



# COMMANDO WELFARE TRUST

ABN 17 860 403 129

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## PATRONS

MAJGEN Tim McOwan AO DSC CSM (Retd)

The Hon DR Brendan Nelson AO BMBS FRACP (HON) FAMA FRSN

CHAIRMAN : BRIG Mark Smethurst DSC AM (Retd)

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: BRIG Craig Shortt DSC CSC DSM

## TRUSTEES

Bruce Parker; Peter Laverick; Ian Breedon; Mark Coad;

BRIG Alison Creagh CSC (Retd); Miriam Dwyer; RADM Robyn Walker AM (Retd).

## TRUST EXECUTIVE OFFICER

MAJOR Steve Pilmore OAM RFD (Retd)

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## CORPORAL TIM PEREIRA'S STORY

Tim was born in Singapore and moved to Australia with his parents when he was 3 months old. He grew up in Melbourne, the eldest of three siblings. He excelled at school and considered joining the police force however, he joined the army due to the global issues at the time and to satisfy his keen interest in travel and experiencing other cultures.

Tim joined the army at age 18, as an Electronic Warfare Operator. He was awarded the Student of Merit on his Initial entry training course. In addition, he studied 2 languages, Indonesian and Pashto. Tim first deployed to Afghanistan in 2010 as part of the mentoring taskforce.

In 2012 he returned to Afghanistan. This time as a platoon Electronic Warfare Operator with the 2nd Commando Regiment as part of the Special Operations Task Group (SOTG). On the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012, five days before his mid-tour leave he was on a mission manning the rear gun in a Bushmaster Armoured Vehicle. This particular mission had been cancelled several times in previous days due to bad weather. Tim had volunteered to swap roles in the vehicle with another soldier and had also recently volunteered to stay on and cover the winter rotation instead of returning home with his platoon.

Bad weather had made conditions poor. The vehicle was involved in a collision and Tim was knocked unconscious. When he came to, he realized he was paralysed from the neck down and was unable to breathe. He thought he was going to die. A medic travelling in the same vehicle acted swiftly and kept him alive. Tim would later learn that he had sustained a C4 burst fracture in his spine.

You can all imagine this accident has changed Tim's life profoundly & permanently.

Post medical evacuation, Tim spent the following six weeks in intensive care in Germany, where his family travelled to be with him. He had no movement from the neck down and could not speak effectively due to a tracheostomy. He was then transferred to Australia and spent six weeks at the Royal Talbot Hospital Spinal Unit in Melbourne. Once well enough, he was transferred to the Spinal Rehab Ward. The only movement he had was a slight muscle twitch in his right bicep. Over the next 6 months his goal was to be able to strengthen his right bicep enough to be able to push the joystick on an electric wheel chair so he would not have to use chin controls. Tim spent over 18 months in rehab. He still requires 24/7 carer and nursing support.

Tim moved to Canberra under a promise that he would always have a job in Defence if he wanted one. He took up a work opportunity at the Australia Signals Directorate doing a few days a month. Even with his physical limitations he commenced studying for a Degree in Computer Science.



Unfortunately, due to his health situation Tim was discharged medically early in 2019. He soon realised that as a result, he would lose his service residence and decided to purchase his own home.

Tim used his compensation payout to help fund the purchase of a house. He required a significant mortgage to help complete works necessary to accommodate his special needs which are currently being completed with the assistance of DVA. The loan, and his round the clock care, has placed a significant burden on his Military Pension. However, even under this pressure, Tim still wants to donate to the Royal Talbot Spinal Rehab Ward which played such a significant role in his treatment and recovery.

Tim has never asked for support from anyone. However, on hearing of his circumstances, the Commando Welfare Trust (CWT) is now funding Tim's mortgage interest payments. In addition the Trustees, on the recommendation of the CWT Military Advisory Board made up of the Unit Commanding Officers and Regimental Sergeant Majors, have pledged to seek support in paying off Tim's mortgage.

**The CWT is aiming to raise \$300,000 to reduce his mortgage payments to zero.  
Since we launched this campaign we have raised over \$100,000 towards the target.**

Tim is a deeply private person but has given permission for his story to be made public in the hope that people will become more aware of the support provided by the CWT to soldiers like himself who have served as part of Special Operations Command (less the Special Air Service Regiment – who have their own trust). The CWT exists to provide swift and tailored support to these soldiers and their families who find themselves in circumstances that require a special level of attention and support that is not provided by the Australian Government or other support agencies.

Should you wish to support Tim Pereira, who has paid a massive price in the service of his country, please donate to:

**The Commando Welfare Trust**  
**Commonwealth Bank Martin Place Sydney**  
**BSB                    062 000**  
**Account             14345057**

**Donations to this cause are Tax Deductible**

For further information please contact:  
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26<sup>th</sup> September 2019