

Combat Assault Dog FAX

Combat Assault Dog (CAD) FAX was born at the RAAF Base Amberley on 27 August 2006 as a part of the Military Working Dog (MWD) breeding program. He was initially trained and mentored by RAAF MWD trainers until 2012. In February 2012, FAX passed his SASR CAD selection and was posted to 2 SQN with handler Trooper (TPR) MG. FAX completed CAD overseas reinforcement cycle in May 2012 and deployed to Afghanistan with 2 SQN SASR in June 2012.

Right from the start, FAX proved to be a strong willed yet affectionate dog. He was quick to win over the hearts of all members of 2 SQN. His affable nature became infectious with his Troop members and he always drew a smile from every face whenever he was around them. He integrated quickly with his Troop and was always excited about getting out and working. At the completion of the 2 SQN rotation to Afghanistan in 2012, FAX remained in-country both to gain additional experience and to bolster the dog capability for the next SASR SQN on rotation to Afghanistan.

FAX teamed up with LCPL JA and Z TP, Operational Support SQN in November 2012 when that SQN arrived in Afghanistan. FAX quickly adapted to his new handler and his role in the TP and was quickly on an operational footing when another CAD was wounded in action (WIA). FAX quickly earned a reputation for his capacity to both detect insurgents and apprehend them.

On 6 January 2013 FAX was in support of a counter-leadership mission for an IED facilitator based in the Langar District of Uruzgan Province. On insertion into the mission area, the TP came under fire from an insurgent who, after the initial engagement, moved upwards to higher ground using a dry river bed as cover. A patrol was tasked to clear the river bed and apprehend the insurgent. FAX was first into the river bed and began to quickly search and clear the ground to his front. He was well ahead of his patrol, but still under control of his handler when he located the insurgent. The insurgent had taken up a firing position and had several of the SASR patrol well within his sights. FAX's handler, LCPL JA was exposed to the insurgent's line of fire and at short range. FAX attacked immediately and apprehended the insurgent. During the melee, LCPL JA quickly moved forward but FAX had been shot twice by the insurgent seriously wounding him. There was a brief but intense fire fight and the insurgent was neutralized. FAX was treated for his wounds at the scene and taken by medevac helicopter to the Tarin Kowt medical facility. However, FAX was dead on arrival.

There can be no doubt that FAX's actions on 6 January 2013 directly saved the life of both LCPL JA and members of his patrol. It was an excellent example of the courage and determination required of a CAD in the SASR.

FAX was handled by the following members of the SASR:

- * TPR MG
- * LCPL JA

CAD FAX was awarded the following:

- * Canine Operational Service Medal - clasp Afghanistan
- * Canine Service Medal

