

ISSUE 39 | SEPTEMBER 2013



# CONTACT

AIR LAND & SEA

THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE



# AASAM

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Tri-national Southern  
**JACKAROO**

Pucka fired up by Ex  
**CHONG JU**

1<sup>st</sup> Brigade  
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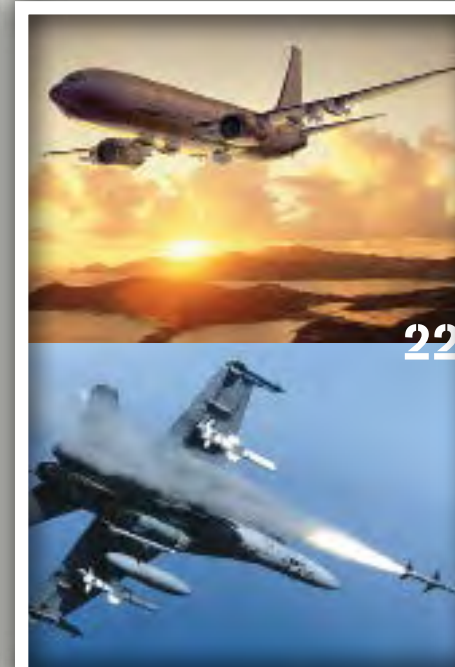
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ISSUE 39 – SEPTEMBER 2013



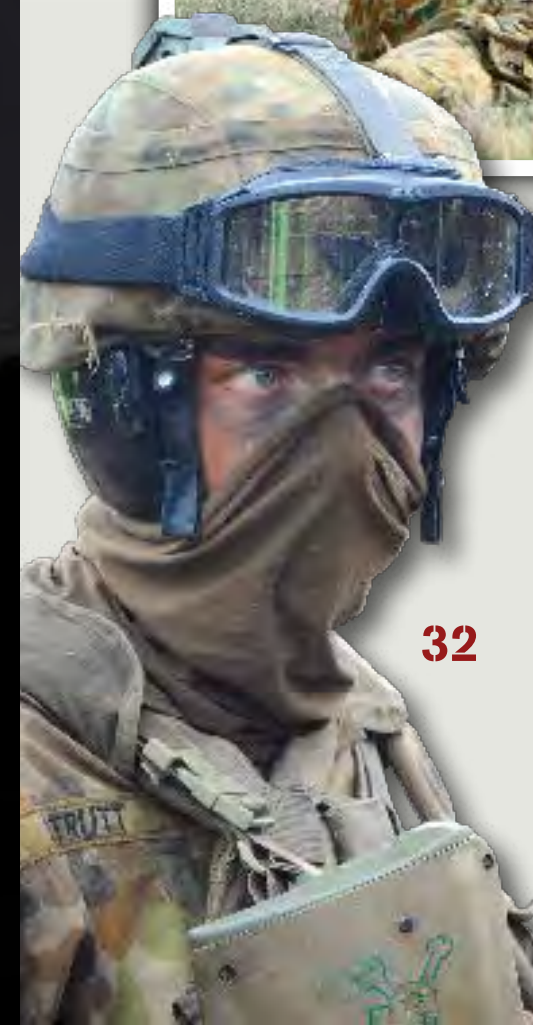
30



22



42



32



20

- 12 The Big Picture**  
ARH Tiger cuts loose at Pucks
- 14 Heads Up**  
News and bits from around the world
- 20 Dawn Blitz**  
Kiwis in the USA
- 22 Weapons of the ADF**  
Fighting aircraft
- 26 VALE**  
Corporal Cameron Baird
- 30 JUST GIVE A F#\*K**  
Soldiers immortalised in oil
- 32 3 Brigade CATA**  
Back to foundation warfighting
- 38 Exercise Chong Ju**  
Pucka burns in demo
- 42 AASAM**  
International marksmanship
- 54 Southern Jackaroo**  
Tri-nation shootout
- 62 Letters Home**  
From AASAM
- 64 Q Store**
- 66 Frontline Africa**  
Damned if you do – part 4
- 68 Just Soldiers**
- 72 Cadet Corner**
- 80 Gear Insider**

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# EDITORIAL

Issue 39 – September 2013

## CONTACT

AIR, LAND & SEA



### AASAM

Able Seaman Wilfred Bowie, HMAS Darwin shooting team, experiments with a Navy cutlass on the bayonet assault course (disallowed in competition) at AASAM.

### AASAM coverage P42

Pic Sergeant Brian Hartigan

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In this issue there are quite a few stories and photos by some dude called Sergeant Brian Hartigan. Given the volume of materiel so attributed, I think it might be appropriate to explain who he is and why there is a distinction between he and I.

Sergeant Brian Hartigan is me dressed in cams and employed as a reserve member of the Australian Army Public Relations Service.

In May this year, I was engaged as such by the PR people in Canberra to go to Puckapunyal to cover AASAM. While I was there, Exercise Chong Ju occurred, so I covered that as well – and after AASAM, I was asked to stick around for an extra week to cover Exercise Southern Jackaroo.

All up, I did 28-day's service – which I thoroughly enjoyed. In fact, I think that being around 'real soldiers' engaged in serious endeavour for all that time rubbed off on me. I felt newly inspired and enthused, even going so far as to exercise a bit more than usual and taking it easy on all the free food in the Sergeants' Mess, losing 10kg in the process.

My new sveltd physique is not particularly relevant, but what is relevant, though, is that, as a sergeant reporter, I officially covered those activities for Defence – not for **CONTACT**.

However, once those stories and photos were apporved, they were made available to the general public and to the media via the official Defence web site, the AASAM Facebook page and other outlets. From those outlets, Contact Publishing simply picked up that cleared product and used it, just as every other media outlet in the country (or the world) is entitled to do – or, just as I pick up cleared, official materiel produced by a wide range of other Defence PR people in every issue of **CONTACT** or **COMBAT Camera**.

In this case, I left the Sergeant Hartigan by-line on this materiel simply because it is official materiel produced by me in my official Defence PR capacity and, as such, is appropriately identified.

I could simply identify that materiel as "Words and pics by ADF", but that would probably muddy the waters, or even suggest I had reason to hide the real author's identity.

On the other hand, there are some people who do actually complain that, as a sergeant reporter in Defence, I and **CONTACT** get special access that isn't available to others. I refute that argument – and know that Defence would too, simply for the fact that **CONTACT** cannot publish anything that Sergeant Hartigan writes unless it has been officially cleared by Defence – and, once cleared, it is by default made available to all media outlets via official Defence channels.

In that regard, and taking AASAM as an example, **CONTACT** is actually disadvantaged in so far as all other media outlets were free to use the Sergeant Hartigan materiel four months before **CONTACT**'s cycle allowed us to print it. But that's just the nature of a quarterly publication.

There is one other reason I by-line Sergeant Brian Hartigan thus. It identifies the story as official, cleared, Defence product – as opposed to stories by Brian Hartigan, which are completely independant. That said, however, aside from the odd backhander to officialdom, if you critically compared the two, you'd be hard pressed to find much difference. I am, after all, Army trained – and proud of it.



Brian Hartigan  
Managing Editor





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**INCOMING**

## SWORD PLAY

I've heard from a family friend who's an officer at Victoria Barracks that a new regulation has or will soon be brought in relating to officers carrying swords – that they will no longer be allowed to carry swords on parade in public because they are classified as weapons. Have you heard anything like that?

**B.W. via Facebook**

No, I hadn't heard that, so I asked Defence on your behalf. The following was their official response – Ed. "During the conduct of Army ceremonial parades, whether they are held on Defence land or in public, Australian Army officers and regimental sergeants major may carry swords, and soldiers may carry rifles. Australian Army officer cadets are also authorised to carry swords on ceremonial parade as it is part of their training curriculum. The carriage of these weapons is a custom and tradition that the Australian Army proudly upholds. Navy policy allows the carriage of swords by Navy personnel (including officer cadets) on parade in public. Neither the Royal Australian Air Force nor the Australian Air Force Cadets have changed, or have plans to change, the use of ceremonial swords during parades."

## SNAP

In respect of my sword question [above], thank you. On a side note, it's great to see you guys take the time to reply to your readers. That's quite rare, so thanks again.

**B.W. via Facebook**

CONTACT is a bloody awesome magazine – been buying it for a while. It really cemented my aim to get into the ADF, which I did at the start of the year. So thanks mate.

**V.E. via email**

B.W. and V.E. you are very welcome. Thank you both for your input and support – Ed.

## THANK YOU

Brian, the rising sun collection is absolutely amazing! Tyrie's mouth drooped to the floor when he opened it. Thank you so much and thanks to The Military Shop.

**Shelley Kovco via iPhone txt**

Hi Shelley. It was our pleasure. For those who don't know what's going on – Tyrie Kovco entered a very emotional photo in the "Sands of Gallipoli" competition we ran, thanks to The Military Shop, on our Facebook page before Anzac Day. So touched were the competition organisers that they sent Tyrie this special extra prize, on top of the Army Bear he received as one of CONTACT's 'local winners'.



## INSIGHT

Just got the magazines in the mail! Look really good! The boys here love it. A lot of free cartons at the bar when we get home!

**Privates Alex Omerod [photographer] and Jonno Saddler [subject on cover of issue #37]**



## TARGETS UP!

This page is a valuable outlet for CONTACT fans to vent or to praise. It is also valuable for us to feel the pulse of our audience and make adjustments to the magazine, to deliver what our fans want. Please, let us know what you like and dislike about CONTACT and about COMBAT Camera. Thank you in anticipation – Ed

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POP QUIZ: To which country's Army does the soldier in this photo belong? It's not a trick question – this soldier is wearing the issued uniform of his national Army.

See it's Paylo, Warren Ball, Ular Diamond and 9 others like this.

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So, here's a supplementary question for you – if the "Pattern and design are unique to \*\*\*\*\*", how come three out of every four answers to the original question were wrong, and how come one-third of everyone who answered said either the US or Canada?  
Find out which country owns this 'new' uniform on page 18.



# ARMED Reconnaissance Helicopter

## ARH TIGER

**Australia's ARH Tiger is equipped with a GIAT 30mm DEFA M781 cannon in a chin-mounted turret for engaging ground or air targets.**

Introduced in the late 1980s, the GIAT 30 is a revolver cannon with electric ignition and automatic recocking. Weighing 120kg and measuring 2.4m long, its seven-chamber revolver mechanism is electrically operated, improving both reliability and rate of fire.

The canon has a cyclic rate of 2500 rounds per minute and muzzle velocity of 1025m/second.

Slaved to the battle captain's helmet, the weapon aims wherever he turns his head.

Reflectors inside the battle captain's (and the pilot's) helmet delivers critical data, including targeting, to the inside of his visor.

Tiger ARH is also fitted with 70mm FZ (Forges de Zeebrugge, a division of Thales) unguided rockets, and fitted for Hellfire II semi-active laser-guided air-to-ground missiles (not carried on the mission photographed – Exercise Chong Ju 2013 (see page 38 for more)).

Australia has 22 ARH Tigers.



## NEW TRUCK FLEET

Minister for Defence Materiel Mike Kelly announced in July that contracts related to Phase 3B of Project LAND 121 – 'Project Overlander' – were signed by Rheinmetall MAN Military Vehicles Australia and Haulmark Trailers (Australia) for the supply of the Australian Defence Force's next generation of trucks and trailers.

Around 2700 protected and unprotected medium and heavy vehicles are envisaged, including medium and heavy recovery vehicles, medium and heavy tractors, heavy integrated load-handling

vehicles (self-loading hook-lift trucks), and medium-weight tray variants (with cranes and tippers).

Dr Kelly said the vehicles will have enhanced performance and protection representing a significant increase in safety, as well as providing consistency across the fleet, ensuring improved efficiency in operator training and simplifying logistic support.

"The maintenance and through-life support for the vehicles and trailers will be undertaken in Australia and is in

addition to the previously approved LAND 121 Phase 3A that is replacing the current fleet of ADF light unprotected field vehicles and trailers," Dr Kelly said.

"This phase included the acquisition of around 2150 unprotected Mercedes Benz G-Wagon 4x4 and 6x6 vehicles and trailers."

Minister Kelly did not divulge the value of the contracts with Rheinmetall MAN or Haulmark.



PIC BRIAN HARTIGAN

## A SPECIAL BREED

On 7 June 2013, the Special Air Service Regiment unveiled a new memorial in honour of all Combat Assault Dogs (CAD) and Military Working Dogs (MWD) that lost their lives in the line of duty.

Unveiled on ADF Military Working Dog Memorial Day, the memorial features a bronze sculpture of a military working dog in operational harness.

Four SASR military working dogs have been killed in action since the capability was established in 2005.

Quake was killed in action mid-2012 in close proximity to the enemy, ultimately saving the lives of the patrol members he was with by flushing out the enemy lying in ambush.

Devil identified an enemy location close to a friendly patrol and, while under fire, forced the enemy to reveal his position, saving the lives of the members he was with, but losing his own life in the process.

Kuga identified and located an enemy ambush position across a river from an SASR patrol. After being recalled by his handler, he swam back across the river with a broken leg and multiple gunshot wounds. He was evacuated to Germany and even Australia for treatment before succumbing to his wounds.

Fax located an insurgent who had set up to ambush the patrol he was with, and was shot twice at close range. Despite being treated at the scene and evacuated to the Tarin Kot Role 2 medical facility, he too passed away.

Corporal Mark Donaldson VC spoke at the ceremony and said that if it weren't for the dogs, there would certainly be a few more names on the SASR Honour Roll.



## Centenary spruce up

The barque James Craig and the replica of Captain James Cook's HM Bark Endeavour in the graving dock at Garden Island, Sydney, undergo scheduled maintenance in preparation for their part in the Royal Australian Navy's International Fleet Review in October. Both ships will help celebrate the centenary of the Royal Australian Navy's first fleet entry into Sydney Harbour in 1913.

The Captain Cook Graving Dock, the largest in the Southern Hemisphere, was built during WWII. It is approximately 345m long, 45m wide and 14m deep and displaces nearly 260 million litres of water.

PIC ABLE SEAMAN NICOLAS GONZALEZ



### SUPER WAR

The government announced in July that, if it is returned to power in the upcoming Federal election, it would change the way military superannuation retirement pay is indexed for Defence Forces Retirement Benefits scheme and Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits scheme recipients.

From 1 July 2014, payments to military superannuants aged 65 and over, in the DFRB and DFRDB schemes (which were closed in 1972 and 1991, respectively) will be indexed to the higher of the Consumer Price Index or the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index.

By contrast, the Liberal Party promised that, if elected, it would ensure DFRB and DFRDB pensions were indexed in the same way as the age pension with the change applied to those aged 55 and over.

### HERC SALE

A Memorandum of Sale between Australia and Indonesia for five C-130H aircraft and associated equipment, including a simulator and spare parts, was signed in July.

This sale is in addition to an earlier sale of four Hercules agreed in November 2011.

### WEDGETAIL CONTRACT

Boeing Defence Australia has won the RAAF's \$140 million

E-7A Wedgetail sustainment contract.

Defence Materiel Organisation said the contract would provide engineering, maintenance, spare parts and training support to the RAAF's Wedgetail fleet operated by No 2 Squadron at RAAF Base Williamstown, NSW.

"The effective transfer of integration engineering knowledge on complex airborne command and control capabilities from the US into local industry is an important milestone for the project," a spokesman said.

Boeing has 200 staff employed directly on Wedgetail support at Williamstown, Amberley and Brisbane.

### FIRST ROMEO

The first of 24 MH-60R Seahawk Romeo helicopters for the Royal Australian Navy completed its first test flight on 26 June at Sikorsky's facility in Connecticut, USA.

Romeo will replace the Navy's Seahawk and introduce an air-to-surface strike capability that



should have been provided by the now-cancelled Seasprite program.

At a project cost of more than \$3 billion, the acquisition of 24 Romeos will allow Navy to embark at least eight helicopters at any one time on Anzac-class frigates and the new Hobart-class air warfare destroyers, with the remainder based at HMAS Albatross in Nowra, NSW.

### OVERDUE RECOGNITION

Solomon Islands scouts and coastwatchers were finally recognised for the role they played in WWII when the first Solomon Islands Scouts and Coastwatchers Medallions were presented to their descendants in July.

Scouts and coastwatchers performed vital roles for the Allies in guerrilla operations and intelligence gathering, with 27 coastwatchers and 20 Solomon Islanders killed in action and a further 18 coastwatchers and 40 Solomon Islanders captured.

Coastwatchers were also credited with rescuing 501 Allied personnel and 450 civilians during the war.

### TAIPAN'S NEW HOME

MRH 90 Taipan Multi-Role Helicopter and 808 Squadron were officially inducted into the Royal Australian Navy at HMAS Albatross, near Nowra, NSW, on 11 July.

808 Squadron was previously commissioned into

the RAN during the 1950s when it operated fighters from the aircraft carriers HMA Ships Sydney and Melbourne.

The squadron will be based at the Naval Air Station, HMAS Albatross, and its new aircraft will operate from ships such as Success, Tobruk and Choules and eventually from the new 27,000-tonne Landing Helicopter Dock amphibious ships Canberra and Adelaide.

### COMPOSITE RULES

Australia's own manufacturer of high-grade carbon-fibre composite components – Quickstep, based at Bankstown, NSW – announced in July that

it had begun production of composite parts for the C-130J Hercules after completing all qualification tasks required by Lockheed Martin.

Tests included the successful fabrication of destructive-test articles using Lockheed Martin's approved production processes.

Quickstep said the milestone heralded the beginning of a revenue stream expected to be worth up to \$US100 million over the next five years.

Earlier in the month, Quickstep delivered the 100<sup>th</sup> part it manufactured for Northrop Grumman's Joint Strike Fighter – in a project worth up to \$700 million.



## SYDNEY MEMORIAL

Passengers aboard the cruise ship Dawn Princess commemorated one of Australia's most tragic wartime encounters – the sinking of HMAS Sydney – on a recent cruise from Fremantle.

With almost 2000 passengers on board, Dawn Princess stopped 2468m directly above the resting place of HMAS Sydney, which was lost with all 645 crew on 19 November 1941.

Captain Ivan Jerman led the poignant memorial service while his ship was enroute to Indonesia.

The service was well attended by passengers and crew and featured a special order of service that included a brief account of Sydney's loss, and ended when a wreath was cast on the water.

The ceremony will be repeated next year on a cruise departing Fremantle on 3 August.



## PIES ALL AT SEA



The Royal Australian Navy has enlisted Sydney-based Garlo's Pies to keep crews at sea happy – and healthy.

Former NRL player and managing director of Garlo's Pies, Sean Garlick, was contacted by Navy chefs keen to add tasty yet healthy pies and sausage rolls to ships' menus.

Mr Garlick said his products were available in many familiar outlets, but he was delighted to also be associated with the Royal Australian Navy.

"Navy prides itself on having a world-class menu and the food provided is promoted as some of the most consistent in the defence sector," Mr Garlick said.

"And, while the meat pie has long been a mainstay on Navy's menu, the demand for higher-quality and better-tasting pies is now met."

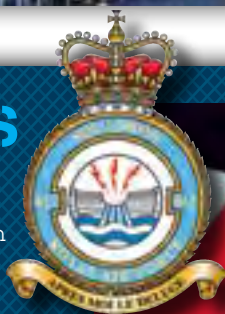
## DAMBUSTERS FLY ON

The Royal Air Force announced in July that 617 Squadron – the famous Dambusters – will be the first operational squadron to operate the F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter.

The squadron will first be disbanded on 1 April next year, as part of the planned drawdown of the Tornado GR4 force, before being reformed in 2016 to take delivery of the F35.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton, Chief of Air Staff, said the Lightning's state-of-the-art stealth and precision target capabilities, together with the battle-proven Typhoon force, would set the base-line for the UK's combat air power for the 2020s and beyond.

He said the F35 would be operated jointly by the RAF and Fleet Air Arm from land and the new Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers.



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## "UNIQUE" NEW UNIFORM

The New Zealand Army is rolling out a new Multi-Terrain Camouflage Uniform (MCU) they say reflects innovations in uniform design from around the world with "a pattern and design unique to the NZ Army". CONTACT and its Facebook fans were hard pressed to agree on the latter point (see page 9).

Captain Ian Leabourne, a project manager involved in the introduction, said there were many benefits to the new uniform.

"With the operational environments we face today, we can be operating in a variety of terrains within one area, so we needed something that would do the job in whatever environment we deploy to," Captain Leabourne said.

