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# CONTACT

**AIR, LAND & SEA**

THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE



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**AVALON ALIGHT**

INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW ACTION

**OP SUMATRA ASSIST**

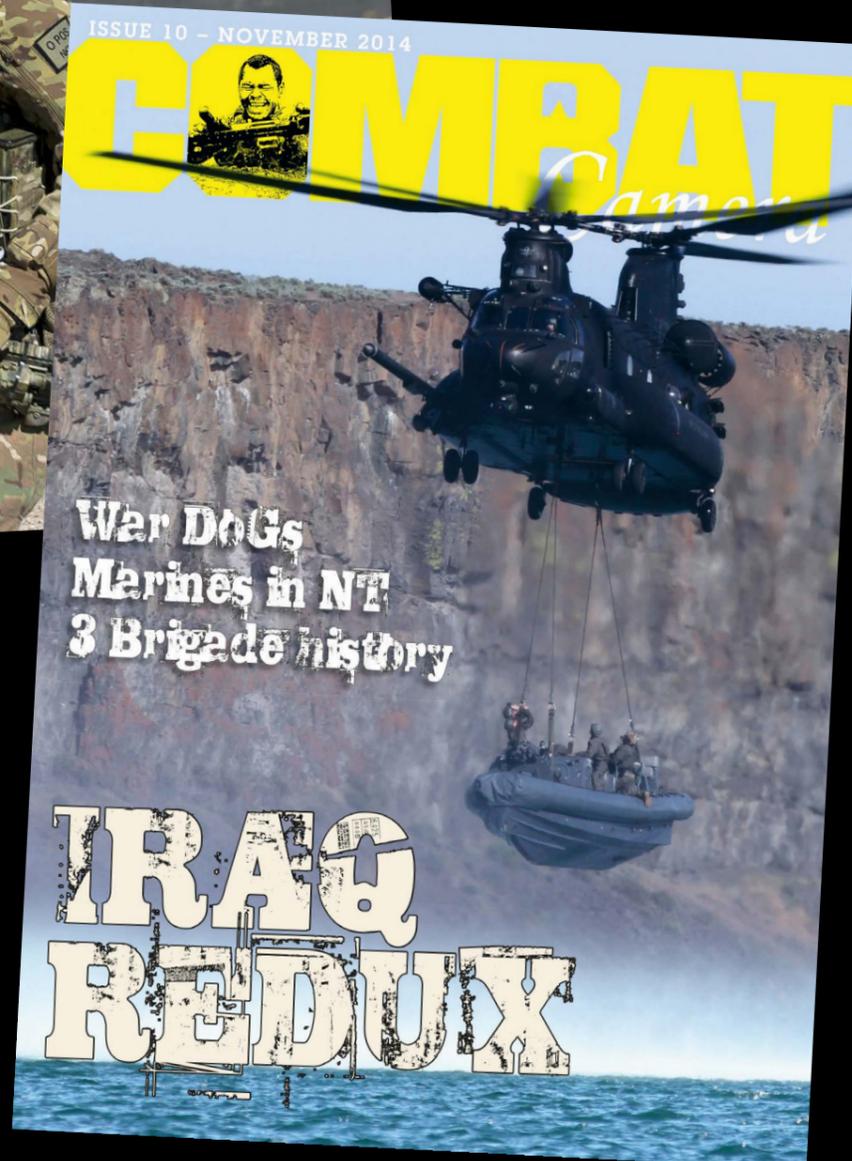
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**Or visit [www.nt.gov.au/pfes](http://www.nt.gov.au/pfes)**



**There's a New Era in Territory Policing. Make the change. Join the force!**

The Northern Territory Police Force is an equal opportunity employer. Applications from women, indigenous people and people from non-English speaking background are particularly welcome.



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# SOLDIER ON HELPING OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS



**SOLDIER ON** IS ABOUT AUSTRALIANS COMING TOGETHER TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR OUR WOUNDED. IT'S ABOUT TELLING OUR DIGGERS THAT WE WILL ALWAYS HAVE THEIR BACKS; THAT WE WILL REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE COME HOME, AS WELL AS THOSE THAT HAVE DIED. IT'S ABOUT GIVING THE WOUNDED THE DIGNITY THEY DESERVE AND THE CHANCE TO DO AND BE WHATEVER THEY CHOOSE.

**SOLDIER ON** IS ABOUT THE ANZAC SPIRIT, AND MATESHIP AND ALL AUSTRALIANS KEEPING THEIR PROMISE TO TAKE CARE OF OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS.



## INSPIRE, ENHANCE AND EMPOWER

Our wounded have done their part for Australia, they have given their best. Thousands have wounds, some you can see and some you can't. It is now Australia's turn to look after them, please give generously and make a difference in our wounded warriors lives.

