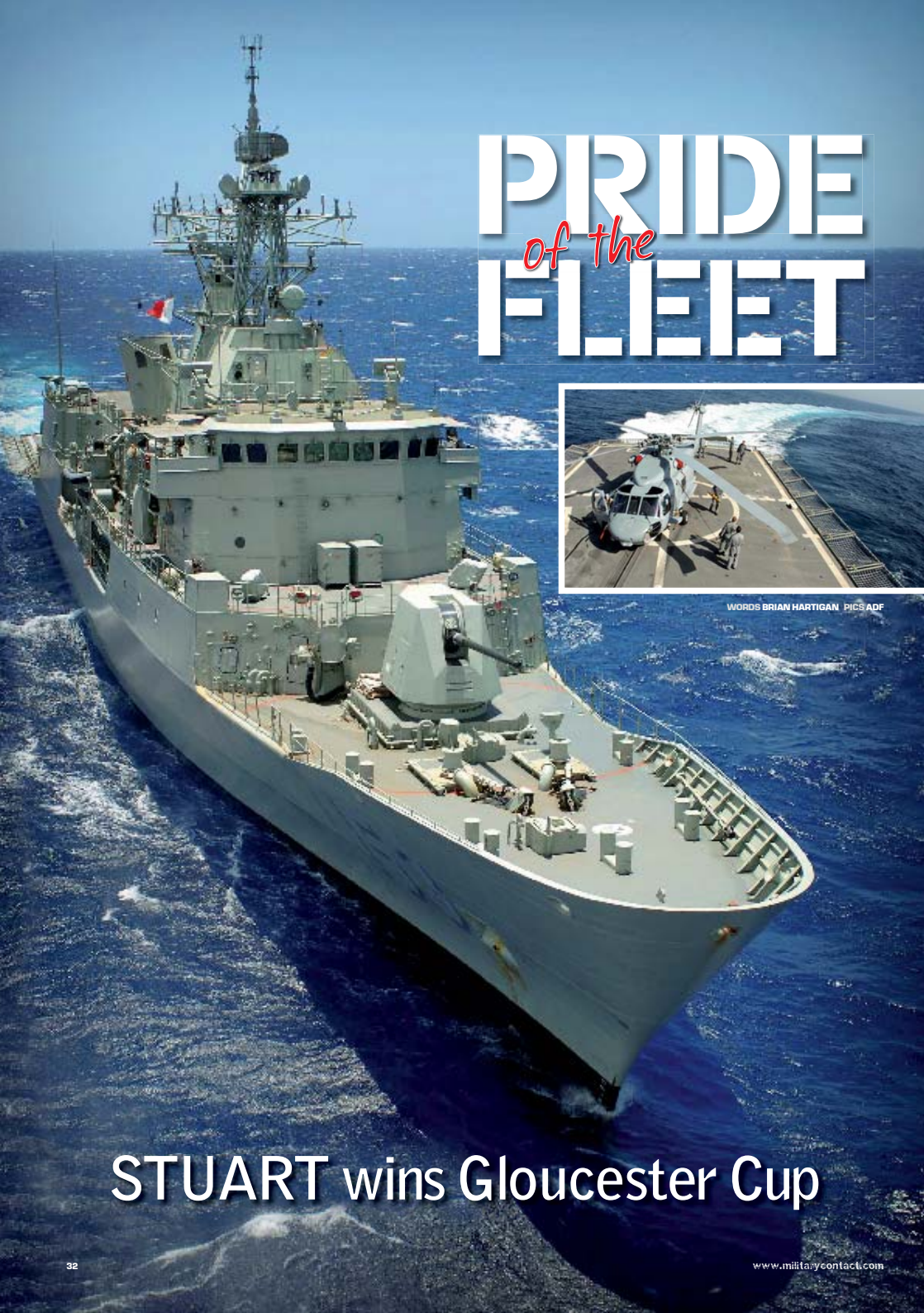


# PRIDE *of the* FLEET



WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PICS ADF

STUART wins Gloucester Cup

Each year, one of Her Majesty's Australian Ships is elevated above all others to be recognised for outstanding achievement over a sustained period and awarded an honour of highest esteem – the Gloucester Cup.

Instituted in 1947 by the Duke of Gloucester when he was Governor-General of Australia, the Cup recognises outstanding and sustained achievement in operational efficiency; husbandry and seamanship; supply and administration; crew training; morale, discipline and resourcefulness; systems and equipment reliability and maintenance.

While presenting the Cup at a ceremony in Sydney in February, Major General Michael Jeffery, Governor-General of Australia, said that the broad scope of the qualifying criteria demanded consistency across the board.

"Every department and each individual plays a critical role in achieving the level of excellence recognised in this award, for which every ship in the Navy undergoes a very thorough evaluation before the most deserving ship is chosen," he said.

"However, as we all know, it is not just the equipment that helps do the job, important as that is, but rather the coordinated, well-led, well-trained team that effectively uses that equipment.

"When a crew demonstrates teamwork, loyalty and dedication – as you have patently done in winning the Gloucester Cup – you do yourselves and the RAN proud."