"This uniform, with its unique NZ Defence Force pattern, solves this issue."

He also said MCU was a layered clothing system, not just a new look.

Wet- and cold-weather clothing layers designed to fit over and underneath the uniform are included in the system, as well as knee and elbow pads.

A flame resistant variant will be issued to soldiers on operations and for specialist units that require them on normal duties.

The rollout will see the old dark green/brown uniform, which has characterised the New Zealand Army, phased out of general use but placed into a clothing pool to equip recruits, officer cadets and the NZ Air Force until stocks are exhausted.

All regular-force soldiers will have the new uniforms by November this year, with reserve forces expected to be fully kitted out by October 2014.

The overall cost of the project is \$13.6million over two years.

## NH90'S AUSTERE SHAKEOUT

Three Royal New Zealand Air Force NH90 helicopters were put through their paces as part of an intensive flying training program around Waiouru in late July.

Squadron Leader Chris Andrew said the exercise was designed to test the RNZAF's ability to deploy in austere environments, away from the comfort of the helicopters' home base at Ohakea.

"It was an opportunity to train and test the aircraft and crew skills in a relatively controlled environment, undertake some intensive flying, and work closely with the NZ Army," he said.

Around 90 Air Force personnel and 30 soldiers from the Queen Alexandra's Mounted Rifles took part in the exercise – the first time that the NH90 had carried fully equipped NZ Army troops.

It was also the first time formation, low-level flying had been undertaken

away from Ohakea, which is a significant milestone in the training and testing of the aircraft and crew.

Two A109 light utility helicopters were also deployed to Waiouru to train alongside the NH90s.



PICS CORPORAL BRAD HANSON



Visiting Gallipoli as part of the official NZDF contingent, Flight Sergeant Chris Wilson finds his grandfather's name immortalised in stone. Lance Corporal Edward Douglas Wilson was killed during the assault on Chunuk Bair, 7 August 1915.

PIC CORPORAL JUDITH WATTS

## EMOTIONAL REUNION

CANTERBURY INFANTRY REGIMENT  
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WRIGHT A. F.  
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WILLIAMS A. E.  
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WILLIAMS H. E.  
LANCE SERJ.  
WRIGHT E. G.  
WHITE H. M.  
CORPORAL  
WRIGHT E. E.  
WRIGHT E. E.  
LANCE CPT  
WRIGHT E. E.  
WRIGHT E. E.  
WRIGHT E. E.

## NEW TRUCKS

New Zealand has signed a \$135million contract for a new fleet of 200 military trucks with Rheinmetall MAN.

Vice Chief of Defence Major General Tim Keating said the New Zealand Defence Force was replacing its old Unimog and heavy truck fleets, which had been in service for nearly 30 years, with three sizes of the new truck – 6-tonne four-axle, 9-tonne six-axle and 15-tonne eight-axle variants.

"These new trucks are a significant step forward from the older fleet," Major General Keating said.

"They provide greater protection to our troops, have greater carrying capacities and are an operationally proven vehicle."

As well as normal troop and equipment-carrying roles, some of the new trucks will also be fitted with winches and cranes to allow independent operations.



Dump trucks, specialised pallet and container handlers, and tractor/semi-trailer combinations to carry heavy vehicles and equipment will also enhance the fleet's capabilities.

Although the trucks meet military requirements, Major General Keating

said that more than 80 per cent of their components were common to MAN's civilian vehicles, allowing for easier maintenance support.

The first batch of trucks has already been delivered, with the fleet expected to be fully introduced into service by 2015.



PIC CORPORAL SAM SHEPHERD

NZ and Singaporean soldiers man a cordon around Christchurch CBD. More than 100 Singapore Armed Forces personnel assisted New Zealand authorities to man the cordon.

## CORDON LIFTED

More than 28 months after the earthquake that devastated Christchurch, the New Zealand Defence Force's Red Zone Cordon was officially lifted on 30 June at a ceremony attended by Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker, NZ Prime Minister John Key and Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General Rhys Jones.

Lieutenant General Jones said the NZDF's response to the tragedy that struck Christchurch on 22 February 2011 had been the biggest humanitarian-assistance mission it had ever undertaken.

"At the height of our response nearly 1800 NZ Defence Force personnel –

regular, reserve and civilian, and from all three services – were directly involved on the ground, with more personnel providing support from their camps and bases," Lieutenant General Jones said.

"Every one of those people stepped forward and did here what they are trained to do anywhere – serve the people of New Zealand."

"I am enormously proud of them all." He said the cordon operation that ended in June this year was the end of an era for the NZDF and a milestone for Christchurch.

## MEGGA MOVERS

Packing up and moving house is a big task by anyone's standards – but moving out the tonnes of equipment and supplies belonging to the NZ Defence Force's mission in Afghanistan is an entirely different proposition.

For the eight months to May this year, the NZ Defence Force mission closure team in Afghanistan successfully completed the Defence Force's largest logistics operation in recent decades.

It took 35 C-130 Hercules loads and 100 truck loads to move all the equipment and supplies out of Bamiyan Province for return to New Zealand.

Royal New Zealand Air Force 40 Squadron and the US Air Force both conducted 16 air lifts each, with the RAAF picking up the rest.

Commander of the mission closure team Lieutenant Colonel Richard Weston said it had been a significant task and a very busy deployment for his team of 43 personnel.

Materiel at Bagram Air Force Base, Afghanistan, is prepared for return to New Zealand. PIC NICOLE MUNRO





# NZ HEADS UP



## MIND BLOWING JOB

Commander Trevor Leslie returned to New Zealand in July after commanding a multi-national military operation in the Solomon Islands to destroy WWII explosives.

The New Zealand Defence Force-led Operation Pukaurua involved more than 150 personnel from the NZDF, Solomon Islands Police, Australian Defence Force, and United States and Canadian navies.

More than 4 tonnes of bombs, mortars, grenades and projectiles were destroyed in and around Munda in the Solomon Islands.

Commander Leslie said that the first task was to clear all known ordnance off Sasavele Island.

"We found more than 1500 90mm high explosive projectiles in the Sasavele lagoon, then shifted our focus to Rendova, which we cleared of all known ordnance, and then on to the village of Munda, where we found explosives around peoples' homes and in the surrounding jungle," he said.

"It's a tough job, but at the same time it's a fantastic adventure.

"We were in the middle of the tropics, blowing up old bombs and making a community a safer place to live in."

## CANTERBURY ON PP13 MISSION

HMNZS Canterbury sailed from Auckland in July to participate in the now-annual multi-national Pacific Partnership, carrying unusual and precious supplies for some remote islands.

Her cargo included 42 hospital beds and an ambulance destined for Namuga on the south-eastern corner of the Solomon Islands.

Namuga's remoteness has meant the community has not been able to easily access any form of healthcare for generations, and this project will provide a health facility for up to 22,000 people.

Canterbury will use landing craft to put her cargo ashore.

The NZDF contribution to PP13 includes three ships, three aircraft and more than 300 NZDF personnel. And, for the first time, the Deputy Mission Commander is a New Zealand officer – Navy Captain Tony Millar.

Among the other activities planned for PP13 are a hydrographic survey of the port at Betio, renovation of an accommodation block at Kiribati Teachers College, and repair and renovation of two classroom blocks at a local school.



PICS CHRIS WEISSENBORN



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# EXERCISE DAWN BLITZ

WORDS NZDF  
PICS LANCE CORPORAL ALEXANDER GUILLES, USMC, AND MAJOR AIDAN SHATTOCK, NZDF

NEW ZEALAND ARMY AND ROYAL  
NEW ZEALAND NAVY PERSONNEL  
COMPLETED A SIX-WEEK AMPHIBIOUS  
WARFARE EXERCISE IN JULY AT THE  
US MARINE CORPS' CAMP PENDLETON  
IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.



"The experience and training our troops have received in the US will allow them to help us develop our own capability."

Commanding general of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade Brigadier General John Broadmeadow, who hosted Exercise Dawn Blitz, spoke about the focus on amphibious operations.

"Exercise Dawn Blitz is a great example of the ability to use the sea as manoeuvre space, then come across the beach and influence events ashore," Brigadier General Broadmeadow said.

"I don't know what the next crisis in this world is going to be, but I do know what we are doing on Dawn Blitz is helping us

prepare so that, when we respond, we do so quickly, effectively and together."

Royal NZ Navy personnel, consisting of the Operational Dive Team and Mine Counter Measures Team spent their time practicing with the US Navy to prepare the beaches for the landing, while the infantry element, based on D Company, 2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, concurrently practiced with the US Marine Corps and faced an intensive build up to the final exercise.

Officer commanding the company group on the exercise Major John Lawrey said his soldiers loved the opportunity to experience the US Marine Corps' equipment and training, especially the

Marine Corps' infantry immersion trainer, which really made them feel like they were on high-intensity operations.

"The company was put under a lot of pressure and learned a lot from the Marines," Major Lawrey said.

"They also had the chance to conduct integration training with Amtrac amphibious armoured vehicles, which got us ashore to take part in the fight, and M1A1 main battle tanks.

"We've also had a fly in their MV-22 Osprey and CH-46 aircraft as part of a company air assault.

"It was a fantastic experience."



**W**orking alongside Japanese and Canadian forces, the Kiwi soldiers and sailors learned amphibious war-fighting skills from their US Marine counterparts from the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division.

NZDF has been preparing its forces for amphibious operations for some time and this was seen as a perfect opportunity to further develop the skills and knowledge to allow the NZ Defence Force to execute successful amphibious operations in the South Pacific.

Commander of New Zealand's Headquarters Joint Forces Air Vice-Marshal Kevin Short visited the troops and got a first hand look at the work the Kiwi troops were doing.

"New Zealand is looking at developing a Joint Amphibious Task Force in the next couple of years. It is about putting a large force on the ground in a very short period," he said.

"Whether for humanitarian aid or security, we should be able to help anywhere in the South Pacific and beyond.



EXERCISE DAWN BLITZ IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF THE ABILITY TO USE THE SEA AS MANOEUVER SPACE, THEN COME ACROSS THE BEACH AND INFLUENCE EVENTS ASHORE



F/A-18A/B

RAAF selected 57 F/A-18A fighters and 18 F/A-18B two-seat trainers to replace the Dassault Mirage in October 1981. Two aircraft were produced in the US with the remainder assembled in Australia. Deliveries to the RAAF began on 29 October 1984 and continued until May 1990. After losing four aircraft in flying accidents during the late 1980s and early 1990s, 71 remain in operation. The RAAF's F/A-18A and B-model Hornets are multi-role fighters designed for both air-to-air and air-to-ground missions. They are capable of air interception, air combat, close air support of ground troops, and interdiction of enemy supply lines including shipping. They are operated by No.3 Squadron at RAAF Base Williamtown, No. 75 Squadron at RAAF Base Tindal and No. 77 Squadron at RAAF Base Williamtown, with No.2 Operational Conversion Unit, also at RAAF Base Williamtown, responsible for training pilots. The Hornet was developed for the US Navy and Marine Corps and has been a very successful aircraft, also in service with Canada, Finland, Kuwait, Malaysia, Spain and Switzerland. RAAF began a series of upgrades on airframes and avionics suites in the late 1990s to extend the service life of the fleet in an attempt to keep the aircraft in service until the now-delayed F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter can be brought into service.

Weapons	AIM-120 AMRAAM active-radar-guided missiles AIM-7 Sparrow radar-guided long-range missiles AIM-9 Sidewinder infra-red-seeking missiles Harpoon anti-ship missiles Conventional and laser-guided bombs M61 20mm nose-mounted cannon
Manufacturer	Boeing (originally McDonnell-Douglas)
Role	Multi-role fighter
Crew	One or two
Engines	Two F404-GE-400 turbofans
Thrust	14,516kg
Airframe	Length: 17.1m, height: 4.7m
Wingspan	12.4m
Weight	10,660kg basic, 20,412kg max
Speed	Mach 1.8 [2200km/h]
Range	Ferry 2700km [without refuelling] Interdiction > 1000km Combat radius 740km
Ceiling	>45,000 feet



F/A-18F

Pic Leading Aircraftman Benjamin Evans  
In May 2007, a contract to buy 24 F/A-18F Super Hornets for the RAAF as an interim replacement for the ageing F-111 was signed, at a purchase cost of \$2.9billion, with training and facilities upgrades bringing the total to about \$6billion. First deliveries arrived at RAAF Base Amberley in March 2010 with the first squadron declared operational in December the same year. Super Hornet was purchased for the RAAF as an upgraded air-combat capability for both air-to-air and air-to-ground missions until the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) can be introduced – for which there is no firm date. F/A-18F Super Hornets are larger than the classic model with many detail improvements. With increased wing area and more hardpoints, Super Hornets can carry a much bigger weapons payload over greater distances. A significant visual difference between the Super Hornet the ‘Classic’ Hornet is in the engine air intakes – the Super Hornet sporting large rectangular intakes, compared to a much smaller oval shape on the ‘Classic’. Super Hornets are operated by No. 1 Squadron and No. 6 Squadron, both at RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland. Currently, Australia is the only country outside the US to operate the Super Hornet.

Weapons	AIM-120 AMRAAM active-radar-guided missiles AIM-7 Sparrow radar-guided long-range missiles AIM-9 Sidewinder infra-red-seeking missiles Harpoon anti-ship missiles Conventional and laser-guided bombs M61 20mm nose-mounted cannon
Manufacturer	Boeing
Role	Multi-role fighter
Crew	Two
Engines	Two F414-GE-400 turbofans
Thrust	19,600kg
Airframe	Length: 18.3m, height: 4.9m
Wingspan	13.6m
Weight	13,387kg basic, 29,900kg max
Speed	Mach 1.6+ [1950km/h]
Range	Ferry 2700km [without refuel] Interdiction > 1000km Combat radius 740km
Ceiling	> 50,000 feet

AP-3C

Pic Flight Lieutenant Simon Longley  
The Royal Australian Air Force AP-3C Orion is an extremely versatile aircraft capable of maritime surveillance, anti-submarine and anti-ship warfare, naval fleet support and search-and-rescue supply. AP-3C Orion is the workhorse of No 92 Wing, located at RAAF Base Edinburgh near Adelaide, which is responsible for conducting long-range surveillance missions within Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone and throughout the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Orion first entered service in 1962, with the P-3C first introduced in 1968. The significantly upgraded Australian AP-3C Orions were introduced into service in 2002 and are fitted with a variety of sensors, including digital multi-mode radar, electronic support measures, electro-optics detectors (infra-red and visual), magnetic anomaly detectors, identification-friend-or-foe systems and acoustic detectors. AP-3C Orion may work alone or in conjunction with other aircraft or ships. Wartime missions include locating and attacking enemy submarines and ships using torpedoes and Harpoon anti-ship missiles.



Weapons	Mk 46/MU 90 torpedoes AGM-84 Harpoon air-to-surface missiles Various sonobuoys and stores
Manufacturer	Lockheed Martin
Role	Surveillance, anti-sub/anti-ship warfare, search
Crew	Four flight crew Nine mission specialists
Engine	Four Allison T56-A-14 [4600shp each]
Airframe	Length: 35.6m, height: 10.44m
Wingspan	30.8m
Weight	61,200kg max
Speed	650km/h cruise, 370km/h loiter
Endurance	15 hours

PC-9/A(F)

Pic Leading Aircraftman Euan Grant  
Pilatus PC-9/A is a two-seat, single-engine turboprop aircraft that, aside from pilot training and aerobatic display, is also used by the RAAF in a forward air control role. The PC-9/A is best known to the public as the aircraft flown by the RAAF Roulettes in aerobatic displays at major events throughout Australia. These aircraft are based at RAAF Base East Sale in Victoria. After successfully completing basic flying training at the ADF Basic Flying Training School at Tamworth, NSW, ADF fixed-wing pilots undertake an advanced course with No 2 Flying Training School at RAAF Base Pearce, WA, during which they fly 130 hours in the PC-9/A.



Forward Air Control Development Unit at RAAF Base Williamtown, near Newcastle, NSW, uses the aircraft to train Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC). In the JTAC role, there are four modified PC-9/A(F) aircraft in grey paintwork fitted with smoke-grenade dispensers for target marking. The PC-9/A, designed by Pilatus of Switzerland, and built under license by Hawker de Havilland in Sydney, was introduced into the Royal Australian Air Force in 1987, with pilot training in the aircraft commencing in 1989.

Weapons	Two underwing smoke grenade launchers
Manufacturer	Pilatus/Hawker de Havilland
Role	Two-seat advanced trainer; forward air control and aerobatics
Engine	Pratt and Whitney PT6A-62 turboprop [950shp]
Airframe	Length: 10.2m, height: 3.3m
Wingspan	10.2m
Weight	3210kg max
Range	1,850km [with two underwing tanks], combat radius 650km
Ceiling	25,000 feet
Avionics	VHF omni-directional range/instrument landing system, two multi-functional cathode ray tube displays

HAWK 127

Pic Leading Aircraftwoman Kylie Gibson  
The Royal Australian Air Force ordered 33 Hawk 127 Lead-in Fighters in June 1997, 12 of which were produced in the UK and 21 in Australia. Hawk 127 is primarily used for initial or lead-in fighter training to prepare aircrew for operational conversion to the F/A-18 Hornets. It is operated by No. 76 Squadron at RAAF Base Williamtown, near Newcastle, and No. 79 Squadron at RAAF Base Pearce, near Perth. Hawk 127 is a low-wing, all-metal aircraft, fitted with an integrated navigation and attack system and powered by a single Rolls-Royce Turbomeca Adour Mk 871 turbofan engine. It features advanced avionics and displays so that the transition from Hawk to Hornet is smoother. A head-up display in the front cockpit and three-colour multi-function displays in each cockpit present a range of flight information, from aircraft performance and attitude through to equipment status reports. Hawk 127's armament system provides for the carriage, aiming and release or firing of practice and Mk 82 bombs, AIM-9M Sidewinder missiles and a 30mm cannon carried in a pod. Stores





are carried on two wingtip missile stations or pylon-mounted on five underside hardpoints.  
Australia's Hawk fleet is about to undergo a major upgrade.

Weapons	Inert/practice bombs Mk 82 500lb bombs AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles 30mm Aden canon
Manufacturer	BAE Systems
Role	Two-seat advanced trainer and light attack fighter
Engine	1 x Rolls-Royce Turbomeca Adour Mk 871
Airframe	Length 11.95m, height 4.08m
Wingspan	9.39m
Weight	5,443kg
Speed	1207km/h
Range	2520km
Ceiling	50,000 feet

ARH TIGER

Pic Leading Aircraftman Leigh Cameron  
**ARH (Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter) Tiger is a four-bladed, twin-engine, two-seat, attack helicopter manufactured by Eurocopter.**  
It is fast and agile, with the ability to detect and engage targets at long ranges, and can easily coordinate and control combined-arms teams.  
Tiger has a sight/sensor pod on its roof that incorporates optical TV and thermal cameras, a laser range finder/tracker/designator, and multiple gyroscopes for stabilisation.



Hellfire missiles, 70mm rockets and a 30mm cannon provide the firepower.  
ARH Tiger is an attack helicopter capable of air-to-air or air-to-ground engagements, or can be used in reconnaissance or surveillance roles.  
Tiger is equipped with the latest technology including a composite airframe to minimise weight and reduce radar visibility, advanced engines and rotors, plus the integrated suite of sensors and weapons.

Weapons	Hellfire missiles 70mm unguided rockets 30mm canon
Manufacturer	Eurocopter
Role	Armed reconnaissance
Engine	2 x MTU Turbomeca Rolls-Royce MTR390
Airframe	Length 14.08m, height 3.83m
Rotor diameter	3.83m
Weight	6000kg max
Speed	290km/h
Range	800km or 1300km with tanks
Ceiling	13,000 feet

COMING SOON:

MH-60R

Pic MC2 Mark A Leonesio, US Navy  
**The Australian government has approved the acquisition of 24 MH-60R Seahawk 'Romeo' naval combat helicopters at a cost of more than \$3billion.**  
Romeos are currently operated by the United States Navy, with around 100 of the type already accumulating more than 90,000 flying hours, including on operational deployments.  
The helicopters are a largely military off-the-shelf product built by Sikorsky and Lockheed Martin and will be purchased from the US Navy.  
Acquisition of 24 'Romeos' means that Navy will have the capacity to provide at least eight warships with a combat helicopter at any one time, including Anzac Class frigates and the new Air Warfare Destroyers.  
The remainder will be based at HMAS Albatross in Nowra, New South Wales, and will be in various stages of the regular maintenance and training cycles.  
MH-60R Seahawk 'Romeo' will be equipped with highly sophisticated combat systems designed to employ Hellfire air-to-surface missiles and the Mark 54 anti-submarine torpedo.  
They will also be equipped for missions involving surveillance, communications relay, combat search and rescue, naval-gunfire support and logistics support.  
As the Navy's next generation submarine hunter and anti-surface warfare helicopter, MH-60R will be the cornerstone of the Navy's helicopter concept of operations.



