian honours system by Letters Patent on 15 January 1991 replacing the British or Imperial Victoria Cross.*