The Gloucester Cup has been won by many superb ships over the years, including Quadrant, Vampire, Sydney and Hobart.

Major General Jeffery said HMAS Stuart joins these illustrious names for her tremendous achievements in 2006 during 137 days spent at sea.



"Amid eight participating RIMPAC nations, Stuart successfully conducted trials and firings of two Enhanced Sea Sparrow Missiles and one NULKA rocket after months of planning and training," he said.

"The favourable impression left by Stuart after participating in Exercises AUSTHAI and Bersamu Padu further enhanced Australia's relations with Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

"Throughout her five-month deployment, Stuart continually upheld the highest standards of safety, training and reliability.

"Without exception, all tasks undertaken by HMAS Stuart and the ship's company in 2006 were completed with outstanding dedication, professionalism and commitment."

A soldier by profession, the Governor General said he was a great admirer of the Navy and – aside from currently living at Admiralty House – had quite a bit to do with the RAN over the years.

"For example, I sailed in HMAS Diamantina in my early SAS days, I returned from Vietnam courtesy of HMAS Sydney, and I spent a fair amount of time training with Oberon Class submarines."

Major General Jeffery said all members of Stuart's company had served their country well and earned the respect and admiration of their fellow Australians.

"I warmly congratulate everyone associated with HMAS Stuart – including, very importantly, the families who support you – and I wish you all the very best for the future."

HMAS Stuart, which is currently undergoing a systems upgrade in Melbourne, is one of eight ANZAC Class Frigates that serve alongside 16 other major fleet units and submarines protecting Australia's borders.

**THE GLOUCESTER CUP HAS BEEN WON BY MANY SUPERB SHIPS OVER THE YEARS, INCLUDING QUADRANT, VAMPIRE, SYDNEY AND HOBART.**



**H**istory and ceremony, brotherhood and mateship are the life blood of any Army unit, with men willing to fight and die for each other under the mantle of a flag – their own unit’s flag, colours or guidons, second only to the Australian National Flag.

Here, members of the newly reformed 7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (7RAR) proudly fly their ‘new’ flag while on operations in Afghanistan.

When 5RAR and 7RAR were linked in December 1973, to form 5/7RAR, their colours were retained as the joint colours of the battalion, but were eventually ‘laid up’ at the Soldiers’ Chapel, Kapooka, in 2004.

Sir Roden Cutler VC originally presented the 7RAR colours on 6 October 1968 – and to 5RAR a year earlier. Both battalions went on to serve two tours of duty in Vietnam.

Now, under a \$10billion plan to expand the Army by 2600 personnel, 5RAR and 7RAR have again been de-linked, reforming to commence new and proud chapters in their separate histories.

For 7RAR particularly, regaining their proud name while on operations overseas is particularly poignant.



WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PIC CAPT LACHLAN SIMOND

# Tigers, Rotors & Blokes



The male-dominated world of military aviation in general and of helicopters specifically might seem a strange place for a self-proclaimed 'emerging artist' to cut her teeth but, for Queensland-based Deb Gilmartin, the world of 'Tigers, Rotors & Blokes' has proved a happy hunting ground.

Looking for a subject that was different but strong, Deb found what she was after in the hangars and on the tarmac at the home of Army Aviation in Oakey, near Toowoomba. "I have always admired war artists but I would not be brave enough to work under war conditions," she admits frankly.

"But I have a scientific background and I am fascinated by machines. I love to draw people and I ideally wanted to work in an environment that combined all of this."

An opportune commission from Australian Aerospace, to document the introduction of the Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter into the Army, set Deb on a year-long project that culminated in an exhibition at the Jondaryan Shire Council Cultural Centre, Oakey in May this year.

Deb says that working in a mostly blokes' world has been fantastic.

"At first I was a little shy – but that didn't last long!

"I have to say that the men I have worked with have been really co-operative, interested, kind gentlemen.

"I liked their honesty about my work – if it wasn't right they would let me know.

"I could have had a good laugh with these blokes, but they took what I was doing seriously and with respect."

She says she is unsure whether being a female artist gave her a different point of view but certainly being an outsider did.

"A lot of military aviation painting and drawings depict historical battles or are very technical. I have tended towards being very detailed in my work but I also explore the use of empty spaces and how much they can be used to tell the story.

"I tend not to fill up every space on the page and the pen & ink studies focus mainly on the guys working rather than being dominated by the Tiger in the picture.

"Whether that's a 'female' thing or just my personal style, I don't know."

She says the experience has been an amazing one and it was a real privilege and a huge challenge artistically.

"I have met some great blokes and feel I have been part of a team while I was there.

"I have made new friends through this project and my respect for what these men do, particularly in these times, has increased no end."

Deb says her next project will document the 'end of an era' as she tries to capture the magic and personality of the last remaining Huey helicopters before they are finally withdrawn from service.

"Hopefully I will capture some essence of this very iconic helicopter – I can't wait," she says.

On the strength of her 'Tigers, Rotors & Blokes' work, I'm confident the results will be worth the wait.

**Deb Gilmartin can be contacted by email at [gilmartin@netxp.com.au](mailto:gilmartin@netxp.com.au)**