EA-18G

Pic Boeing Defence Australia  
**Australia has placed an order for 12 EA-18G Growler electronic warfare variants of the Super Hornet.**  
Growler's primary function is to disrupt or jam a range of enemy electronics systems, including radars and communications systems.

RAAF says the Growler is a force-level electronic warfare capability that will operate in conjunction with our air, land and sea forces. It will improve situational awareness and protect our forces by providing the ability to deny or disrupt an adversary's use of the electromagnetic spectrum and hence, their electronic systems.  
Planned to operate from RAAF Base Amberley, the 12 EA-18G Growlers will complement the F/A-18F Super Hornets as well as the F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter.  
Costing \$1.5 billion, the EA-18G Growler purchase includes the aircraft, required mission and support systems, training and ongoing support to effectively develop and operate a Growler capability. Defence plans to achieve Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in 2018.



P-8A

Artist's impression Boeing  
**Eight P-8A Poseidon aircraft are planned to replace the AP-3C Orion by 2017-18 – the latter reaching its 'life of type' around 2019, after more than 50 years service in the RAAF.**  
The P-8A is built from the ground up as a military aircraft based on the proven commercial designs of Boeing's 737-800 fuselage, but is structurally modified to include a bomb bay, under-wing and under-fuselage weapon hardpoints, as well as increased strengthening to allow for continued low-level (down to 200ft) operations and 60° angle-of-bank turns.  
An internal fuel capacity of almost 34 tonnes will give the P-8A an unrefuelled range of more than 7500km or the ability to remain on station conducting low-level anti-submarine warfare

missions for more than four hours at a range of more than 2200 km from base. However, missions can be extended with air-to-air refuelling via the boom on the RAAF's now-in-service KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transport, pushing its endurance out to more than 20 hours – making it possible to patrol Australia's isolated Southern Ocean territories.  
The P-8A has 11 weapon hardpoints (five in the bomb bay, four under the wings and two under the fuselage) and can carry more than 10,000kg of weapons.  
The aircraft will have an extensive communications suite of more than 10 separate radios and data links across the VHF, UHF, HF and SATCOM spectrums.  
Like the Orion, the P-8A will have advanced sensors and mission systems, including an advanced multi-mode radar, a high definition electro-optic camera, an acoustic system (that has four times the processing capacity of Orion's current, recently upgraded system) and an advanced electronic support system derived from that fitted to the EA-18G Growler.  
Initial Operational Capability (IOC) for the RAAF's P-8A is scheduled for 2017 through 2020.

F-35A

Pic Master Sergeant Donald Allen, USAF  
**The official RAAF web site says, "The Royal Australian Air Force must maintain air superiority in our own airspace". To that end, the 'fifth-generation' F-35A Lightning II was chosen.**  
However, this aircraft has/is suffering from bad press and project delays caused by a variety of reasons including budget cuts, capability-expectation shortfalls and resultant rumblings of disquiet from some of the countries who have committed to its development and purchase.  
Interestingly, the RAAF web site also goes on to say, "When operational, F-35A will provide a networked force-multiplier effect in terms of situational awareness and combat effectiveness", but that, "The F-35A's combination of stealth, advanced sensors, networking and data fusion capabilities, when integrated with other defence systems, will enable the RAAF to maintain an air-combat edge" – possibly seeking to water down our 'air superiority' expectations.  
Nonetheless, Australia has fully committed to initially buying 14 F-35As, planned for RAAF Base Williamtown, near Newcastle, NSW.  
Up to a further 58 F-35As (total 72) will be considered (but have not been committed to) as part of Phase 2A/2B of the acquisition project, to create a total of three operational squadrons – two at RAAF Base Williamtown and one at RAAF Base Tindal, near Darwin in the Northern Territory, plus a training squadron at RAAF Base Williamtown. Phase 2C of the acquisition project will consider a fourth operational squadron for RAAF Base Amberley, for a total of about 100 F-35As.  
Defence says that F-35A, commonly known as the Joint Strike Fighter, is the most suitable aircraft for Australia's future air-combat and strike needs, to replace the current, ageing F/A-18A/B Hornet, however, delays in the overall development project have caused flow-on delays on the Australian fleet, causing the government to step in and purchase 24 F/A-18Fs and 12 EA-18Gs to bridge the capability gap.







## CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONAL

**Corporal Cameron Stewart Baird MG** was killed in action on 22 June 2013 while operating as a member of the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan.

**T**he SOTG and the Afghan Provincial Response Company were conducting a partnered operation to disrupt an insurgent network operating in the Khod Valley, which was known to have direct influences on insurgent activity in Uruzgan province. During the engagement, another Australian special-forces soldier and a Royal Australian Air Force airman operating with the Joint Terminal Attack Control Team were also wounded.

Members of the patrol provided immediate first aid to the casualties who were aero-medically evacuated to the Role 2 Medical Facility at Multi National Base - Tarin Kot, but despite best efforts, Corporal Baird could not be saved.

A member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment based at Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales, Corporal Baird was on his fifth tour in Afghanistan and had also served in Iraq and East Timor.

Cameron Baird, survived by his parents, brother and partner, was born in Burnie, Tasmania, in 1981.

He joined the Army in January 2000 and, upon completion of initial employment training, was posted to the then 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Commando), The Royal Australian Regiment, now the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment, in February 2000.

Corporal Baird was an outstanding special-forces soldier who exemplified what it meant to be a commando, living by the attributes of uncompromising spirit and honour, which in turn earned him the unconditional respect of his fellow commandos.

Corporal Baird's leadership in action was exemplary, constantly inspiring those around him to achieve greater things. He was an extremely dedicated and disciplined soldier, always striving for excellence in everything he did.

Corporal Baird died how he lived – at the front, giving his all, without indecision.

For his actions during close-quarters combat in Afghanistan in November 2007, then Lance Corporal Baird was awarded the Medal for Gallantry.

His citation says in part that during a Commando Company mission to clear and search a Taliban stronghold, Lance Corporal Baird's platoon came under heavy fire and, during the ensuing close-range firefight, a member of his team was mortally wounded.

Displaying complete disregard for his own safety, Lance Corporal Baird led other members of his team forward under heavy fire from machine guns and assault rifles to recover the wounded team member.

He then re-entered the compound and continued to engage the enemy. Even though under constant fire, Lance Corporal Baird continually moved among his team members coordinating their fire, and throwing grenades to neutralise the enemy machine-gun positions.



Once the initial close-quarter battle had ended, Lance Corporal Baird led his team forward and began room-by-room clearances, where he was again engaged by several enemy.

Throughout the action, Lance Corporal Baird displayed conspicuous gallantry, composure and superior leadership under fire. He was personally responsible for killing several enemy combatants during the clearance, ensuring the momentum of the assault was maintained, and undoubtedly preventing further members of his section from becoming casualties.

On 25 June 2013, members of the Special Operations Task Group, the wider Australian contingent and ISAF partners farewelled Corporal Cameron Baird in a solemn Service of Remembrance and ramp ceremony at Multi National Base - Tarin Kot.

He was remembered by his mates and the SOTG as a modest yet inspirational leader and a true modern-day warrior.

Commanding Officer SOTG Lieutenant Colonel J said, "Cam, you were a soldier of the highest order, one never to shy from battle".

"Rest in peace fine soldier and rest in the knowledge that we will honour you through our pledge to continue the mission here in Afghanistan."

His patrol and commanding officer, Major P, described Corporal Baird as a mentor and role model.

"Cam Baird is and will always be one of the most inspiring leaders of men within the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment. There isn't one of us who wouldn't follow Cam into any combat situation," Major P said.

"Although Cam has left us in person, he will forever be a part of this company.

"His moral, physical and mental standards provide a guiding light for each of us to follow. He will never be forgotten."

Corporal Cameron Baird MG was finally farewelled in a moving funeral service, attended by Chief of Defence Force General David Hurley, Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison and Special Operations Commander Australia Major General Gus Gilmore, at the Reedy Creek Baptist Church on the Gold Coast, Queensland, on 5 July.







# CAT ON A LAKE

**Pics Glenn Fenwick** | An Illawarra-based landscape, seascape and surf photographer, Glenn's first love is the ocean. He also harbours a boyhood love of military aircraft, and living close to Albion Park Regional Airport enables Glenn to satisfy this interest too, observing old warbirds regularly flying over his house, and through the annual Wings Over Illawarra Air Show. If you would like to see more of Glenn's work, visit [facebook.com/glennfenimagery](https://facebook.com/glennfenimagery)

On Sunday 5 May, Albion Park, south of Wollongong, played host to one of Australia's best regional air shows, the now-annual Wings Over Illawarra – and CONTACT sent local photographer Glenn Fenwick along to photograph it for us.

Obviously, Glenn did a wonderful job, the spread on p48-49 last issue testament to that. The only problem was, we forgot to give Glenn credit for his work.

To make amends, we publish this extra spread of Glenn's photos – with our sincerest apologies for last issue's oversight. We can also tell you that Glenn got a 'Highly Commended' accolade – and his son Sam won first prize in the juniors' section – in the official Wings Over Illawarra Photo Competition.

Glenn took this set of images a couple of days before Wings Over Illawarra, of the PBY Catalina's touch-and-go on Lake Illawarra, a (hopefully annual) publicity event in the lead-up to the big day.

The Catalina made one sighting pass over the lake, then came around for two touch and go splashdowns, skimming the water a mere 100m from shore before soaring off to cheers and applause.

The annual Wings Over Illawarra is well worth a visit. Mark the first Sunday in May in your calendar now.



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*"I DON'T CARE IF YOU  
SUPPORT THE WAR OR  
NOT – JUST GIVE A FUCK  
[ABOUT THE SOLDIERS]"*

The words of former US Army Lieutenant Matt Gallagher from his acclaimed book *'Kaboom – embracing the suck in a savage little war'*, so resonated with portrait artist **Caroline McGregor** that she immortalised the speaker by naming an entire collection of heart-felt Australian-soldier portraits...

**JUST GIVE  
A F#\*K!**

WORDS AND PICS BRIAN HARTIGAN

**S**outh-African-born Caroline McGregor grew up in a country where war and conscription were part of the landscape and fellow university students suffering the mental anguishes of their involvement in an unpopular and un-talked-about war were largely ignored.

"We didn't know or realise what they were going through," she told me at her Sydney studio. "When you saw them sleeping in the gutter in pools of their own vomit, you just stepped over them and went about your business. No one stopped. No one cared. No one gave a fuck about those boys or what they might be going through."

"And now, that makes me angry – and I don't want to see the same thing happen to Aussie boys when they come home."

But, Aussies know about and care about our soldiers – don't they? Caroline thinks not – at least not in the suburbs and not in the everyday.

"Sure, we all say 'that's terrible' when we hear that another soldier is killed or wounded, but it's only a fleeting thought for most people who have no connection to the ADF."

"I had another reporter come here to talk to me and take pictures one day and he said something like, 'these paintings are really good – I wonder how I can link them to ANZAC Day?'"

"And I said, 'Are you kidding? Don't you know these boys are in Afghanistan right now fighting a war on our behalf? How more ANZAC can they be?'"

"It was only when I rammed it down his throat that he got it – and his story made the front page!"

"So, what I'm saying is, most Aussies out here in the suburbs don't really know – and that makes me

angry. I want to shake them and say, 'Please just give a fuck about our boys!'"

One of the boys who knows that Caroline McGregor gives a fuck is Trooper David Nicolson – familiar to CONTACT fans as the man who told us in issue #33 how he survived four IEDs.

Trooper Nicolson is also a subject who has been immortalised on canvas by Caroline McGregor – and is forever grateful that Caroline McGregor cares so passionately about Aussie soldiers.

"I first saw Caroline's work when a random painting showed up on my news feed on Facebook," Trooper Nicolson said.

"I was surprised at how amazing it was and knew straight away it was my mate Corporal Michael Byron."

"I sent Caroline a message asking how she came about doing his painting, and told her about Byron and the incredibly ballsy job he and the engineers did for us in Afghanistan."

"I felt in a way this would give her a better understanding of the soldier she painted and thought it would be nice for her to have a story behind it."

Trooper Nicolson said that after 'chatting' via Facebook for a couple of weeks he realised Caroline McGregor wanted to do a whole exhibition dedicated to our deployed troops.

"I was amazed to see that someone with no military background was putting so much time and effort into such amazing artworks just to show support to the young vets of today's war."

"Yes, we get a massive amount of support from our loved ones and friends. We/I can't thank them enough for putting up a brave face and staying positive while a loved one is deployed. Whether or not they agree with us being over there, they are as proud of us as we are of them."

"But, while we do get 'thank you's' from strangers – and it's a great feeling of support – it's a shame it's only usually on occasions like Anzac Day!"

"All we want is for people to support us, the soldiers, even if they don't believe in the reasons we were sent there. I can sometimes see people judge us just because we were in Afghanistan."

Trooper Nicolson said he felt diggers today owed a great deal of thanks to the Vietnam vets for their hard work over many years in changing the way people treat returning vets and the ADF in general.

"That said, it is very different to see a complete outsider like Caroline McGregor do something like this for us – it is very special."

"Caroline shows her support in a very different and special way. No words need to be said. Just look and admire her paintings and her support jumps out from her art – and that's what I love about what she's doing!"

Caroline McGregor eventually included a portrait of Trooper Nicolson in her collection [top-left photo and background] – and he was more than happy to consent.

"She sent me a photo of the finished piece and I was deeply thankful for her great work."

"She has now completed several paintings of the guys from Alpha Company MTF-3 and others, and I'm still gobsmacked by what she has done."

"I just don't have the right words to express how much her work means to me. I really can't thank her enough!"

"I look at the paintings and remember the good and bad times I had over there with the best bunch of guys, who I'm so proud to have served with."

"In thanks for her support, I want the whole world to see what Caroline McGregor did for us – so now I'm grateful to CONTACT too

for helping me to show Caroline that all her new fans in the ADF – and Townsville in particular – appreciate the wonderful thing she is doing for our vets."



FOLLOW CAROLINE MCGREGOR'S WORK AT  
[FACEBOOK.COM/CAROLINEMCGREGORART](https://www.facebook.com/CAROLINEMCGREGORART)



*'The Army needs to be balanced internally as well as within the ADF more generally; that it must possess a structure suitable to contest, should it be required, against an adversary who is either a peer in terms of military capability, or who is intellectually our equal in the conduct of war...the Australian Army must possess the ability to commit successfully to joint land combat, and win.'*

Lieutenant General David Morrison, Chief of Army

The Australian Army's 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade recently completed a Combined Arms Training Activity (CATA) at the Townsville Field Training Area, with the aim to enhance the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade's ability to prosecute foundation warfighting – that is, to operate, fight and win as a potent and versatile combined-arms formation executing joint land combat against a near-peer threat. 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade's CATA represented the most recent significant step in Army's reorientation from its commitment to counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan and peace-support

commitments in Timor Leste and The Solomon Islands towards being an Army 'that can fight, manoeuvre and defeat a credible enemy'. CATA was the first time Army's future Multi-role Combat Brigade (MCB) deployed, operated and fought against a near-peer threat in a high-intensity-conflict scenario. Furthermore, CATA witnessed the first time that the Armoured Cavalry Regiment (ACR) component of Army's Plan Beersheba/MCB force modernisation program was exercised. CATA saw the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade force concentrate in Mounting Base Townsville for a rapid deployment to a fictitious nation to expel foreign enemy forces that had usurped the legitimate national authority. Following force concentration and final mission-specific training, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade deployed from Townsville via



simulated air and sea assets to an air point of entry. Following the build-up of sufficient combat power, it undertook combined-arms battlegroup missions to destroy enemy forces that had occupied key urban terrain. These missions saw the integration of infantry, tank, armoured reconnaissance, armoured lift, engineer, M777 artillery, armed reconnaissance and attack by Tiger helicopters, the rapid insertion and redeployment of forces by Multi-Role Helicopter, Blackhawk and Chinook by day and night, the exercising of a robust logistics support, recovery, detention and medical evacuation, command and control exercised by a light and robust Brigade HQ and simulated UAV and strategic intelligence support. CATA culminated with the execution of a live-fire Multi-role Combat Brigade deliberate attack to destroy a near-peer mechanised battlegroup threat. Concurrent to the formation's battle procedure, intelligence on the enemy's disposition and composition was gathered by clandestine cavalry, Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH Tiger) and infantry reconnaissance and surveillance assets. In addition, during this phase of the battle, ARH destroyed enemy high-value targets via Hellfire missile.

This screening force subsequently cleared the avenues of approach to the formation's assembly area. As a preliminary action to the assault, an infantry combat team was inserted by a live-fire air-mobile operation (AMO) by night. This AMO saw the first insertion attempt compromised, which resulted in the rotary-wing assets having to fight their way out of the compromised landing zone. Following their insertion, the infantry combat team seized key terrain for the ACR's assault. This seizure involved the live-fire destruction of an enemy security outpost by night. The MCB attack was spearheaded by the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Cavalry Regiment's advance-to-contact by night and rapid, comprehensive destruction of enemy from dawn. Following the completion of its mission, the ACR rapidly regrouped its armoured vehicles to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion that completed the destruction and pursuit of the mechanised enemy battlegroup. Throughout the assault, M777 artillery and mortars were employed as danger-close fire to advancing infantry. Tiger helicopters augmented this maelstrom of suppressing fire by destroying high-value enemy targets with Hellfire missiles and suppressing enemy battle positions with a constant stream of rocket and 30mm gunfire.



# CATA

## COMBINED ARMS TRAINING ACTIVITY

WORDS CAPTAIN DAVID COWAN PICS LEADING AIRCRAFTMAN OLIVER CARTER







Other aviation lift assets were employed to facilitate air command and control and the rapid evacuation of simulated battle casualties.

Engineers supported the execution of multiple battlegroup and combat team explosive obstacle breaches.

The formation's logistics assets were arrayed to facilitate immediate casualty and PW evacuation, recovery and resupply of the fighting echelon.

Command and control of the attack was exercised forward by Commander 3 Bde. This command and control was facilitated by the Formation HQ located some 30km south (outside of enemy artillery range) of the enemy objective.

In summary, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bde CATA achieved:

- Another significant step forward in Army becoming expert in foundation warfighting.
- Validated the combat power, utility, agility, flexibility, responsiveness, resilience and robustness of the ACR and the MCB against a near-peer threat.
- Validated the capacity and responsiveness of the MCB's logistics elements.
- Achieved the first MCB live-fire exercise executing danger-close artillery and rotary-wing attack fires, explosive breaching of battlegroup and combat-team obstacles.
- Proved the ability of Army to integrate the capabilities of multiple brigades when executing foundation warfighting. During CATA this manifested in the integration of the 5<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment's lift and armed-reconnaissance platforms into the manoeuvre and logistics plan. Throughout the activity lift assets supported the insertion of reconnaissance assets, oftentimes via airborne rappel. In addition, during CATA, 5<sup>th</sup> Aviation executed no less than four battlegroup air-mobile operations (AMO), one by

night, to position 1RAR for the live-fire formation attack – and eight combat-team AMO, inclusive of live-fire and the rapid insertion of combat teams to support the pursuit of enemy forces. MRH platforms were integral to this lift effort.

- Lift platforms were also employed for the AMO of equipment across the battlefield.
- Throughout CATA, 5<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment's rate of effort was equal to that during the first weeks of INTERFET.
- Finally, CATA saw the ARH Tiger employed for the first time in intimate support (with live ammunition) to advancing troops assaulting enemy objectives.
- CATA saw 5<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment deploying to and operating from austere field environments for the first time in 17 years.
- It also proved the Army's only explosive breaching weapon system – the Personnel Explosive Lane Clearance Charge (PELCC).

**CATA SAW THE ARH TIGER EMPLOYED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN INTIMATE SUPPORT (WITH LIVE AMMUNITION) TO ADVANCING TROOPS ASSAULTING ENEMY OBJECTIVES.**

This system was employed for the first time outside of a training institution to breach enemy minefields as part of each battlegroup's assault.

