



In Memory of
**Private
TIMOTHY JAMES APLIN**

8251206, 2nd Commando Regiment, Australian Army
who died age 38
on 21 June 2010

Son of Margaret Aplin,
of Brisbane, Queensland.

Remembered with honour
MOUNT GRAVATT CREMATORIUM, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA



PRIVATE
TIMOTHY JAMES APLIN
2ND COMMANDO REGIMENT
SERVICE NUMBER: 8251206



The following is an extract from the Last Post Ceremony commemorating the service of Private Timothy Aplin (delivered by Aaron Pegram) and used with permission from his mother, Margret Aplin.

'Timothy Aplin, known as "Tim", was born in May 1972, the only son of Margaret Aplin of Indooroopilly, Queensland. He spent most of his formative years surrounded by a large extended family of cousins, aunts, and uncles in the Western suburbs of Brisbane, where he attended Kenmore Primary and began his secondary schooling at Indooroopilly State High School. He and his mother lived briefly in Sydney, where he was involved in the army cadets, igniting a passion for life in the military. Aplin later returned to Queensland and continued his education as a boarder at Toowoomba Grammar School and, later, as a day student at Brisbane Boys' College.'

In the mid-1980s Aplin travelled with his mother to Europe, where he relished visits to the Imperial War Museum and the National Army Museum in London, as well as the Arch de Triumph and Musée de l'Armée in Paris. According to Margaret, "Tim was letting me know where his future was heading". By then, Aplin had become the loving stepson of Richard Gunnell and stepbrother to Jonathan.

After completing year 12, Aplin studied Agricultural Science at Gatton College, Brisbane, before enlisting in the Australian Army under the Ready Reserves Scheme in February 1992. After training at Kapooka and Singleton, he served as a private in the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, rising to the rank of corporal. After 12 months of full-time service Aplin went part-time and for the next two years continued studying in Brisbane. He enlisted in the Regular Army in 1995 and was posted to 1RAR in Townsville, fulfilling a lifelong dream to become a full-time soldier. There he met Jenny, whom he married in April 1998, and they soon began a family. In 2000 the couple welcomed their daughter, Josie, followed by their son, Daniel, in 2002.

Aplin developed into a proficient soldier. Rising to the rank of sergeant, he deployed to East Timor in October 2000 to help provide security during the country's transition to independence. He went with 2RAR to Iraq in 2003, forming part of the first security detachment to ensure the safety of Australian government and military personnel in Baghdad following the overthrow of Ba'athist dictator Saddam Hussein.

Aplin's marriage to Jenny ended after his return, although the two remained good friends and he continued to cherish his time spent with Josie and Daniel on weekends.

In 2006 Aplin was posted to the Royal Military College, Duntroon, as a drill sergeant for officer cadets. By then he had met Natasha, whom he married in 2008, becoming step-father to Ty and Shinae. He returned periodically to Queensland for holidays with his children on the Gold Coast, skiing in New Zealand, camping with his brother, and visiting family and friends in Brisbane.

Aplin was determined to undertake the Special Forces selection process, and after a gruelling six-week selection and training course he qualified for entry into 4RAR (Commando) at the age of 36. Based at Holsworthy in Sydney, Aplin

willingly accepted a reduction in rank to private, whereupon he trained as a team demolitions specialist and deployed to Afghanistan with the Special Operations Task Group in January 2009.

Based at Camp Russell at the multinational task force base at Tarin Kot, Aplin was involved in counter-insurgency operations in Uruzgan and neighbouring provinces in southern Afghanistan. At that time the commandos were involved in heavy fighting in neighbouring Helmand province in an effort to disrupt the supply of arms feeding the insurgency in Uruzgan.

After a brief return to Australia in 2009, Aplin deployed once again to Afghanistan, where the Special Operations Task Group continued to target the insurgency. In Operation Hamkani, a four-day disruption operation in the Shah Wali Kot district of northern Kandahar province, the commandos contributed to the defeat of more than 100 Taliban insurgents. For this, Special Operations Command received the first battle honour awarded to an Australian Army unit since the Vietnam War.



In the early hours of 21 June 2010 an American UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters crashed while transporting Australian commandos near Shah Wali Kot. Among the 14 casualties on board was Private Timothy Aplin, who was one of three Australians who died in the crash. He was brought home and buried with full military honours in the Native Garden at the Mount Gravatt Crematorium in Brisbane. He was 38 years old.

Aplin was a highly skilled and professional soldier who lived life to its fullest. He was well-respected by those who served alongside him, who continue to remember their mate "Aps" or "Apples" by his character, professionalism, humour, and "shoddy attempts to grow a beard". He was, in the words of one Australian soldier, "the best platoon sergeant a new digger could ever get". Those who trained with Aplin remember his calming and reassuring influence on those around him. For them, Aplin was an "old mare in a stockyard with young, nervous and excitable horses".

Aplin loved the army and his mates there, but above all he loved his children and extended family. He was an adoring husband to Natasha, and a loving father and stepfather to Josie, Daniel, Ty, and Shinae. Time has not diminished their sadness, and his loss is still felt today. For his family, Aplin's humour, kindness, and practical no-fuss approach to life provides them with the courage to navigate through what continues to be an extremely difficult time.

Private Timothy Aplin's name is listed on the Roll of Honour, along with the 41 other Australians who died as a result of their service in Afghanistan.

This is just one of the many stories of service and sacrifice told here at the Australian War Memorial. We now remember Private Timothy James Aplin, who gave his life for us, for our freedoms, and in the hope of a better world.'

Aaron Pegram
Senior Historian, Military History Section

All photographs are courtesy of his mother, Margaret Aplin.

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