# THE EDITOR'S LETTER

Issue 6 – June 2005

## CONTACT AIR, LAND & SEA

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RIGHT: Corporal Mat Tanner, 1st Combat Engineer Regiment, gets down and dirty during cleanup operations in Banda Aceh.  
Photo by Able Seaman Jarrad Olliffe

**T**his past quarter saw the untimely death of nine young Australians, proud wearers of the uniform of their nation's armed services. While the rest of us thank our lucky stars that we do not have to share the sadness their families must now be feeling, we do, with all sincerity, offer what little sympathy we can. In a special four-page lift-out, CONTACT offers a small memento of their passing – lest we forget them.

Meanwhile, in a poignant sign of changing times, an extra 450 of Australia's fine young service men and women celebrated ANZAC Day in Iraq – shoulder to shoulder with their Japanese counterparts. We wish them all the best as they venture into dangerous territory.

A stark reminder of this danger came at the cost of another young Australian life – Chris Ahmelman of Queensland, a former Aussie Digger, who was gunned down while working as a civilian security contractor in Baghdad. He was a colleague of 'Skippy', the former Aussie Military Police officer turned security operative whom we featured in the last issue. Our sympathies go to Chris' family and our best wishes for a safe return go to 'Skippy' and her colleagues.

Despite the loss of the Sea King helicopter and the nine young Aussies, the job of helping a neighbour in need continued on the western end of the Indonesian archipelago. Starting on page 30, Corporal Cameron Jamieson from the Army newspaper gives us a touching and very personal glimpse of the extent of the very human tragedy our near neighbour has suffered since Christmas.

Our main feature this issue sees us in the Middle East with the Australian Army Training Team-Iraq. Doing a sterling job of their own, these diggers had some very big shoes to fill after being named in honour of their Vietnam-era forbearers. But, stepping boldly out of the shadow, they have made their own mark on the future shape of security in a new theatre.

Gem among a host of good stories this issue is one from our intrepid New Zealand reporter, 'Kiwi Mac' who collared an old soldier on ANZAC Day and, suitably plied with amber nectar, Wolfgang Hucke recounts no less than seven theatres of war he has served in – but always on the losing side!

Before I sign off for another issue, I want to highlight a couple of interesting polls on our web site. One asked the question "Do you agree with the decision to send another 450 troops to Iraq?" Perhaps not surprisingly, given the audience, this came back overwhelmingly in favour of sending the troops. However, the vote was a lot more divided on the question, "Should the nine ADF members killed in the helicopter crash be awarded an Australian medal?" I encourage you to cast your own vote, to keep an eye on the site for future poll questions or perhaps even suggest a poll yourself.

Until next time, stay safe.

Brian Hartigan  
Managing Editor



# WHO USES CARINTHIA...

AUSTRIAN ARMY  
BELGIAN ARMY  
BRITISH ARMY  
CHILEAN ARMY  
CYPRES ARMY  
ESTONIAN ARMY  
FINNISH ARMY  
GERMAN ARMY  
HUNGARIAN ARMY  
INDIAN ARMY  
NETHERLANDS ARMY  
NORWEGIAN ARMY  
PORTUGUESE ARMY  
SLOVAKIAN ARMY  
SLOVENIAN ARMY  
SWEDISH ARMY  
SWISS ARMY  
TURKISH ARMY  
U.A.E ARMY

NETHERLAND AIR FORCE  
GERMAN AIR FORCE  
FINNISH AIR FORCE  
ROYAL AIR FORCE  
PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE

## SPECIALIST USERS

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE  
ALPINE TROOPS - GERMANY  
DANISH SPECIAL FORCES  
ESTONIAN SPECIAL FORCES  
FRENCH SPECIAL FORCES  
GSG-9 GERMANY  
GREEK SPECIAL FORCES  
IRISH ARMY-EAST TIMOR  
KSK - GERMANY  
LATVIAN SPECIAL FORCES  
ROMMANIAN SPECIAL FORCES  
ROYAL MARINES  
US SPECIAL FORCES - UZBEKISTAN  
UK SAS

# PEOPLE WHO KNOW.

# CARINTHIA

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Got something to say?  
E-mail: editor@militarycontact.com  
Or visit the feedback section on our web site



# INCOMING

## RAPID FIRE...

**Y**ou have done a great job with the magazine. It's the best military mag yet. I am in the AAFC (Australian Air Force Cadets) and was wondering if you will ever do an article on the Australian Defence Force Cadets or AAFC.  
- *I'm being inundated with requests for a Cadet feature and I promise I will get around to it - Ed*

**S**orry guys, but a lot of attention should be paid to the website. I know it's in its early days but, I have been searching for it for God knows how long. It could give a terrific first impression for what your magazine could/would contain.  
- *I hope you've checked the web site recently. I now endeavour to post Defence and related news on the site as soon as I get it. If you have any specific advice or tips I'd be happy to take a look - Ed*

**J**ust got my hands on the next issue. I haven't had time to read it cover to cover, yet, but I've read most of it. Dare I say it, best issue so far. Well done.