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To mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal Australian Navy's First Fleet Review, renowned Australian marine artist **Don Braben** painted an outstanding artwork depicting the then fledgling Royal Australian Navy's first fleet en-route to Sydney on the morning of 4 October 1913.

**T**he artwork, specially commissioned for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October 2013, captures a moment in time when the proud fleet of seven ships steam slowly in formation, unspotted by the waiting throng of Sydneysiders covering harbour vantage points in anticipation of the new armada.

Don said the elevated perspective he chose, afforded a unique viewpoint. "There are several very fine artworks in existence of the fleet entering the harbour in line astern, but few show the entire fleet.



## A MOMENT IN TIME

I wanted to marry today's perspectives with this moment in our history," he said.

"For this, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I feel we needed to show more of the fleet and, most importantly, to show the fleet moving forward under steam. It seemed obvious that an aerial view at sea would be the most effective and poignant."

From the elevated position, the painting shows the ships of the new fleet in early morning light as they make way to Sydney. The flagship, HMAS Australia, flying the flag of Rear Admiral Patey, leads the column, followed in line by the cruisers HMA Ships Melbourne, Sydney

and Encounter, with the destroyer HMAS Yarra at the end of line. The destroyers HMA Ships Parramatta and Warrego flank HMAS Australia.

In 2013, Don Braben's unique depiction of the 'first fleet' also forms the basis of a collection of commemorative products available on line through [www.militaryshop.com.au](http://www.militaryshop.com.au) and at events around Sydney Harbour during this year's International Fleet Review.

The International Fleet Review will officially span 3 to 11 October 2013, with up to 20 tall ships entering Sydney Harbour on 3 October, followed by 40

warships on 4 October. Then on 5 October, a ceremonial Fleet Review will be followed by flyovers, military displays and what the Navy promises will be the largest and most exciting public fireworks and light displays held on Sydney Harbour since the Olympic Games in 2000.

Navy's Director of the International Fleet Review Captain Nick Bramwell said that with tens of thousands of visitors expected at this year's fleet review, the IFR team wanted to ensure everyone, from kids and parents through to international guests, could take a lasting keepsake away from this historic milestone event.

"Nowadays it is critical you engage your audience in ways that let them be a part of what you are celebrating, and one way to do this is to give them the opportunity to take away more than just memories," Captain Bramwell said.

"So, IFR engaged Navy Canteens to manage the creation and distribution of a range of official products and giveaways." Canteen CEO Stephen Gregory said the International Fleet Review was a great opportunity to get Navy's message out to the community.

"This event will put Navy front and centre and we want to make sure the

**THE INTERNATIONAL FLEET REVIEW WILL OFFICIALLY SPAN 3 TO 11 OCTOBER 2013, WITH UP TO 20 TALL SHIPS ENTERING SYDNEY HARBOUR ON 3 OCTOBER, FOLLOWED BY 40 WARSHIPS ON 4 OCTOBER.**

significance of the event is reflected in every product we provide," Mr Gregory said.

"We have a great product support partner in Canberra-based promotional company BrandNet, to whom we turned to guide us through product development.

"BrandNet has a long association with Navy and is at the forefront of support to military events with commemorative products."

While BrandNet has done a lot of work with Navy and the Navy community, particularly in support of major events, the company's product-development director

Lindsey Davie said being trusted to create products to support this anniversary was one of the company's greatest honours.

"It's amazing how many people have a natural affinity with Navy, and this is one of the most exciting on the Australian calendar," she said.

"IFR organisers are expecting huge numbers of people in Sydney and we have created a product range that allows everyone to have a meaningful keepsake from this fantastic celebration of Navy.

"With an event as significant as this you need to build a product range that meets the needs of collectors, casual visitors and those who will rekindle or start their link with Navy through the IFR, so we commissioned the Braben artwork to provide a strong base image that could translate across a range of media.

"Don Braben was an easy choice when it came to commissioning such a significant artwork. He is one of Australia's most respected dedicated maritime artists and his paintings have won many awards and hang in public, private and corporate collections worldwide," she said.

## Pride in Fleet – Our Nation Our Navy

Pride in Fleet – Our Nation Our Navy is one for the collectors or for those seeking a special gift to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RAN's first visit to Sydney. Since 1913 tens of thousands of men and women, and hundreds of vessels of all classes, have served in Navy. This symbolic collection of ships and stories represents just part of that story of service and pride in fleet.

The fronts of the medallions feature ships from the RAN's history while the reverse depicts the image of HMAS Australia (I) as used on the 1913 commemorative coin to mark the fleet's first visit to Sydney.

These proof quality medallions are minted from brass alloy and finished in highly polished and frosted silver with gold plate RAN badge. Each measures 50mm in diameter by 4.5mm and is enclosed in a sturdy clear protector set in a velvet lined leatherette case. Only 500 sets and 250 of each individual medallion will be available worldwide. Each comes with numbered certificate of authenticity featuring short bios on ships of the same name.



More collectables available including limited edition prints, puzzles, posters and more. Visit [www.militaryshop.com.au/ifr.html](http://www.militaryshop.com.au/ifr.html) to view the entire collection.



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# EXERCISE CHONG JU

## FIREPOWER DEMO

Exercise Chong Ju is an annual live-fire exercise designed to give the Army's next generation of combat leaders a taste of the combined affect of air and land assets ranging from Abrams tanks to F/A-18s on the battlefield.



WORDS AND PICS SERGEANT BRIAN HARTIGAN

**T**he annual firepower exercise held at Puckapunyal on 1 and 2 May this year is a key component of the Combat Officer Advance Course, but also allows opportunity for other spectators, including ADF, visiting foreign military members and media to witness a wide spectrum of capabilities including Abrams, ASLAVs, M113AS4s, Javelin anti-armour missile, 81mm mortars, M777-A2 155mm Howitzers, F/A-18 Hornets and ARH Tiger helicopters pummel a well-placed enemy position.

The M777 Howitzers provided artillery support from about 6km away while two Abrams tanks and two Tiger helicopters from 1<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment provided fire support from very, very close to the corralled audience position.

Also from the air, but comfortably removed from the audience, three F/A-18s provided close air support, strafing enemy positions and dropping 1000-pound bombs.

The scenario involved an attack on an enemy position with friendly forces breaching natural and man-made obstacles to move through to clear the objective, followed by a withdrawal and reorg in anticipation of an enemy counter-attack. Commander of the School of Armour Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Cree was pleased with the opportunity to give future commanders an insight into ADF capabilities.



"What they get from this exercise is seeing the affects of a combined-arms team firing on enemy targets with all the consequences of fire and movement, and gaining an appreciation for all the things that need to be done to synchronise those effects onto the enemy," Lieutenant Colonel Cree said.

"This activity goes to the very heart of foundation warfighting. We are here to train our soldiers who are in the field training for war, and we are training the next generation of combat commanders for foundation warfighting."

Exercise Chong Ju was named after a battle in North Korea on 29-30 October 1950, in which 200 Australians from 3RAR, supported by American tanks and aircraft, took on an up-to-600-strong North Korean tank brigade, and captured a North Korean defensive line blocking the United Nations advance north. During the brief but fierce battle and counter attacks, Australian forces lost nine killed in action (including the



commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Green) and 30 wounded, while inflicting 162 KIA and 10 captured on the North Koreans. Eleven enemy tanks and

two self-propelled artillery guns were also destroyed. The battle is considered a text-book example of a successful combined-arms attack.

## PERFORMING UNDER PRESSURE

**Corporal Brodie Naunton found himself under intense pressure on 1 May with Mother Nature fighting against him while nearly 300 pairs of eye bored into his back.**

Corporal Naunton, currently posted at the Australian Army's School of Armour, was the 'number one' on a Javelin anti-armour missile team scheduled to fire the expensive weapon during Exercise Chong Ju.

Being number one on the Javelin meant Corporal Naunton was tasked to pull the trigger, after carefully locking the system's heat-seeker sights onto a target about a kilometre away.

However, as Corporal Naunton stepped onto the battlefield, in front of nearly 300 spectators, he found the battlefield was already ablaze and his target was lost in a haze of smoke and heat.

Yet, despite the pressure, Corporal Naunton called on all his training and a steady hand to lock on to the 'enemy tank' before firing the rocket – and, yes, hitting it.

"I had a lot of trouble figuring out which heat signature was my target. It turned out it was actually colder than everything else around it," Corporal Naunton said.

"There were a lot of people putting a lot of pressure on me today, so I'm very happy that I actually hit the target."

Corporal Naunton is currently posted to the Australian Army's School of Armour as a section commander at Bin Bah Troop, but is actually an infantryman and will probably get posted back to an infantry battalion next year.

He said he was enjoying his current posting and would recommend it to anyone.

"Being posted to a training unit is definitely good for family time. It's good to be able to plan my year around what's going on at work."

"I do have to say the Army can put a lot of pressure on families, but, I'm pretty lucky in that I've got a wife who copes quite well – and I'm still loving the job."

"I've done a lot of things that a lot of people wouldn't even dream of doing. So in that aspect, I have quite a good job."



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Lance Corporal Nick Catton, New Zealand Army Shooting Team, in action on the pistol range.



Australia's WO1 Andrew Munn congratulates Staff Sergeant Mohd Asnawi bin Ahmad after the Malaysian Army just pipped the Aussie team in the Service Rifle Falling Plate - International match. Middle: The Malaysian team celebrates. Right: A Japanese soldier on the obstacle course.

# AUSTRALIAN ARMY SKILL AT ARMS MEETING

AASAM — the Australian Army Skill at Arms Meeting — marked its 29<sup>th</sup> year by filling its ranges to capacity in a challenging competition that spanned almost three weeks.

WORDS CAPTAIN FELICITY HAMBLIN, AND SERGEANTS BRIAN HARTIGAN AND DAMIAN GRIFFIN  
PHOTOS SERGEANTS BRIAN HARTIGAN AND JOHN WADDELL



**With just under 350 competitors and just over 500 people from 17 countries living in the AASAM 'village', the atmosphere was akin to a major international sports meeting.**

Yet AASAM is not a sport, but a serious test of the core skill of all ADF and foreign military members – marksmanship.

AASAM as a military shooting contest is designed to pitch shooters against each other in physically and mentally tough competition with a heavy emphasis on modern warfighting skills and lessons learnt on contemporary operations.

Since 1984, AASAM has been Australia's premier military shooting tournament, with a growing reputation worldwide, and is now one of the world's biggest international shooting competitions.

This year, teams from Australia, Brunei, Canada, France (New Caledonia), Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tonga, the UK and the US were joined by first-time entrants China.

Irrespective of nationality or language barriers however, the common language was marksmanship.

The competition was judged through a wide range of team and individual events encompassing both day and night shooting on ranges from 5m to 450m, across bayonet assault, obstacle and biathlon courses as well as standard pistol and rifle ranges. Snipers also engaged an array of static and moving targets out to more than 1000m.

Contestants were required to fire their own standard-issue weapons including pistol, assault rifle, sniper rifle and machine gun – although competitors from 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, were disappointed they weren't allowed to use their standard-issue weapon, the newly acquired M777A2 155mm medium gun.

Among many awards and accolades vied for at AASAM, the competition also decided the individual champion shots of the Australian Army, Navy and Air Force as well as Champion Shot International.

The best unit or formation team in the Australian Army was also hotly contested, with more than a little friendly banter along the way.

The champion shot of each Australian service was awarded the Champion Shots Medal – except in the case of Army, because this year's winner, WO1 Andrew Munn, won on four previous occasions, and therefore added another bar to the medal he first won in 2000.

Keeping 350 shooters safe on multiple live-firing

The 1/19RNSWR shooting team, from left, Sergeant James Aka, Private Terry Nixon (front), Warrant Officer Barry Parsons, Private Tom Barron and Sergeant Warrick Campbell proudly fly the NSW State flag at AASAM.



## BUSHMAN'S RIFLES

**Many Army teams at AASAM were made up of members of the Army Reserve from a variety of backgrounds.**

Those from the 1<sup>st</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Royal New South Wales Regiment are all part-time infantrymen, many of whom – not unusually these days – are veterans of one or more operational deployment.

And all are pretty good natural marksmen.

Team captain Warrant Officer Class Two Barry Parsons said 1/19RNSWR had a small team of just five shooters at AASAM this year. "Plus a previous Champion Shot of the Army – young Ferguson – belongs to us and while he's actually on the Australian Army Combat Shooting Team, he shoots for our team too, whenever he can".

"This is our fifth year of AASAM and traditionally we go pretty well," WO2 Parsons said.

"We're all infantry. For example this fellow here [Private Tom Barron] is a student, Nicko [Private Terry Nixon] is a farmer, Sergeant [Warrick] Campbell over there is a – what would we call him, a professional choc – and Sergeant [James] Aka is a regular soldier who came across from PNG four years ago.

"And most of us have done at least two deployments – Private Barron has even done three, to the Solomon Islands, East Timor and Butterworth.

"We call ourselves 'the bushman's rifles' – because we come from a tradition of farmers and shooters and we're trying to carry on that tradition.

"And so far we're doing all right."

WO2 Parsons said he believed that growing up on the land, where weapons were part of the family, gave them a definite edge.

"I know when I was a kid, everyone had rifles.

"Even school cadets, who are all-but done away with these days, used to have their own rifles and take them to school on the school bus, train with them all day and then take them home again on the bus.

"When my dad came back from WWII, he taught us how to shoot properly and how to respect weapons.

"Things like not just looking at what you're shooting at, but looking beyond that to where your bullets are going to go – and never climb through a fence holding a weapon, and all of that sort of thing.

"So, when dad was teaching us, he was actually teaching us marksmanship principles and safety – safety was the big thing."

Range safety brief in multiple languages.



Major General Mick Slater, Commander Forces Command, observes a soldier shooting Match 20 – the Barricade Match.

**A LIVE-FIRE BAYONET ASSAULT COURSE AND SHOOTING AT MOVING TARGETS, OR SHOOTING WHILE WEARING GAS MASKS NOT ONLY ADDED TO THE CHALLENGES, BUT ALSO THE ENJOYMENT.**



Private Thomas Page, British Army Shooting Team, in action on the bayonet assault course.

ranges can have its challenges at the best of times, but throw in a wide mix of languages, huge variety in normal range-safety practices and weapon-handling drills and it's not hard to imagine that it must take experience and cool heads to keep things running smoothly.

That was the challenge officer in charge of the range Warrant Officer Class Two Darryl Lemmon and his team of committed range safety officers were faced with at this year's AASAM.

WO2 Lemmon said that although the language barrier was at times challenging, the professionalism of every team meant challenges were quickly overcome.

"The important thing is getting everyone into a routine early, and then they know exactly what's required," he said.

"Most of the international teams face highly competitive and rigorous marksmanship selection to attend AASAM, so their professionalism as soldiers is very high anyway.

"One of the very professional teams here has always been New Zealand.

"They are always on time for every range brief and you can tell by the way they conduct themselves and their shoots that they've rehearsed a lot before coming to Australia.

"Some of the other international teams are exactly the same – the Japanese for example."

WO2 Lemmon, who this year attended his 18<sup>th</sup> AASAM, said the competition had developed a lot since he first attended in 1985, when it was just Australia and New Zealand and focused mainly on traditional range practices.

Today, AASAM prides itself on testing soldiers' modern fighting skills using standard-issue rifles, sniper rifles, pistols and machine guns.

Serials include traditional practices such as timed falling-plate events and deliberate practices from prone, prone unsupported, kneeling and standing positions.

But the real challenge comes in the tough combat-like events that include day and night serials, moving targets, shoots through key-hole observation ports from a range of angles and positions, made all the more difficult because of body armour and helmets.

A live-fire bayonet assault course and shooting at moving targets, or shooting while wearing gas masks not only added to the challenges, but also the enjoyment.

"It's certainly changed with modern warfare," WO2 Lemmon said.

Action on the pistol range.





"We're constantly trying to improve the competition." Another person who believes the competition is evolving and improving is AASAM commander Lieutenant Colonel Angus Bell.

As the new boss of AASAM, Lieutenant Colonel Bell has visions of improving the standards of the competition generally and especially in the overseas contingents – but believes the competition has reached its limits in terms of numbers.

"AASAM is about at full capacity now with about 340 competitors and 500 people altogether," he said.

"It's not that we wouldn't like to expand, but we're actually limited by the classification range for the service rifle matches.

"So what we want to do is increase our international quality.

"You may remember that in previous years we had similar numbers of teams, but many were from the same nations.

"Now we have 16 international teams with no duplicates, and we could probably take about 20."

Lieutenant Colonel Bell said that on the Australian side, he wanted to promote the Australian Army Combat Shooting Team more and lift its profile so that more ADF members wanted to be a part of it and wanted to compete for the privilege.

"We also want to enhance the team-competition aspect more, because I think there's a lot of enjoyment in competition.

"Obviously we still need to do the basic marksmanship matches to validate doctrine, but we can also step it up and make it both challenging and enjoyable.

"I think you can see that already with shoots such as the barrier match where shooters get themselves into very unusual firing positions, and with the moving car that the snipers engaged.

"We want to keep those shoots, improve on them and add more elements that are even better and more challenging."

Lieutenant Colonel Bell said there was another serious side to AASAM – learning.

"Some of the instructors on the ranges actually wrote the pams on shooting, so, when a shooter steps out on a range and the guy who wrote the book on shooting gives him tips and pointers, you know he has to be learning something.

Marco from the French Shooting Team prepares to bayonet a target – on his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.



Gunner Zach Jones, 4 Regt, checks out a Chinese Type-95 assault rifle.



Privates Luke Cornish and Brad Rawnslie, 5RAR, in action during a machine gun shoot.



RANGE SAFETY OFFICER WARRANT OFFICER CLASS TWO GEOFF HARTLAND – ONE OF THOSE WHO 'WROTE THE BOOK ON SHOOTING' – SAID HE AGREED THAT AASAM WAS A TRAINING TOOL MORE THAN JUST A PURE COMPETITION.

Lance Corporals Slavko Jankusik and Rowan Turner, 2RAR, receive range instructions from WO2 Geoff Hartland during the sniper competition.



The Champion Shots Medal was established on 13 September 1988 by Letters Patent and builds on an extended history in other nations of rewarding skill in weaponry. In Australia the three services compete, with no more than one medal for each service awarded in each calendar year.

#### MATCH 104: CHAMPION SHOT OF THE ARMY

Place	Name	Unit	Score
1	WO1 Andrew Munn	CATC	1200.036
2	Pte Aaron Woolston	10/27RSAR	1193.034
3	Cfn Jaden Hopfner	8/7RVR	1159.031
4	Pte Reece Ferguson	1/19RNSWR	1152.035
5	WO2 Peter Richards	6ESR	1143.029
6	Pte Scott McMillan	8/7RVR	1117.029
7	Pte Jarrod Mollison	5/6RVR	1112.017
8	Cpl Trent Cox	6RAR	1077.021
9	Col Geoff Stacey	JHC	1071.030
10	Pte Christopher Payne	2RAR	1068.034

Note 1: top shot in Air Force and Navy wouldn't have made the top 20 in Army

#### MATCH 104: CHAMPION SHOT OF THE AIR FORCE

1	LAC Dean Thurtell	23 Sqn	935.010
2	LAC Nigel Raddie	23 Sqn	894.012
3	Flt Lt Lena Dijs	MPSPPO	890.024
4	LAC Darin Carruthers	23 Sqn	824.010
5	LAC Jake Thompson	23 Sqn	797.009

Note 2: 3rd place is female

#### MATCH 104: CHAMPION SHOT OF THE NAVY

1	AB Christopher Benton	HMAS Darwin	917.009
2	PO Gordon Orr	HMAS Kuttabul	904.023
3	CPO Greg Edwards	CATC	877.008
4	AB Jarrod Chugg	HMAS Darwin	736.010
5	Smn Stuart McBride	AFG	717.005

"I competed at AASAM many times in the past and I think I went back from here a much better shooter.

"If we can send that experience and learning back to units each year, and if units step up their range practices to reflect the experience here at AASAM, then everyone wins."

Snipers were the first to fire and the first to finish a hard-fought competition during AASAM and everyone involved agreed with Lieutenant Colonel Bell's sentiment.

Lance Corporal Karl Daly, 1RAR Sniper Cell, said AASAM for him was more about the training value than the actual competition, because he and his number two, Private Mathew Hawker, didn't actually get to do a lot of shooting as snipers.

"I think we just need practice. These are perishable skills, so we really have to work on them," Lance Corporal Daly said.

"But we don't get much opportunity back in the unit because of budget restrictions on ammo and because there's no military range and only one civvie range we can use for extend-range shooting around Townsville.

"The only other real opportunity we got recently was the SAS sniper concentration last year, which was more about learning what they do – and they do a lot more with moving targets.

"The sniper concentration was really good and I learned a lot over there, especially about shooting.

"And AASAM is another great learning environment."

Range safety officer Warrant Officer Class Two Geoff Hartland – one of those who 'wrote the book on shooting' – said he agreed that AASAM was a training tool more than just a pure competition.

"When you speak to some of the soldiers here, they actually comment on how very hard the ranges are and that they have definitely got learning outcomes from them," WO2 Hartland said.

"I think everyone out here on the sniper ranges today has gone away realising that if some of the technology they've been given was taken away, they have already lost some of their basic skills.

> Continued on page 50





Sergeant Donglin Chen

## ■ AASAM — THE CHINESE WAY

**First-time competitors at the 2013 Australian Army Skill at Arms Meeting were the Chinese – and the sniper pairing of Sergeant Donglin Chen and his number two Captain Yu Zhang were the first from the team to show the world what level of competition they should anticipate.**

Sergeant Brian Hartigan caught up with the pair following the snipers' competition prize-giving ceremony, from which Sergeant Chen and Captain Zhang took a swag of medals, trophies and prizes.

Following is a partial transcript of that conversation, which was dominated by Captain Zhang, keen to display his considerable command of English.

**Sergeant Chen, how old are you and where are you from?**

I am 24 and I am living in Guangdong Province. I have two brothers one sister.

**Are you married?**

Not yet.

**When did you join the army?**

In 2007.

**Did you have access to weapons growing up – to shoot for sport or for food?**

(this question seemed to make no sense until I explained that I was trying to find out why he is such a good sniper) *[interpreter answered – no weapons in the home when growing up. Only his military training is what makes him a good sniper now.]*

**Captain Zhang, what is your family background?**

I am 27 and I have an older brother and a younger brother. I am not married yet too.

**Were you born in a city or in the country?**

We are both born in the country, on a farm.

**Was it a hard life growing up?**

It was very good conditions.

**So, a happy childhood?**

Yes.

**When did you join the Army?**

In 2004.

**Experienced soldier then?**

(dumb-question look – all Chinese servicemen join as privates and can then choose to progress through officer streams) *[interpreter – you can tell by his rank he's a captain].*

**How long have you worked as a team?**

We have been together as a team for about half a year.

**Will you always stay together in the same team?**

We will stay together as a sniper team.

**What makes him a good sniper?**

Faith.

**Faith that you will hit the target or religious faith?**

Faith in our country – we love our country – faith in our party and faith in our military.

So, first thing is faith, then discipline. Because we are military, soldiers, we act as we are told. We follow instructions. Especially for sniper team, we have to maintain persistent discipline – and make sure that we take the target.

Next is teamwork. We rely on each other.

**And fitness as well?** [disbelieving look] Yeah. Fitness is a basic requirement. We do daily work to maintain our fitness. That's a basic.

**On the range, before you pull the trigger, what goes through your mind?**

Actually, you will have not too much time to think a lot. The only thing that matters is the target and you have to get it down. So you get yourself calmed down, just to pull the trigger. Calm thoughts, calm with breathing.

**So you don't worry about technique?**

We trust ourselves, because we have been training for a long time. We are trained by our coaches and also by our teammates and by ourselves. We trust our coaches and we trust our techniques.

**How often do you go on a range to practice?**

*[interpreter – I have read their background, they trained for the AASAM competition for about one month – of course Saturday and Sunday is rest, so from Monday to Friday were their working days]*

**How do you feel to have that many medals, Australian medals, on your chest?**

Well I am happy – honoured. I think we are lucky to be awarded such a star amongst so much brilliant, excellent soldiers. I think I am lucky.

**Did you anticipate that you would perform well here?**

We do have some expectation, confidence, because it's our first time and we are very excited. But the performance was not the best I think, because it was the first time. We actually did better in our earlier shooting. But we are satisfied.

**Do you think you would like to come back and try again?**

Yeah. Absolutely. *[interpreter adds – we come not only for the competition, but for the friendship as well and make our performance better and to show our competence to the rest of the world]*

**Do you learn a lot talking to the other countries?**

Yeah! Americans and French, Australians. We talked a lot, about the tactics, skills. I think I learned a lot.

**What have you learned?**

We learned a lot – techniques, mood control and shooting. We learned a lot. And we have seen a lot of things we haven't seen back in our country. And we see different things, different cultures. All people here is very good.

**Do you find it friendly?**

Yeah of course. I think a very important thing, apart from the contest is that we get to know each other better. If all the countries know each other better, then we reduce the risk of misunderstanding.

**Before you came here, were you nervous about how you would be received?**

No, I was not nervous. I thought I would do good. (goes into long-winded Chinese proverb thingo along the lines "the things you lose and the things you win are not important, but the things you learn are the good things")

**Can you give me a specific example of something you have learnt?**

From two countries I think I have learnt most. One is Indonesia and the other is New Zealand. They are both very competitive – I mean their performance is very competitive – but they both act very calm. They seem like they won't be so competitive, but their performance is very good, but they are calm about it. That's nice. That's cool. And we are going to learn about that.

**When you say calm, do you mean they don't go around telling everyone how good they are?**

Yes. In the shooting area there is no number one. No matter how skilled you are you should always be low key, low profile.

**Is that your philosophy?**

Yeah. That is our Chinese philosophy. We don't like to push out – we like to hold things in heart.

**Which target or which scenario was your favourite in the competition?**

[lot of discussion in Chinese] Two zero three.

**Sorry?**

Match 203 and 202. *[interpreter – he means all the competition was very good. The different scenario is good to adapt ourselves to scenario that is new for us]*

**I mean, what was your favourite shot?**

My favourite shot never exists in the gun – it is in the mind.

He [Sergeant Chen] says his favourite shot was the furthest range of 900m. He never accessed that range in our country, and then he made a very good performance in this competition at the range of 900m.

Mine is the last serial of the match two zero three that we shoot four terrorists in a car and we go boom, boom, boom, boom and we kill them. We thought we might have missed, but we actually killed them all. That's cool.

**Did you get excitement from that?**

Of course. Of course. It was excitement.

**Will you shoot in the rest of the competition?**

Yeah. Pistol match and rifle match, individuals.

**Do you anticipate you will do good there?**

As I always do, I will try to do my best.

**With calm thoughts?**

Yeah.

**Was it a strange sight for you to see kangaroos on a shooting range?**

No. I don't think it's very strange. There is no surprise for trained soldier in combat.

**Good philosophy.**

Thank you.

**OK. That's all. Unless you would like to pass on a message to your comrades, your colleagues, professional soldiers here in Australia?**

There is. There are some words I think I would like to say at this moment.

To the Australian army, to other competitors – that we should never ever meet together in real combat.

In this age, as the world gets smaller, as we get to know each other better, as China is known better by the world and China gets to know the world better – we are different cultures, but we are both good people and there is no harm intention.

I think if these things like AASAM keep on going and we interact with each other more fondly, then maybe we military have no use.

**And maybe one day the Aussies can come shoot in China?**

OK. Welcome. Welcome to China.

Maybe we come here some other days and you are welcome in China.

**Thank you.**

Thank you.



Captain Yu Zhang

### CHINA'S SNIPER RESULTS

Match 200	Sniper Assessment	1st	Sgt DL Chen	314 points
Match 201	Snap	4th	Sgt DL Chen Capt W Zhang	103 points
Match 202	Observation/Cold Shot	9th	Sgt DL Chen Capt W Zhang	60 points
Match 203	Panoramic	6th	Sgt DL Chen Capt W Zhang	125 points
Match 204	Range Estimation	3rd	Sgt DL Chen Capt W Zhang	55 points
Match 207	Advanced App of Fire	3rd	Capt W Zhang	182 points
Match 208	Pistol Advanced Application	4th	Capt W Zhang	150 points
Match 210	Sniper Pairs Championship	2nd	Sgt DL Chen Capt W Zhang	1508 pts



"And, I think our guys in particular really are learning these lessons with a view to applying them in a combat role."

WO2 Hartland said the core skill for any soldier was marksmanship and, while the WTSS [Weapons Training Simulation System] was a great training tool, it would never replace live firing.

"Out here you have real wind that changes and swirls and you have to lie down on grass and rocks.

"Out here you actually get cold and you still have to get down behind a gun and shoot it with freezing-cold hands.

"And out here, the soldier lying behind that gun is actually thinking 'live ammunition' – and you can never ever simulate that."

As countless salvos echoed around the hills of Puckapunyal, the scorecard for lessons learnt was definitely marked high.

Among the 340 competitors on the various ranges, not a bad word was heard about either the running of the various shoots or the banter between teams off the mound.

In fact, veterans and first-timers alike all agreed that AASAM was definitely on their to-do list for the future.

Major Tom McEntyre, New Zealand team captain,

said that aside from the thrill of competition, AASAM was a fantastic opportunity to promote and further marksmanship skills, experience and expertise throughout the New Zealand Army and to develop trainers and coaches, not just the soldiers who were competing.

"The lessons we learn from the people we compete with and shoot beside here – the Australians, the Canadians, the British, the Americans, the Malaysians – the skills, expertise and ideas we pick up from them, we can definitely take home and apply.

"Shooting is a key component of soldiering in any trade and there has actually been a re-emphasis on shooting skills in the New Zealand Army recently and a revamping of the New Zealand Army Combat Shooting Tournament last year – and the learning and experience here will definitely add to that momentum."

Captain Tim Cummings, team captain for the British Army shooting team said AASAM was very well run, admin wise.

"Everyone seems to know what they're doing and it's gone very smoothly. I certainly can't fault the organisation," he said.

## REMEMBERING A MATE

### THE PRIVATE MATTHEW LAMBERT MEMORIAL TROPHY

After Private Matt Lambert was killed in action in Afghanistan on 22 August 2011, his colleagues decided to commemorate their mate by commissioning a sniper trophy in his honour.

As a trophy for snipers, the memorial couldn't be more fitting.

To the uninitiated, it is little more than a statuette of a sniper in battle kit, on task. But, to those who served with Matt, those who were present for his life and his sacrifice, it is a small dedicatory monument to a man who put himself ahead of his brethren, placing himself at far greater risk for his team's protection – and paying the ultimate price.

Making the first-time presentation of this new trophy very special indeed – and very emotional – was the presence at AASAM this year of Private Lambert's father, Chris.

Chris Lambert, who travelled to Puckapunyal from the Gold Coast to present the new trophy, said he was honoured that the trophy had been designed as a tribute to his son.

"I'm a very proud father of a very proud soldier," Mr Lambert said.

"Matt was a remarkable young man and to be remembered this way by his peers and mates and by the broader sniper community is very special to me, and I'm sure it would be to him as well."

Warrant Officer Class Two Clint Vecchio, who won the prestigious award with his sniper number two, Corporal Alex Howard, said it was a privilege to have Mr Lambert there for the presentation.

"Having Chris here to present the trophy was quite emotional for some people," WO2 Vecchio said.

"It was great to finally meet Chris after speaking on the phone a number of times and a real honour to receive the award from him."

A Matthew Lambert Memorial Trophy was first introduced last year but, through the efforts of those closest to the fallen sniper, particularly the 2RAR sniper community, a statue of Private Lambert was produced by Naked Army and incorporated into an all-new trophy.

"The redesigned trophy was modeled off a photograph of Matt in Afghanistan," WO2 Vecchio said.

"The idea came from the 2RAR Sniper Cell and was made possible by significant support from former AASAM CO Lieutenant Colonel Wally Jensen, the RSM-A, the RAR Foundation and by Scott Edwards from Naked Army who made the statue."

RSM-A Warrant Officer Dave Ashley said he felt very strongly about supporting the initiative to have the new trophy made.

"I think it's fantastic that the RAR Foundation was able to help out and develop it into the magnificent trophy it's become," WO Ashley said.

"There could be no more fitting trophy for the snipers' comp than this trophy where today's snipers can reflect on the sacrifice that Matty Lambert made."

After presenting the trophy and addressing the

## SERVICE RIFLE MATCH HIGHLIGHTS

Note 1: ADF 1.5 = the old x1.5 optic sight  
EOS = one of the modern sights

Note 2: AACST = Australian Army Combat Shooting Team

### WO1 Andrew Munn, CATC

1st	Champion Shot of the Army	1200.036
1st	Applied Marksmanship Practice	284
2nd	400m Snap ADF EOS	44.004
2nd	Advanced Application of Fire ADF Masters	170
3rd	400m Deliberate ADF EOS	38.002
1st	LF6 Team (AACST)	1583

### Pte Aaron Woolston, 10/27RSAR

2nd	Champion Shot of the Army	1193.034
1st	LF6 ADF EOS	208
1st	LF6 International	208
1st	400m Snap ADF EOS	47.006
1st	Bayonet Match ADF EOS	45.000
1st	Advanced Application of Fire ADF Masters	175

2nd	400m Snap International	47.006
2nd	Close Quarter Practice ADF EOS	219
3rd	45m Deliberate ADF EOS	45.003
1st	LF6 Team (AACST)	1583

### WO2 Peter Richards, 6ESR

1st	400m Deliberate ADF-EOS	47.003
1st	LF6 ADF 1.5	202
1st	Applied Marksmanship Practice ADF 1.5	281
1st	Barricade Match ADF 1.5	92
1st	Night Combat Pistol ADF Masters	94
2nd	400m Deliberate International	47.003
2nd	Close Quarter Practice ADF Masters	139
3rd	LF6 International	
3rd	Close Quarter Practice ADF 1.5	179
3rd	Advanced Application of Fire ADF Masters	168
5th	Champion Shot of the Army	1143.029
1st	LF6 Team (AACST)	1583

Lance Corporal Karl Daly and Private Mathew Walker, 1RAR, pose with the Matty Lambert Memorial Trophy.



hundreds of gathered shooters – and receiving a very heartfelt standing ovation – Chris Lambert had a chance to catch up with some of his son's mates, and said it was a great way to finish his visit to Puckapunyal.

"Every time I catch up with the boys it's like a little bit of Matt," he said.

"I know that it's difficult for those boys too, and they don't often get the opportunity to express it and talk about it, so when we do catch up, it's always good."

Scott Edwards from Naked Army said that, as a project, the commission to produce the Matt Lambert statuette was similar to previous work his company had completed for ADF units – but with one significant difference; it was the first time he was asked to create a sculpture of an actual soldier who was recently lost in combat.

"We needed to capture Matt Lambert's likeness on ops as best we could, in a way that memorialised him, but also showed his living likeness and physicality," Mr Edwards said.

"It's a great credit to Matt's unit, and to Corporal Adam Kelly in particular, for getting this project up and through to completion.

"The will and dedication of Matt's mates, and the sense of mateship, family and community that we have seen during the project has left a lasting impression on us."

Corporal Adam Kelly, a member of the 2RAR Sniper Cell for eight years, said everyone who came through the unit, especially the group who went on MTF-3, felt like his second family.

"We were and still are a tight unit – they were like my own boys," Corporal Kelly said.

"I'd do anything for any one of them, and I was never going to let one of my boys' sacrifice be forgotten, whether it was through this perpetual trophy or something else."

*The Private Matthew Lambert Memorial Trophy is awarded to the Best Australian Sniper Pair at AASAM – the Australian Army Skill at Arms Meeting – and was won this year by WO2 Clint Vecchio and Corporal Alex Howard from the School of Infantry.*





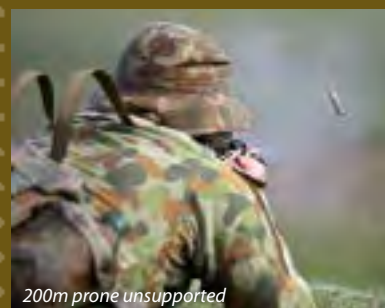
WHAT BINDS EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM TOGETHER, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE COUNTRY THEY COME FROM OR THE SERVICE THEY BELONG TO, IS THE RECOGNITION THAT AS SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN HAVING AN ABILITY TO USE YOUR PERSONAL FIREARM

200m standing unsupported

### MATCH 5: 450M DELIBERATE ADF 1.5

Note – 1st place is a female – and her score was good enough for second place in the ADF EOS division, where most of the infantry are:

1st	Flt Lt Lena Dijs	MPSP0	46.005
2nd	Pte Jason Mezartis	5RAR	45.005
3rd	Pte Michael Sujka	5/6RVR	44.004



200m prone unsupported



A 'rundown' during Match 102  
Champion Shot - ADF

"This is the first time at AASAM for all my lads. In fact it's the first time any of us have done a major shooting competition.

"We are quite inexperienced in terms of competition shooting, but the guys have worked hard and are really enjoying it."

But, at the end of the day, AASAM is about competition and WO1 Andrew Munn was crowned the Australian Army's Champion Shot – for an impressive fifth time.

WO1 Munn, Combined Arms Training Centre, edged out his nearest rival, Private Aaron Woolston, 10<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> Royal South Australia Regiment, and described this year's competition as a tough battle.

Champion Shot of the Army WO1 Andrew Munn



"The shooters are getting better every year, and it's getting more difficult to win," he said.

"Last year I didn't do well and I spoke to the coaches and pretty much started from scratch.

"They worked with me a lot to get me back up to the standard I needed to be at to do well."

It was WO1 Munn's 14<sup>th</sup> AASAM, having first competed in 1992, eventually winning the Champion Shots Medal in 2000.

He said the best thing about AASAM was being among like-minded marksmen.

"The Australian team is a great bunch of blokes from a lot of different units, both regular and reserve.

"We all train together, we learn from each other, and have a good time."

Able Seaman Christopher Benton, West Head Gunnery Range, won for Navy, while Leading Aircraftman Dean Thurtell, 23 Squadron, took out the prize for Air Force.

The separate, but highly competitive, Best International Shot was won by SSgt Armando Mejia from the Philippines.

To the applause of almost 350 fellow competitors, each champion was carried to the awards presentation upon their teammates' shoulders in a ceremonial winner's chair.

Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison awarded the medals and praised the level of professionalism displayed at AASAM.

"What binds everyone in this room together, irrespective of the country they come from or the service they belong to, is the recognition that as service men and women there is nothing more important than having an ability to use your personal firearm," Lieutenant General Morrison said.

"It's what sets us apart as a profession of arms."



The French (FFNC) team and supporters on a forced march during Match 53 - Section Match.

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# Southern Jackaroo



ABOVE: SERGEANT FIRST CLASS CHIAKI TAJIRI, JAPAN SELF DEFENSE FORCE, AT THE PEAK OF ACTION ON THE RANGE AT PUCKAPUNYAL.

BELOW: A JAPANESE SOLDIER IN ACTION ON A SNEEKER RANGE IN THE AUSSIE BUSH, DURING EXERCISE SOUTHERN JACKAROO.

MAIN: AN AMERICAN SOLDIER IN ACTION ON THE SNEEKER RANGE.



PICS SERGEANT BRIAN HARTIGAN

BELOW: AN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER IN ACTION ON AN URBAN ASSAULT RANGE.

BOTTOM: A US SOLDIER IN ACTION ON AN URBAN ASSAULT RANGE, DURING THE TRI-NATIONAL EXERCISE SOUTHERN JACKAROO.

BACKGROUND: A BUCKET-LOAD OF AUSSIE AMMUNITION READY TO FIRE. NOTE: THE US AND JAPAN BROUGHT THEIR OWN, SAME SIZED (5.56MM) BUT SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT AMMUNITION.



**A**ustralia, Japan and the US conducted the first ever ground exercise involving the three nations – Exercise Southern Jackaroo – in Australia from 18 to 26 May 2013.

The exercise was seen as an important step forward in trilateral defence cooperation.

Exercise Southern Jackaroo saw Australian Army, Japan Ground Self Defense Force and US Army personnel participate in skills-based live-fire training and adventurous training, at Puckapunyal and in Melbourne.

During the exercise, 14 personnel from each of the three nations participated in live-firing activities focused on advanced marksmanship skills within simulated urban terrain, as well as abseiling from tall buildings in the Melbourne CBD.

Over the past year, military cooperation between Australia, Japan and the US has strengthened, with the Chief of the Australian Army attending the Senior Level Seminar between the Japan Ground Self Defense Force, US Army Pacific and US Marines Forces Pacific. Earlier in May, Japan and the US participated with 14 other international teams in the Australian Army's Skill at Arms Meeting.

A Defence spokesman said Exercise Southern Jackaroo reflected the shared commitments of the three countries to strengthen defence and security cooperation.

"The three nations share several common security interests, and so practical cooperation through exercises such as Southern Jackaroo is a central part of developing our trilateral defence relationship.

"The importance of this cooperation was amply demonstrated in the multi-nation response to the tsunami that devastated parts of Japan in 2011."



# Apex Combat Technologies

**Apex Combat Technologies is a new, innovative Australian company specialising in military and law enforcement technologies.**

The company brings together decades of advanced weapons engineering experience.

"We ensure a streamlined and customer centric approach from enquiry through to fabrication, delivery and support," says Company Director Nathan Feldman.

"We bring expertise from numerous Australian Defence Force projects ranging from the development of Army sniper suppressors to the fleet wide refit of surface vessel armouries for the Navy."

The company ethos is simple: Build it tough so that it is battle ready.

Their ever-growing military-spec product line up ranges from tactical laser and lighting systems, to suppressors, optical mounts, Picatinny accessory rails, bipods, and flash suppressors, just to name a few. It is round-

ed off by their professional services in small arms design, modification, repair and maintenance programs.

One example in their line up is Gunworx Removable Camouflage Paint, designed in conjunction with Defence to expand a soldier's ability to conceal their weapon or kit. It finally addresses the issue that soldiers are not permitted to alter the surface finish of their weapon, as Gunworx Removable Camouflage Paint is fully removable and compatible with all in service weapon systems. It is water based, fast drying and can be applied in the field. Most importantly, it is easily removed with Gunworx specialised non caustic solvent, which is safe on all ADF weapons.

The product has low reflectivity in both IR and visible spectrums, is non slip, heat and corrosion resistant and comes in an array of Disruptive Pattern Camouflage colours to suit most theatres of engagement.

Designed for Special Forces, Snipers, Forward Observers, Recon and Infantry, Gunworx Removable Camouflage Paint has already been used successfully by Special Forces in Afghanistan, Iraq and East Timor and is endorsed by the ADF.

For more information on any ApexCombatTechnologies' products, contact [info@apexcombattech.com](mailto:info@apexcombattech.com) or visit the company's web site at [apexcombattech.com](http://apexcombattech.com)



Gunworx Removable Camouflage Paint available from Apex Combat Technologies.



Apex Combat Technologies' SR98 suppressor in action with Australian Special Forces.

## BATTLE HONOUR

## EASTERN SHAH WALI KOT

PICS CORPORAL JAKE SIMS

The Battle Honour Eastern Shah Wali Kot has been awarded to the Special Air Service Regiment and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment and formally presented in separate ceremonies on 10 May and 20 June.

This is the first battle honour awarded since Vietnam and was awarded for outstanding performance during an offensive that took place half way between Tain Kot and Kandahar, Afghanistan, during May/June 2010.

Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison said the battle honour was recognition of the exemplary work of both units.

"A battle honour is the public recognition and commemoration of an outstanding achievement on the battlefield by a unit or formation," Lieutenant General Morrison said.

"It is a resounding endorsement of not only the professional excellence of our special forces, but also of the supporting elements of Special Operations Task Group Rotation XII – the engineers, signallers, logisticians and headquarters staff.

"It is important to emphasise that while this award recognises the exemplary courage and professionalism of a particular group of soldiers in the most extreme circumstances, it also pays an enduring tribute to the entire Australian

Defence Force commitment to this long and complex conflict.

"Australian soldiers, sailors and air force members who have served in Afghanistan have upheld the reputation of the ADF.

"More importantly, they have given some of the best years of their young lives to improving the lot of some of the poorest, most disadvantaged people on earth."

Special Operations Commander Major General Gus Gilmore said the battle honour was well-deserved recognition of the skills, teamwork and professionalism of our special forces in Afghanistan.

"The Shah Wali Kot Offensive achieved a very significant outcome for the coalition's Afghanistan campaign and it was only achieved through the superior leadership and skills of Australia's special forces," Major General Gilmore said.

"This battle honour recognises the courage, dedication and professionalism displayed at all levels by those 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment and Special Air Service Regiment soldiers involved in the Shah Wali Kot Offensive."

Commander 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment Lieutenant Colonel B said the Shah Wali Kot Offensive was a significant action in the history of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment and everybody was enormously proud to receive the battle honour," he said.

"Commandos have a long and rich military history in Australia and those within the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment are conscious about serving the Australian people and contributing to that history."

Lieutenant General Morrison said the Shah Wali Kot Offensive was a job well done and the outcome decisive.

"Apart from a large number of insurgent casualties inflicted, a significant quantity of insurgent weaponry was captured.

"Also, a major insurgent supply line from Pakistan into Kandahar was and remains disrupted and the insurgency in the region was rendered ineffective for the 2010 fighting season.

"These outcomes allowed ISAF to progress security and stability operations in and around Kandahar City.

"This wider security operation was the main effort in Regional Command South during the 2010 fighting season and Australia's special-forces' contribution was highly regarded."

Members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment marked the battle-honour presentation with a parade featuring mission-ready soldiers dressed in MultiCam uniforms and carrying weapons.

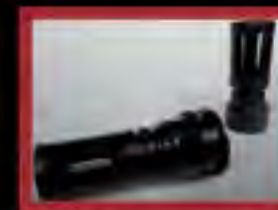
The parade, scheduled to coincide with the regiment's fourth birthday, was well received by the families and friends in attendance.



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# A walk in the shadows of history

WORDS CAPTAIN SCOTT KLIMA PICS SUPPLIED

During the initial stages of the 2013 Operation Paladin deployment to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Israel, the idea to have a small contingent of officers go to Turkey and attend the Anzac Day services on the Gallipoli peninsula was formed.

Captain Chris Iodice took the planning lead and made contact through appropriate channels, getting our party onto the official guest register, which would allow us to attend the service in uniform.

Five of us were fortunate enough to travel to Turkey to see for ourselves the battlefields where our military heritage and the birthplace of our national identity 98 years ago.

We met at Istanbul on 23 April, some coming at the end of a period of leave while others came straight from their observation post on the Golan Heights, and had our first experiences of Turkish hospitality.

Now all together, we departed at 0900 the next day to drive four hours south to Canakkale. The drive was a mix of contrasts, from the city of Istanbul where the traffic chaos exceeded our expectations, to the countryside with its beautiful rolling farmland reminiscent of the Hunter Valley or Shepparton districts in Australia. The big difference however was the view to the east, which took in the Sea of Marmara, the vast body of water that is fed by the Dardanelles and is the lifeblood of the Black Sea. The volume of shipping travelling through the sea was staggering, more reminiscent of a two-lane highway than a shipping lane.

Just after lunch we arrived at the little township of Kilitbahir where we were to take a car ferry across to the historic Canakkale. The area is significant to both the decision to proceed with the landings of 25 April 1915 and to the Turkish people in their quest for independence during the twilight of the Ottoman Empire. Sailing the straights it is difficult to comprehend the decision by the British and French navies to force the Dardanelles with a naval force alone. Measuring just some 1500m across with shallows throughout the area, the Allied naval vessels were bottlenecked in an excellent killing ground and suffered accordingly, marking 18 March 1915 as a day to remember for the Turkish people.

For us, we sailed across peacefully and arrived at our hotel with a couple of hours to spare before we were to meet the military band, a mixture of Australian and New Zealand Navy personnel, who were to be our transport across to Anzac Cove.

Showered, shaved and dressed for a long night at the memorial site, we boarded the buses with the band. We then re-boarded the car ferry, disembarking this time a little further north at a town called Maydos and commenced our drive over the ridge that bisects the peninsula and towards our brush with history.

Security was evident everywhere with the roads leading to the site closed for the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> and a heavy overt presence of Turkish Gendarmerie.

Arriving at the site itself was surreal. As we approached the entrance to the commemorative area we encountered a very long line of those who were coming to attend the service with local tour groups, as members of Australia-based Gallipoli tours or on individual pilgrimages. However, as part of the official party, we drove through security, escorted the whole way by Turkish police, and dismounted just west of the original landing site.

As we stood taking in the area, the ground and

the atmosphere, we were fortunate to bump into Brigadier Don Roach, the ADF representative who would be advising on the official 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations. Brigadier Roach showed us through the site and through the western security entrance to where we would sleep for the night. The walk took around 10 minutes and, thinking back on it, the realisation of just how small the area was and how many men on both sides lived here for nine months, is staggering.

Overwatching everything we did from the time we passed through the eastern security gate to the time we would leave the cove the next afternoon was that most famous of features – the Sphinx. It towered over the entire area like a beacon, and gazing up at this iconic feature brought home the reality of where we were.

The organisation of the site today was outstanding. For an area with no electricity, plumbing or running water, we wanted for nothing. Lighting, hot food, entertainment – it was all there. The official program ran non-stop overnight from 2000hr until the dawn service at 0530, and showcased the history of the campaign, the area and the organisations that have supported the preservation of both the site and the history that is embodied within the ground on which we now stood.

THE WALK TOOK AROUND 10 MINUTES AND, THINKING BACK ON IT, THE REALISATION OF JUST HOW SMALL THE AREA WAS AND HOW MANY MEN ON BOTH SIDES LIVED HERE FOR NINE MONTHS, IS STAGGERING.





The dawn service started with the screening of the short film 'The Telegram Man'. It is hard to think of any movie or story that has touched me personally more deeply than that film, showing the sacrifice, dedication and community spirit that gave Australia the chance to become the nation it is today.

Followed by complete silence with all lighting extinguished you could not help but be transported back 98 years with nothing but the lapping of waves on the shore to fill the void of the quiet darkness.

A Maori ritual broke the silence.

We sat off to a flank and got to see almost the entire congregation assembled there, a sea of beanie-clad 'supporters', their sleeping bags at their feet, having held their ground overnight.

The dawn service was exactly right.

At its completion we took the opportunity to take photos of each other in uniform at the cove – getting our first taste of what was to come later in the morning.

We asked some of the Turkish soldiers to stand beside us at the memorial for a photo. Their openness and pleasure at taking part was an extension of the hospitality we had enjoyed since we had arrived two days earlier and displayed for all to see as we stood together for at least 10 minutes while members of the public swarmed to take a photo for themselves; a memento showing Australian and Turkish soldiers standing side by side in memory of each nation's deeds so many years ago.

We offered our thanks and said our farewells to the Turks and commenced our walk to Lone Pine, the site of the Australian service at 1000 (a New Zealand service would be held at Chunik Bair at 1130).

The walk was again a mix of surreal wonder and professional appraisal.

Still in Service Dress, we initially walked east along



the coast, passing the initial landing site where the first elements of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade came ashore at 0430, looking up at Plugge's Plateau and Shrapnel Gully and then up the track to the ridge above. We stopped part way, at Shell Green cemetery, the site of the famous cricket photo, where we met a couple of diggers on leave from Afghanistan and a Vietnam veteran who had fought at Fire Support Base Coral nearly 45 years ago.

On we trekked, traversing Bolton's Ridge to the Pimple and on to Lone Pine.

Again, the size of the area is surprising. It is so incredibly small, hardly any bigger than a soccer pitch – and completely flat. The trenches are gone, but their positions are known and you can stand at the forward edge of either the Turkish or Australian positions and try to understand just what these guys did on this spot in August 1915.

Led by an Australian MC, the service once again was a mix of education and commemoration under the watchful eye of the lone pine tree that was planted at the site in 1923.

Throughout the service, the Navy Band had been supported by members of the boys and girls choir from Gregory Terrace in Brisbane, some displaying their links to family members who had served, including some who had actually been here in 1915.

We laid our wreath and talked with the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, before performing what would be the second most satisfying part of our trip to the cove.

After having a group photo under the 'Lone Pine' tree, we were approached by a small group of youngsters who asked if they could have their photo taken with us too.

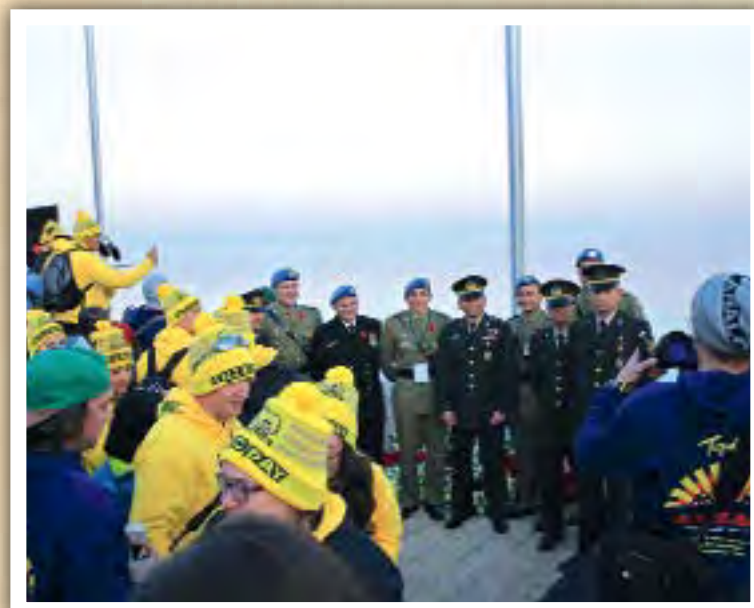
"Of course," we replied – and did not move from that spot for more than two hours as one group was replaced by another asking to have their photo taken at Gallipoli with Australian soldiers.

During the service, the MC had asked current and former-serving members of the ADF to stand. Once we were on our feet he proceeded to ask the remainder of those assembled to show their appreciation for our service.

The humbling nature of our visit and our profession was vividly brought home by the crowds who gathered to take a photo and say thanks.

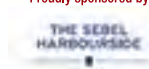
It was one of the most satisfying moments of my career.

THE HUMBLING NATURE OF OUR VISIT AND OUR PROFESSION WAS VIVIDLY BROUGHT HOME BY THE CROWDS WHO GATHERED TO TAKE A PHOTO AND SAY THANKS. IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST SATISFYING MOMENTS OF MY CAREER.



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## Aaron Woolston ▼

Private Aaron Woolston from Meningie, South Australia, likes nothing better than to roam the paddocks of his parents' property hunting rabbits – but shooting of a different kind put him in the spotlight recently.

Well known as a crack shot with 10<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> Royal South Australia Regiment, Private Woolston came second in the Champion Shot of the Army during the Australian Army Skill at Arms Meeting at Puckapunyal in May.

Private Woolston put his skills with a weapon down to being a country lad who grew up on the land shooting from an early age, but didn't really take his talents seriously until this year.

"I was picked for the Army Combat Shooting Team a couple of years ago, but it was just more shooting for me at first," he said.

"I came second last year too, but it wasn't until this year that it kind of switched on in my head that I might be able to take out the Champion Shot.

"So I took it a bit more seriously this year, going to bed early and keeping my head clear for each shoot. I also kept quiet on the range and didn't get in to trying to psych the competition out or anything. That's not my style.

"I just stayed calm and focused on my own shooting."

The Champion Shot of the Army is decided over several days and over several different matches.

Going in to the last shoot, Private Woolston was five points ahead of his nearest rival and posted a personal best, 40 points better than last year, in blustery conditions.

However, eventual winner, Warrant Officer Class One Andrew Munn also posted a personal best and pipped Private Woolston by just seven points, with a total score of 1200 with 36 bulls-eyes, against Woolston's 1193 and 34.



## Craig Toikka ▲

Gunner Craig Toikka, currently based in Townsville, is a New South Wales boy through and through, but found himself competing in a multinational shooting competition in Victoria in May.

Gunner Toikka, an artilleryman with the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, said he had always wanted to join the Army.

"My grandfather served in WWII as an aircraft mechanic in the British Army and he had some good stories, so I guess that's what made me want to join," Craig said.

"Unfortunately he passed away when I was about two weeks into basic training at Kapooka, but I know he was very happy that I joined because he was asking how I was doing in training just before he passed away."

Craig was at Puckapunyal in May competing in the Australia Army Skill at Arms Meeting.

"I'm not unfamiliar with Pucka. I shot at this range once before when I was here for training as an artilleryman. But, of course, shooting rifles isn't what we in artillery usually do, so this has been a huge learning experience.

"This is our first time competing here and it's been a really good experience talking to all the different countries, seeing the kit they use, comparing weapon weights and checking out their sights and so on.

"We've been using Google to translate a lot so we can have conversations with them and I'm noticing that across all ranks, soldiers are all the same. The same jokes that make us laugh are just as funny to them."

After AASAM, Craig was expecting to be back in Puckapunyal on a detachment commander's course, which is lead-up training to being number one on the gun – in other words, in control of his own gun.



## Joanna Bonner ▲

A former Tasmanian schoolteacher who now works as a training systems officer at RAAF Base Edinburgh found herself competing in one of the biggest military shooting competitions in the world in May.

Pilot Officer Joanna Bonner, whose parents still live in Launceston, was competing as an individual at the Australian Army Skill at Arms Meeting (AASAM) in Puckapunyal, Victoria, from 1 to 18 May.

With her weapon laid down between matches on the range, Joanna had time to remember her parents in the lead-up to Mother's Day.

"My parents live on a small acreage with chickens, a huge veggie patch and an orchard," Joanna said.

"Mum is retired and plays bridge every chance she gets and spends a lot of time in the garden, while Dad works in a cheese factory making feta. So, in fact, if you eat feta, you're probably eating my dad's cheese.

"Launceston is stunning. I love Tasmania. I really miss it."

Speaking of her childhood, Joanna said she moved around a lot and, as such, the RAAF was a perfect fit for her.

"Dad used to see opportunities for living in different countries overseas and mum was a traveler too, from way back, so they used to move us around a lot.

"I was a school teacher for 11 years, in Launceston and WA and England, so I guess I'm a bit of a nomad too.

"About three years ago I decided I needed another change of scenery and a bit more of a challenge.

"I chose to join the RAAF over the other two services because I look horrible in white and I didn't know the RAAF wore green – but look at me now."

Pilot Officer Bonner said this was her first year at AASAM and it was harder than anticipated, but was really enjoyable.

"There are six women here and we have certainly sat down and had a chat about being females in a very male-dominated activity.

"I have talked to the American lady in particular, specifically about strength and fitness and what she did to prepare for this.

"For me, the toughest physical challenge here at AASAM has been wearing the combat body armour.

"Before joining the Air Force I did a lot of bush walking and I was with the SES and we would carry 30kg walking through the bush when we were searching for someone.

"But we weren't trying to run and shoot at the same time and keep accuracy with a weapon and so on.

"There are definitely lessons to be taken away from AASAM. And not only about shooting, but about the different cultures and how they run their military and what their work conditions are like.

"The big thing I learnt is that we are all facing the same issues, all facing budget constraints and the usual office-politics issues.

"I'm certainly keen to come back next year"

After initial training in the RAAF, Pilot Officer Bonner's first posting was to RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia and likes that a lot too.

"I always wanted to go to Edinburgh for my first posting, because I did one of my university degrees there.

"I'm working with a great team of people – good mentors and a great bunch of executives. It's a very positive place for a junior officer to start.

"But, at the moment I would definitely say home is in Launceston. That's where my parents live, that's where I've got a house.

"I don't know if that's where I'll be when I eventually leave the RAAF, because I might find another place on the map I want to stick a pin in.

"Once a nomad always a nomad, I suppose, so having itchy feet every three years is ideal for life in the RAAF and their posting cycles."



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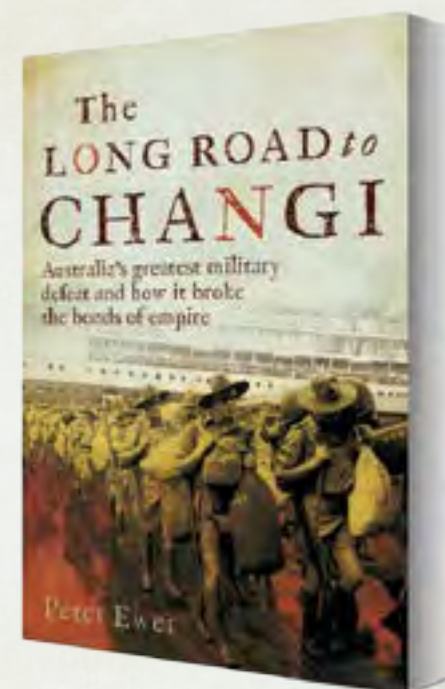
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## In Conclusion

As highlighted by conservation economist Michael 't Sas-Rolfes in 1993, the People's Republic of China gave in to political pressure from the USA and banned the use of rhino and tiger products in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). They were removed from official use, but, in 2007, China held a workshop to discuss the re-opening of domestic legal trade in tiger products, supplied from captive breeding facilities, to meet medicinal demand for tiger bone.

China is now an international super-power and unlikely to bow to international demand to cease using traditional medicine containing endangered animals. Indeed, at a 2011 CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species) meeting, China refused to discuss the issue of how to reduce demand for rhino horn.

Delegates from Vietnam and China agree that farming animals endangered in the wild for their body parts is a far more logical approach than the continued trend of killing them outright. But the average person on the street often struggles with this concept when we think of certain animals. If one was to walk through a Vietnamese market and see a chicken in a tiny cage or hundreds of fish in a tank waiting to be taken home for dinner, they would most likely not give a second thought. But a few miles down the road there is a bear in a cage being milked for its bile and we become emotional.

Why is that? Why do most of us subconsciously put a scaled value on animal life and wellbeing? Is it based on size, remaining population or the 'sexy' factor? How would it be received if one put a hook through a rhino's mouth, dragged it behind a truck for 200m, picked it up and then threw it in a tank of water to drown? What's the difference between this and fishing? The difference is, we are used to fishing.

Could the average person stand seeing a rhino in a small enclosure being kept alive for the harvest of its horn? Or, is this a better option than the extinction of a species because we couldn't stand to see it caged?

While I struggle seeing animals in cages, I would struggle more knowing they were extinct in the wild. If some rhinos must spend their lives in relative confinement so others can be free to survive in the wild, then the logic in me says this is better than total extinction.

The argument on farming tigers is a fierce one, but there are stark

differences, most notably in that the sought-after rhino horn can be harvested from live animals, whereas the tiger is killed for its various parts.

China makes up 20% of the world's population. Vietnam has almost 90 million citizens. Can the small army of conservationists fighting for the survival of the rhino stand up forever against this overwhelming and growing mass of rhino-horn consumers? Or must we do what hurts us emotionally, but defines us logically – save a species at any cost?

If some Asian's can express little compassion for captive animals in their own countries, why should they care about a rhino half a planet away? At the end of my travels I realise that it is not the Asians directly killing the rhino. They are happy to take the horn from animals dead or alive, wild or domestic. The rhino is being killed by people who sit behind desks on the other side of the world and decide that wildlife managers in Africa cannot use their own natural resources sustainably. They are fuelled by Facebook petitions signed by people who have never seen a rhino.

The fact we are in this situation is absurd. A 35-year-old policy to prevent the use of a sustainable resource that increases demand and thus the price more and more every year. And, while the price goes up, the resources to defend these animals becomes increasingly limited.

Anti-poaching units can cost hundreds-of-thousands of dollars a year. Where is this money supposed to come from? Without sufficient protection, a landowner holding 10 rhino may lose two or three a year to poachers. Yet, if he could legally harvest just one horn each year, at current market value he could invest in anti-poaching efforts to protect the rest of 'his' rhino. If he could harvest three horns annually, he could buy more land and breed more rhino.

Africa's culture of hunting allows foreign tourists to come to the continent and hunt the rhino, the head – horn and all – taken home and mounted on a wall over a fireplace. This is currently acceptable behaviour, mostly sustainable, and laws protect it. And yet so many people jump up and

down at the thought of sustainably taking the horn off a living animal to be used in another culture's medicine.

While the 'new' upsurge in Asian demand may be just a wave, do we have time to try and re-educate the masses or wait for the wave to pass?

Did western education stop the flow of cocaine into the USA, arms into Africa or change Middle-Eastern attitudes towards women's rights? Can we really change Eastern beliefs and culture? Are we really on enough of a pedestal to do so, or are we just being arrogant? To an Asian it is we Westerners who are killing the rhino by our failure to create a system to give them the horn they 'need' without killing the animal – especially when we actually could.

We talk about true conservation, but let's not forget what defines this – the preservation of a naturally functioning eco-system. But, I don't remember ever seeing one of those, to be honest – an area that is not either burnt, recovering from war, population controlled, re-forested, visited by tourists, researched, driven through, fenced or poached. Man is naturally a part of all eco-systems and the world is now a smaller place. What man does on the other side of the planet can easily impact what happens in Africa's back yard. Man-made problems need man-made solutions.

But what are the solutions to the rhino-horn trade, and will we find them in time? Really, it's a case of damned if you do, and damned if you don't.

It's a sad but true point in history whereby the rhino must justify its existence, and by this I mean providing a horn for harvest.

I think, deep down, CITES officials understand that at some stage they will have to legalise to some extent. Whether this begins with a release of horns taken from natural deaths or not, only they know.

Their concerns about corruption in Africa are well founded, but really, that's like going to the beach and becoming frustrated by the sand.

For those who are completely against legalising the trade to any extent, I ask you this – show me where the money to protect these animals in the wild is, and I'm back on your side.

Until decisions are delivered from the CITES summit, the best option we know of for the rhino, is well-trained, well-equipped units on the ground, backed up by good intelligence – but that needs money.

Because of the current commercial value of rhino horn, I see the rhino as the hardest animal to protect in Africa. But, if we can succeed in protecting these magnificent animals, then we know that everything else in the surrounding ecosystem is far safer from the poachers.

Upon returning from Vietnam I was fortunate enough to spend a few days with Dr Ian Player – the man who led efforts to save the southern white rhino from extinction. Listening to his stories of struggle and success, I see one thing is true – conservation is, and must be, a life-long commitment. After six decades of hard work from Dr Player and his friends, I pray that the lessons they have given us are enough to carry on their work, one way or another.



**I see one thing is true – conservation is, and must be, a life-long commitment**



# The Artillery

The percussion of exploding shells rocked their senses. The screech of artillery fired from the field guns of both sides was deafening – but communications had to be maintained.

Cecil Francis Edwards was barely 19 when Great Britain declared war on Germany. Cec was among the first to join the long queues of young Australian men eager to volunteer to serve their king and country. Like most of his generation, the lad didn't much fancy walking – only swagmen traveled long distances on foot – so he had no desire to become an infantry 'foot-slogger'.<sup>1</sup>

He was rather impressed by the style and look of the uniforms worn by the lighthorsemen and artillerymen, with their leather boots and leggings, tailored jodhpurs, spurs and bandoleers. However, it was the prospect of working with both horses and the big guns that swayed him to choose artillery.

He was assigned to No 2 Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Field Artillery Brigade, as a gunner (a member of a detachment that loads and fires artillery guns).<sup>2</sup> The battery was a mix of raw recruits and trained militia soldiers. It was equipped with the quick-firing 18-pounder field guns that could hurl a high explosive shell or shrapnel-filled projectile nearly 6km. To the gunners, the 18-pounder was the perfect 'killing machine' and they developed a love for, and devotion to their guns that no outsider could ever understand.

'Into action, out of action; load, unload; action left; action right; mount; dismount!' While at times it seemed as though their training would never end, the enthusiastic new recruits accepted the long hours of instruction and discipline without complaint, acutely aware that the German gunners would be equally well drilled and share the same determination to survive.

Time passed quickly and, within a few weeks, the first contingent of soldiers of the fledgling AIF was embarking on ships for what most believed would be the opportunity of a lifetime. Cec waved enthusiastically to the crowds of families and friends standing shoulder to shoulder on the docks as they bid farewell to departing loved ones. As the troopship passed through the heads, he took a long, last look at the city he called home, eyes fixed on the familiar Sydney skyline until it was out of sight. He wiped a tear from his eye as he pondered whether he would survive this war to see his beloved home and family again.

Life on board ship was no holiday. There was plenty of work to be done. Horses needed to be fed, watered and groomed, stables kept clean and guns maintained – and there was more training. Of relative importance was the need for cross-training. Young Edwards laughed as he looked at the telephone handset.

'Why do I need to know how to use this, Sarge? I'm a gun number.'

'So that when some Hun blows your mate's head off, you

can take over his job, you dumb ass,' the sergeant replied sarcastically.

Cec soon appreciated the value of the additional training and listened intently, keen to learn these new skills. His hard work and enthusiasm led to his becoming a very competent signaller.

As time passed and the ship steamed closer to its destination, the men's eagerness to enter the war against the Germans increased to almost fever pitch. But it seemed the Hun was not to be their first opponent. Turkey had entered the war as an ally of Germany and the Diggers were now bound for training grounds in north Africa, not England as many had thought.<sup>2</sup>

By the time the ships began their transit of the 160-km-long Suez Canal, the convoy had been at sea for six weeks, and there was much excitement as the men caught their first glimpse of mystical Egypt. For several days and nights, as they moved slowly through the canal, an exchange of shouting and cheering between the Australians on board the ships and the Indian troops camped on the banks filled the air. Until now, the Indians and their English officers had not been aware the Australian force was on its way.

In early December 1914, the brigade disembarked at Alexandria, a Mediterranean seaport, north-west of Cairo. From here they were transported by train to Mena Camp, a vast 'city' of tents in the shadow of the great pyramids.<sup>2</sup>

At Mena, in the dry desert conditions, the gunners trained long and hard with a grim determination to ready themselves for the battles they had yet to face. However, during off-duty hours they crowded onto trams – often sitting on the roof or standing on the footboard – and headed for the bars and 'entertainment' spots in nearby Cairo.

By early April 1915, Cec and his mates were hardened, confident and eager to tackle the enemy. They did not have long to wait.

From the deck of yet another troopship, Cec watched the ferocious battle being waged on the shore. He turned to his troop commander and asked, 'What do they call this place again, Skipper?'

'Gallipoli,' the officer replied.

Mesmerised by the unfolding war, the gunners were unaware of the problems the ANZAC artillerymen faced following the landing in the early hours of 25 April 1915. The force had been sent ashore at the wrong place. Instead of the flat beach they had expected, they faced sand dunes and rugged cliffs. The beachhead lacked the vital areas of flat ground needed to allow the field gun batteries to deploy. The 18-pounders' lack of the necessary trajectory to allow for the hilly terrain of the Gallipoli Peninsula meant the gunners

# Signaller

were without the ability to accurately engage the enemy entrenched on the hillsides above.

With hearts thumping and pulses racing, the artillerymen on the ships didn't care about such trivial matters; they just wanted to get ashore and take part in the fighting, to finally face the reality of war – and the horrors of hell on earth.

But, they would have to wait a little longer. There was no room for all the guns to be unloaded at ANZAC Cove and, as the 18-pounders were found to be totally unsuited to the terrain, the field artillery brigades, including Cec's battery, were forced to remain aboard their ship. In early May, the brigade was deployed to support the British at Cape Helles<sup>3</sup> where the terrain was deemed to be more suitable for the 18-pounders – but the area was covered by Turkish guns.

During the campaign that followed, the gunners played a game of cat and mouse with their Turkish artillery counterparts. The Turks were familiar with the terrain and had little difficulty pinpointing the Australian gun positions for quick and accurate engagements. Cec and his mates in the batteries were forced to become masters of camouflage and deception.

Guns were hauled up near-vertical cliffs using ropes, brute strength and pure 'guts'. The Diggers concealed their large weapons using local foliage and hessian.<sup>3</sup> They deployed in absolute silence, then opened fire with a devastating barrage, quickly moving to another position before the Turkish artillery could respond.

Sometimes they succeeded and other times they were caught by the bigger calibre and better positioning of the enemy guns. At times the Diggers would be forced to 'duel' with an enemy battery's guns. The noise of the exploding shells from both sides was deafening.

The Diggers felt safe behind their dugouts, but would scurry for cover when the Turkish shrapnel shells burst overhead. Not all made it to safety and the list of casualties among the gunners grew as more and more made the supreme sacrifice. These men were buried on the peninsula, never to return to their homeland and families.

In early October, the brigade was redeployed to ANZAC. By now, the gunners had been at Gallipoli for several months and, like so many of the Allied troops, Cec became ill and required hospital treatment on Lemnos Island, but recovered to return to the fighting a short time later.<sup>1</sup>

Following the landing in April, the Allies fought heroically, but failed in their objective to gain control of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The casualty toll continued to climb – the ANZACs alone lost some 10,000 men. The approaching winter would make conditions even harsher for the men, and the storms and rough seas at that time of year would disrupt the landing of necessary supplies. The greatest fear of the Allied generals was that a withdrawal could cost half the total force. But, after several weeks of hesitation, the British Government finally decided to evacuate.<sup>3</sup>

Cec and his fellow Diggers were upset at the thought of quitting ANZAC – they had expected to stay until they had conquered the Turks.

It was planned that the evacuation should be carried out under a guise of normality. Silence, movement under the cover of darkness, and the use of any innovative ruse to deceive the enemy remained the order of the day.

As Edwards strained to manhandle the gun onto the barge in the darkness, the grind of the wheel against the pebbles of the beach sounded loud enough to attract every Turk with a rifle – but not a shot was heard.



Australian gunners in action with an 18-pounder at Gallipoli, 1915

From the barge being towed out to sea, Cec looked back to the place they first had sighted so many months ago. His eyes filled with tears as he thought of the scores of dead mates left behind. Many of the Diggers, like Cec, felt they were deserting their fallen mates and one was heard to say 'I hope they can't hear us leaving'.

Back in Egypt, the surviving ANZACs were given the chance to rest, re-equip and retrain. During this time of respite from the war, Cec welcomed the opportunity to catch up with his two brothers Les and Lionel, who had both seen action at Gallipoli with the infantry and survived physically unscathed.

The war raging in Europe became the focus of daily life. For the gunners, training consumed most of their waking hours, as they were desperate to reinforce and refresh many of the lessons they had forgotten while serving on the peninsula.

This was also a time of great change. Following the success of the recruiting drives during the Gallipoli Campaign, there was a need to expand the AIF, to reorganise and split the divisions to make room for the reinforcements. Many of the veterans of ANZAC were required to transfer to the new divisions to provide a nucleus of experienced men to train the new recruits. Many did not want to see their units divided, or be separated from their mates. Others saw it as an opportunity for promotion or to change to another corps. Edwards was one of those who transferred to the new 4<sup>th</sup> Division Artillery.

On their arrival in France, the artillerymen found this to be a 'gunners' war'. Great lines of guns would hammer at each other, hour after hour and day after day. The men of the ammunition columns were forced to run this gauntlet of counter-battery fire to keep the guns supplied.

Young Cec, now promoted to bombardier, was serving as a forward observation party signaller. His new position required him to man his phone line, ready to pass vital information to the gun position officer, who would use it to bring devastating fire upon the enemy.

All too often, Cec and the infantry unit his detachment was supporting would find themselves on the receiving end of the German artillery fusillade. It was not unusual, during an enemy counter-barrage, for young Edwards to have to leave the safety of his shell hole and crawl over the broken and muddy terrain to repair the shredded ends of the telephone cable severed in the bombardment.



In late 1916, Cec was moved back to Brigade Headquarters for a 'rest'. He was to help man the forward artillery exchange in 'York Trench'. On 20 December, soon after his arrival at the exchange, he sat in the dugout of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division Artillery command post chatting with his mates about the approaching Christmas and what preparations for the festivities would be taking place at home.

Suddenly there was pandemonium. The dugout was rocked by one explosion after another. The switchboard was inundated with calls for close-in artillery support. The duty officer stuck his head outside to evaluate the scene as an incoming round exploded, killing him and collapsing the front of the dugout.

Another round hit the roof, smashing the hardwood beams into splinters. A large sliver of timber struck the signaller sitting next to Edwards, killing him instantly.

The next round blew Edwards across the dugout floor, slamming him into the wall. His eyes filled with mud, Cec groped around for his helmet and jammed it back onto his head. As rounds continued to explode around the dugout, he crawled across the floor to his seat. Wiping the mud from his eyes with his sleeve, he picked up the telephone handset and placed it to his ear, but the line was dead. Looking around he saw the ends of the wire hanging from the shattered ceiling and swaying in the breeze.

Grabbing a set of pliers, Cec stood up, only to be blown across the dugout again – losing the pliers as he fell. Regaining his senses, he tried to reach the tattered cable. Yet another explosion sent him sprawling.

He lurched forward again, this time successfully grabbing

the end of the cable before he hit the ground. Stripping off the protective covering with his teeth, he spliced the ends together. He crawled back to where he'd left the handset. It was dead – there had to be a break beyond the dugout as well.

Crawling through a hole in the partially collapsed roof, he made his way outside. Shells continued to explode around him and he felt the heat from the red-hot splinters whistling overhead. He quickly located and repaired the severed ends then clawed his way back into the relative safety of the dugout.

As he picked up the handset, he heard a voice at the other end screaming into the telephone. On answering, Edwards heard a loud and curt, 'It's about bloody time!' followed by a series of co-ordinates which Cec relayed to the battery command posts. The cable was severed again and again, but each time Edwards successfully conducted repairs and kept open the line of communication to the guns.

When the enemy shelling subsided, a party made its way to the caved-in shelter.

'Is anyone in there?' the officer yelled.

'Yeah, me, Edwards', came a muffled reply. As they forced an entry through the shattered timber beams that had once been the roof of the dugout, they found Cec still clutching his handset.

'Crikey mate, how did you survive this?' the officer asked.

'Just lucky I guess', replied Edwards.

On 14 May 1917, Cec Edwards paraded before the corps commander. He smiled as two medals were pinned on his chest – the Military Medal for bravery in the field and the

coveted Italian Bronze Cross for conspicuous service at 'York Trench' – awarded for his courage under fire and his determination to support his mates regardless of the threat to his own safety.<sup>4</sup>

Young Edwards continued to fight on the battlefields of France and Belgium, at Fleurbaix, Ypres, Bullecourt, Messines, Ploegsteert and Hamel – places that would be etched forever in his mind as scenes of some of the bloodiest fighting on the Western Front.

The Edwards family had paid a high price for their part in the Empire's fight for freedom. Cec's brother Les was severely wounded at Pozieres, resulting in the loss of his left hand. His other brother Lionel, wounded and gassed, was repatriated to Australia where he was discharged as medically unfit.<sup>5</sup>

In September 1918, Cec was ordered to report to the command post. He was informed that, because he was a 1914 veteran, he was being sent home on furlough.

As the ship made its way across the Mediterranean, Edwards became ill and was forced to disembark at Suez for a brief period in hospital.

On Boxing Day 1918, Cec thrilled to the sight of Sydney Harbour and the skyline of his home town, which, in his darkest hours, he was sure he would never see again.<sup>5</sup>

For the battle-weary young Digger, it was a time of mixed emotions. The crowds waving and cheering from the docks filled his heart with pride, but there was also a feeling of great sadness and loss for the mates he had left behind.

Walking down the gangway of the ship, he saw his two brothers waiting on the wharf to meet him. They slapped one another on the back, happy to be reunited and relieved

that all three had made it home. As they headed away from the dock, Cec noted Les's empty sleeve and the gasping, wheezing cough that troubled Lionel, and he thought to himself, 'Yeah, we've served our country well'.

<sup>1</sup> National Archives of Australia: B2455, WW1 Service Records, 267 Bombardier C F Edwards

<sup>2</sup> Bean, C E W, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume I, the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1936

<sup>3</sup> Bean, C E W, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume II, the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1936

<sup>4</sup> AWM 28, Recommendation Files for Honours and Awards, AIF, 1914-1918 War

<sup>5</sup> The All Australian Memorial, A Historical Record of national effort during the Great War, Australian Publishing Service, Melbourne, date unknown.

This is the 39th and last chapter extracted from *Just Soldiers* by Warrant Officer Class One Darryl Kelly. We take this opportunity to thank WO1 Kelly most sincerely for his input to and support of *CONTACT Air Land & Sea* over the past 10 years. We are also very pleased to say that this will not be the last we hear from now Major Kelly, with new, as-yet-unpublished stories lined up and ready to roll.

Back soon...

No. 2 Australian General Hospital/Camp section in charge of Major W.H. Read, Mena, Egypt, May 1915.

Photo from the Irene Victoria Read papers, pictorial material and relics, 1839-1951 and the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.



## WINGS OVER ILLAWARRA



Cadets get hands-on experience in aviation at the Wings Over Illawarra Air Show. Pic Sam Fenwick

**More than 250 Australian Air Force Cadets from across NSW and the ACT attended the Wings over Illawarra air show at Illawarra Regional Airport, Albion Park Rail, on 5 May.**

In addition to enjoying an excellent flying program and static aircraft displays, the cadets volunteered in several ways, including handing out programs and wrist bands for the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS).

Officer Commanding 3 Wing (NSW & ACT) Wing Commander (AAFC) Wayne Laycock said attendance at events such as Wings over Illawarra was a significant part of the cadet experience.

"Air shows give our cadets the chance to see aviation up close, which is important as many of them are aiming for careers in the aviation industry," Wing Commander Laycock said.

"It is also a great opportunity for them to volunteer their time at an important civic event."

## DARWIN GRADUATION



Darwin-based Australian Air Force Cadets Aaron De Fransz and Mikhaela Higgins get a good look at the cockpit of an RAAF AP-3C Orion during a visit to RAAF Base Darwin. Mikhaela attends Mackillop College and aspires to be a RAAF fighter pilot. Aaron attends Taminin College and hopes to become a helicopter pilot.

**Australian Air Force Cadets from across the Northern Territory held a graduation parade at RAAF Base Darwin on 13 July.**

This year marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Northern Territory Squadron, Air Training Corps (AIRC), which later became 8 Wing Australian Air Force Cadets (8WG AAFC), with NT flights coming under NSW squadrons before the change.

The cadets marching on 13 July represented 8 WG AAFC, based in the Northern Territory plus cadets from South Australia and north Queensland who had just completed a junior leadership course and general service training camp in the Top End.

Officer Commanding 8 WG Wing Commander (AAFC) Andrew Shearman said the course taught the cadets to take responsibility for themselves and others by equipping them with basic leadership and teamwork skills.

"This parade is a significant milestone and the cadets should be very proud of themselves," he said.

For 14 days (during school holidays), 90 cadets aged 14 to 20 had trained in leadership, drill, fieldcraft and instructional techniques – and are now eligible for promotion to cadet corporal.

An official 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner, at Darwin's Aviation Heritage Centre, was held in conjunction with the camp.

## NT COURSES CAMP

More than 100 cadets from the Northern Territory, Victoria and Tasmania were put through their paces during the Australian Army Cadets courses camp and annual field exercise at Robertson Barracks and the Kangaroo Flats Training Area near Darwin from 7 to 17 July.

Aged 13 to 19 years old, the cadets had the opportunity to learn about drill, leadership, fieldcraft, navigation, field engineering, radio procedures, use of service firearms, navigation and first aid.

This year's Northern Territory presence included cadets from Darwin, Palmerston, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Daly River and Nguiu in the Tiwi Islands, participating alongside cadets from Tasmania and Melbourne.



Top: Fun out bush.

Above: Cadets Matthew Bowerman and Danielle Close record the ground they covered during a mock search and rescue for lost tourists.

Left: Cadets muster for lunch during the field phase of their courses camp and annual field exercise.

Pics Leading Seaman Jo Dilonzo





## DUAL 50TH

**No 218 Squadron Australian Air Force Cadets celebrated its 50th birthday on 16 May – and foundation member Flight Lieutenant (AAFC) Ken Brandes was recognised for 50 years continuous service in the AAFC.**

No 218 Squadron started as No 18 Flight, Queensland Squadron, Air Training Corps on the 16 May 1963 and gained its current name, as part of No. 2 Wing South Queensland, in 2000.

Since joining the cadets on 16 May 1963, Flight Lieutenant Brandes has served 50 years of continuous service with the AAFC – five years as a cadet, before re-joining as an adult instructor in 1969. He spent 35 continuous years at 218SQN, almost half as commanding officer.

A recipient of the prestigious Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow for services to the community and scheduled to receive his second Federation Star for his service, Flight Lieutenant Brandes said that just having the chance to contribute towards the betterment of young Australians had been reward enough.

Director General Air Force Cadets Air Commodore Dennis Green said the number of young people that Ken had positively influenced to be good citizens, and others who had joined the Air Force because of his leadership and guidance, were innumerable.

Current commander 218SQN Flying Officer (AAFC) Adam Taylor said that during his tenure as CO, Ken's generous old-school approach to leadership and organisational behaviour was respected and appreciated by all cadets and staff.

"Without role models like him, the squadron would not have been as successful as it has been over the past 50 years," Flying Officer Taylor said.

## CULTURE EXCHANGE

**Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) hosted an International Air Cadet Exchange program from 20 July to 7 August.**

This was an exciting youth development program that saw 36 Air Force cadets from Canada, South Korea, Hong Kong, Netherlands, Turkey, Belgium, United Kingdom and America enjoy a two-week educational tour of Australia.

All the cadets were selected for their leadership attributes and ability to represent their respective organisations and countries.

The group of international cadets were escorted by senior staff from around the world.

The Australian IACE Detachment Commander, Wing Commander (AAFC) Tony Lee has been organising these exchanges for seven years and said he enjoyed the interaction of the various cultures and nationalities.

"Technology today allows cadets to keep in contact with the push of a button and so cadets have remained lifelong mates," he said.

"It also proves that people from all different cultures can get along and respect each other. By the end of the fourteen days they are definitely one team and an international family."

During their stay, the international cadets visited significant Australian landmarks and cultural sites including Sydney Harbour, the Blue Mountains, the Australian War Memorial, the Australian Defence Force Academy, Parliament House, Australia Zoo on the Sunshine Coast, and Gold Coast highlights.

Throughout the tour, the international cadets also interacted with past and present members of the Royal Australian Air Force, veterans from the Air Force Association, and other young members of the AAFC.

At the same time, a group of Australian Air Force Cadets traveled overseas to various countries on a similar two-week cultural exchange program.



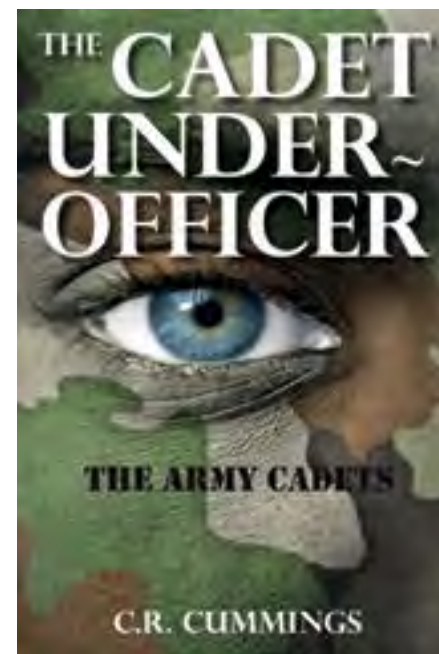
Air Force Cadets from nine countries visit Australia Zoo.

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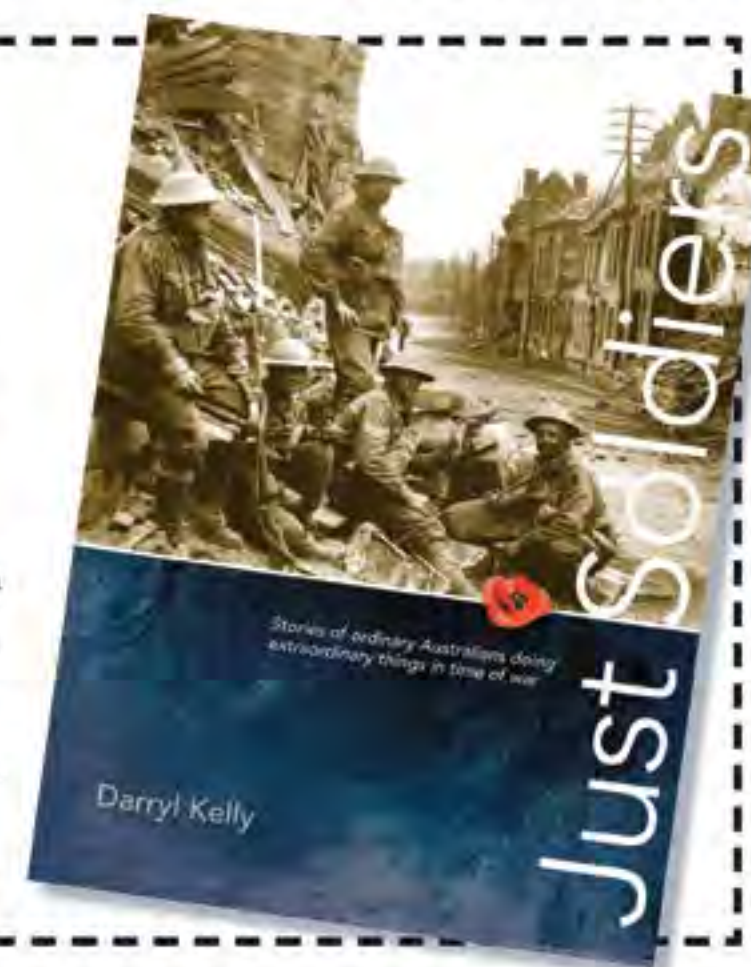


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# DEADLIFTS

the most important exercise for military fitness

**If you could pick one exercise that defines strength, what would it be? For most guys who spend any time in gyms, the immediate answer is going to be the bench press. Some other people might suggest the squat. But for my money, the exercises that defines 'strong' above all others is the deadlift.**

The bench press is a great exercise for developing upper-body strength and mass but in practical terms it tests strength in a manner rarely seen outside of the gym – horizontal pushing with the back braced. Also, a big squat is certainly important and impressive but few people squat deep enough to count. So, when it comes to determining who is strong and then developing that strength to extraordinary levels, the deadlift can't be beaten.

Depending on the variations used, the deadlift can help develop virtually every muscle from the finger tips to the toes (notable exception for the chest, but I'm not suggesting you give up bench pressing, just the idea it proves you are strong) and it is the single most functional strength exercise for military fitness, most sports and life in general. One of the great mysteries to me is why the military has never focused on developing great deadlift strength in trainees and then throws them into situations where good back strength and stability are so important.

Every program I write for military fitness, from beginner to SF selection, includes deadlifts or deadlift-related exercises, no exceptions!



So, now it's time to look at some deadlift variations and training methods.

There are dozens of variations of deadlifts for different purposes, but over the years I have discovered that for military fitness and for developing a superior level of back strength, there are two main variations that cover all the bases.

The first is the conventional deadlift. This exercise is performed with the feet directly under the hips and the hands placed at about shoulder width apart. The bar starts on the floor and is lifted with the legs and back until you are standing up straight. This variation of the deadlift allows for large loads to be used and challenges all of the major muscles of the posterior chain, legs and arms.

The second variation is the snatch-grip deadlift standing on a block, with a slow negative. This deadlift is performed with approximately half the load of the conventional deadlift and is a fantastic exercise for developing the muscles in the upper, middle and lower back that are responsible for holding your spine in extension during conventional deadlifts, squats, power cleans and any other activity where you are lifting loads.

To perform this exercise you will need a block about 5 to 7cm high to stand on (a weight plate or two is normally sufficient) and you will want to use weightlifting straps as the slow negative is very hard on the grip. Stand on the block and take a grip outside the small smooth rings on an Olympic barbell using the straps. From here, set yourself with the hips low and the chest up. The initial movement is more squat than deadlift and you will feel your quads working quite hard. Once you get to lockout, lower the weight with a 4-5 second negative and then immediately lift the bar again. I like sets of five to six reps and suggest starting with 40% of your best deadlift and work up to 50 to 60%.

When performing deadlifts, it is very important to work on keeping your spine extended so as not to place unnecessary strain on the ligaments and discs in the lower back.

## Deadlift training

Training for deadlifts is a huge topic and there are dozens of programs that can be used to push your strength up. At the most basic level, I like to perform heavy low-rep deadlifts once per week starting with five sets of five reps and then reducing the reps each week by one while increasing the weight. Then on another day I will program another deadlift variation such as the snatch grip deadlift for six sets of six with 50% of the weight used on the heavy day.

For a more intensive deadlift program I will schedule in a heavy day, a day of speed deadlifts (conventional deadlifts with 60 to 70% of max performed with maximum speed on each rep) and two days of assistance work like snatch-grip deadlifts, kettlebell swings or back extensions.

Of course, during such an extensive program I will reduce the volume of squats and other leg work to avoid burnout.

*So there you have it. Hopefully the tips above will put you on the path to your first double-bodyweight deadlift (my minimum standard for men) or beyond. For a video tutorial of both exercises, bonus variations and sample training plans, make sure to visit my blog at [www.octogenstrengthcoach.com](http://www.octogenstrengthcoach.com)*

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Last issue we discussed what comes out the pointy end of your rifle. This issue we'll talk about the delivery system and the mechanics of how those bullets are loaded.

Since man realised that gunpowder could be used to propel objects that would damage his enemy, improvement has been sought. For us, that improvement has sort of plateau'd, waiting for the next material and technology breakthrough.

What's available to us in point-target weapons (that's tech speak for small arms) are all variations of a few methods of function. They are either magazine or belt fed, have a reciprocating method of function and mostly rely on chemical energy to power them.

You know propellant in ammunition burns very fast, creating pressure in a confined space, and pushing the projectile along the path of least resistance – the barrel – right? Well, a number of inventors harnessed that energy to produce rifles and machine guns that would reload themselves after

each shot, and came up with three basic variations. We know these as recoil operated (most pistols, the M2 .50 cal heavy machine gun), gas-operated (F88 and most other rifles) and blowback (G3 and most sub machine guns).

Before going further, you need to do some homework. Ask Mr Google about the stages of function – chambering, locking, firing, unlocking, extraction, ejection, cocking and back to chambering. That will make what follows a lot clearer.

Recoil operation is pretty simple. The rearward force, or recoil, created at firing is used to impart kinetic energy to the action in order to cycle it. In this operation usually the barrel and bolt will move rearward together in the receiver. At some point the barrel will stop and return forward under spring pressure while the bolt continues

rearward and completes the cycle. This is mostly found in auto-loading shotguns and some machine guns such as the Maxim, Vickers and Browning – probably the first reliable system, and the scourge of the WWI trenches.

Gas operation is the most common system today and as you may have guessed, uses the propellant gases to do the work. And why not, because, not long after ignition, expansion pressures for 5.56x45 can reach around 62,000psi!

The first thing that happens, of course, is that the projectile begins to move through the barrel, because there is little to resist it. Then, somewhere along the barrel, a small port (hole) bleeds off some of the propellant gasses to drive a piston. The piston pushes on the action and makes the cycle of operation happen.

In one very famous rifle, the M16/M4 family, the gas is directed right into the bolt assembly where the bolt head is the piston, moving inside the bolt carrier. This is known as a gas-impingement system. When the gas enters the bolt carrier, it forces the bolt carrier to move rearward against the bolt, picking up kinetic energy. As it does this, the bolt unlocks and is then pulled rearward by the carrier's kinetic energy.

In other gas systems the gasses operate a separate piston. There are two types of piston system, short stroke (F88, M14) and long stroke (L1A1, MAG58). In a short-stroke system, the piston doesn't move far and it gets a hard shot of gas to impart sufficient kinetic energy to function the action. In long stroke, the piston travels the full length of the action stroke.

At some point, the gasses need to be vented so as not to impart too much energy to the action or be pressed past the end point of the piston's natural travel. This is why gas systems have a bleed-vent hole. Most do this by having the piston uncover a vent to the atmosphere at the appropriate length of travel so that no more pressure is applied.

Now, I have asked CONTACT to include a picture from Exercise Southern Jackaroo that clearly demonstrates this. You can see two streams of gas, the main one from the muzzle and the lesser, secondary stream is a vertical jet from the gas port as the piston reaches its

full stroke and vents. In this photo, you can just see the bolt carrier clearing the ejection port, but, while the bolt will be unlocked at this point, it has not yet left the chamber face (though you can't see this much detail in the photo).

By the way, that little vertical gas stream and its enormous pressure and speed is why you don't want to put your fingers near it on the F88! *[Or if, like me, you favour shooting with the foregrip folded up, you may already know that the vented gas hitting your little pinkie feels like a solid blow from a five-pound hammer – Ed]*

Another thing to note from this awesome photo is how far the projectile is out of the barrel and that the recoil has not yet deviated the rifle from the line of fire. This is why it is pointless trying to anticipate or try to control recoil – by the time you feel it, the bullet is long gone and your effort is pointless!

The last method is blow-back and it is as it sounds. That massive pressure is pushing back on the shell case with the

same force that it is pushing the bullet forward. Normally, the bolt is locked to the chamber and won't move, but in blow back, it is usually return-spring pressure that tries to hold it in place. In a blow-back weapon, the case will push itself out of the chamber imparting kinetic energy to the bolt to cycle the action.

Easy? Well, not quite. Blow back is great for low-power cartridges such as 9x19 pistol. As such, it also suits sub machine guns with a heavy bolt and light bullet. But a rifle generally has too much power for this system.

There are exceptions of course. The H&K G3 keeps its pressures from smashing the action into your face using a delayed-blow-back mechanism, which forces two rollers into locking recesses in the receiver.

There are other modes of operation I haven't mentioned, but these derive their power from external forces, not from the harnessed power of the ammunition.

IF, LIKE ME, YOU FAVOUR SHOOTING WITH THE FOREGRIP FOLDED UP, YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW THAT THE VENTED GAS HITTING YOUR LITTLE PINKIE FEELS LIKE A SOLID BLOW FROM A FIVE-POUND HAMMER



Pic Sergeant Brian Hartigan

The first machine guns – the multi-barrelled Gatling Gun and Nordenfelt – were hand operated. Then some genius (and I mean that with the greatest respect) added an electric motor to the Gatling Gun, giving us awesome firepower such as the 6000-rounds-per-minute GUA-M134 mini-gun, and the Hughes Chain Gun.

The chain-gun – such as that used on our Tiger helicopters and Aslavs – is the other type, using as the name suggests, a chain to drive the bolt group and ammo feed.

Tune in next issue for more weapon insights.

In the mean time, send your comments, critiques, criticisms and death threats to [gearinsider@militarycontact.com](mailto:gearinsider@militarycontact.com)



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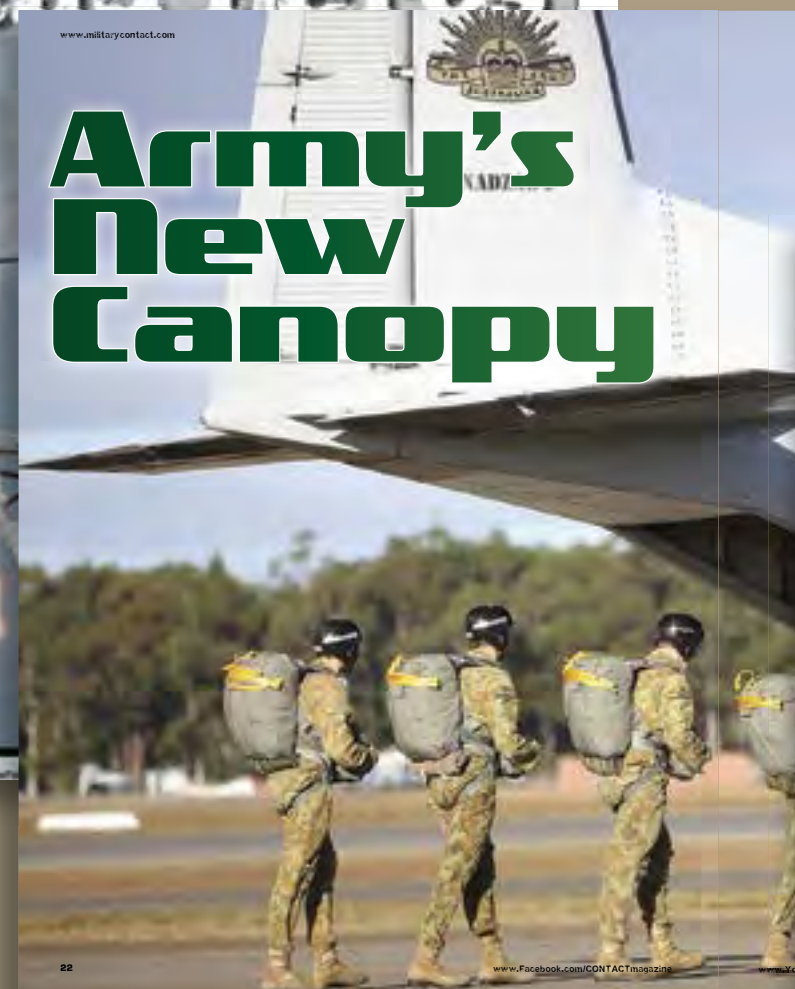
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A man with a weathered face and a serious expression, wearing a camouflage military shirt, holds a black Gerber CFB knife in his right hand. The knife has a silver blade with a serrated edge and a black handle with a textured grip. The blade is open and pointed upwards. The background is a blurred, industrial setting.

HELLO, TROUBLE.  
THIS IS MY KNIFE.  
IT NEVER RUNS  
OUT OF AMMO.

Tim Kennedy and his Gerber CFB.

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