**B**ought set at airshow. Impressive, informative, readable, interesting and current. A 'doubting Thomas' converted after dipping into the first Contact. One of the best purchases ever made. Fantastic value.

**I**'d just like to congratulate you on a terrific magazine. From the first to the latest issue you have continued to improve in the looks, design and content. The information provided is excellent research for prospective ADF candidates, and always good to read over and over again. Thanks for a better, exciting and, most of all, Australian point of view.

## ON TARGET...

This issue's best letter wins a 3ltr Hydrapak worth \$115, thanks to **Cool Kit Australia**, [www.coolkit.com.au](http://www.coolkit.com.au)

**H**aving just read your first issue, I had to write in regards to the French Foreign Legion story.

As a former sergeant in the Legion who served eight years (1991-99) in the parachute regiment and who has served on operations around the globe, I found it strange you based your story on somebody who did just six months before throwing the towel in! I found a lot of "Shane's" story hard to believe.

There are numerous Legionnaires in Australia who could have given you a lot better insight.

Maybe if Shane had just lasted until he got to an operational regiment and been deployed he would have liked it the way I did.

I felt this story did the Legion a lot of injustice. Other than that, your magazine is a good read.

**Craig S**

- *Shane's story was told through his eyes. I'm more than happy to hear from other Legionnaires who want to tell their story in the future - Ed*



## SUSTAINED BURST...

**N**ormally I would single out an article or two to say how good they are but everything in this last issue is great.

As Mark H said, following some recruits through Kapooka would be a great idea. I'm hoping to go there at the end of HSC - only a few months now - and I'd love to hear what it's like.

Cadets are great, I went back to my old unit the other day, they have your 3RAR poster up on the wall.

Anyway, one last little thing, I want to be a commando and I know you have to train and train and train. One problem I find is fitness help. Have you guys ever thought of dedicating a page to a fitness program or something like this. I use the SASR 13-week training program.

**Jakub M**

- *Jakub, your request for a fitness column may be answered. Check the September issue for the first of what I hope will be an interesting, regular addition to our magazine - Ed*

**I** just want to tell you how good this magazine you have put together is.

To be honest I buy it over any other my newsagent offers, not only because it directly relates to my country's military but because it has so much information and first-hand accounts of situations and career opportunities. The information is direct and never beats around the bush.

Anyway, I'm 17yro and studying for my HSC. My goal and dream is to enlist in the RAAF Airfield Defence Guards. There is vague information on the internet about it, and very little at that. It would be good to see an article about the ADGies, including courses, specific job roles and maybe some experiences.

**Anthony W**

**H**aving been kindly given free copies of the magazine at the recent spectacular 2005 Avalon International Air Show I would like to extend my congratulations to you and your staff on the production of such an independent, thorough, informative and most of all enjoyable magazine.

It is certainly a pleasure to read an Australian Defence magazine rather than the many less attractive, less informative and less enjoyable American magazines that are often full of irrelevant information and adverts interrupting articles.

In particular I commend the articles on 4RAR and the 3RAR poster, which were extremely interesting and informative, even though I am a corporal in the Air Force Cadets and maintain an active interest in the RAAF.

I hope you continue to deliver the correct balance of current military news, historical information, hardware news and analysis, however, believe that more emphasis should be given

to current events - such as the deployments in Iraq, the Solomon Islands and the recent relief effort in Bada Aceh.

**Thomas W**

**I** picked up your Issue 4 a week ago. Have to say it's a quality magazine.

Having spent four years putting my own story to air, via the net I am loath to criticise other writers' work (mine is called A Grunt's View, the reason will become obvious if you have a look), but I feel that one of my key aims on the site is when I place an image it is backed up by information that tells you, what, where, why and who took it. I was disappointed when you failed to support your images in issue 4 with information that should be standard in your target market. Diggers like to know who, where, what and why?

However this will not stop me picking up the back issues as soon as I can.

I hope this problem will be addressed in future issues?

**oink, Tony (7RAR)**

- *New Grunt's View - [www.gruntsview.org](http://www.gruntsview.org)*

- *Cherry Tree Walk - [www.hinet.net.au/~ozgrunt](http://www.hinet.net.au/~ozgrunt)*

- *5th 7th Battalion Association - [www.5-7rar.org](http://www.5-7rar.org)*

- *Criticism accepted, but, researching, writing and correlating captions is a whole other level of input I simply don't have the time or staff for at the moment, but it will be one of the first things rectified when I do - Ed*

Please keep your letters short and to the point, to fit more in. The Editor reserves the right to edit letters to make them fit.

# VICTORIA CROSS RECIPIENT



Private Johnson Gideon Beharry, 1st Battalion the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, is the first person to receive the Victoria Cross since 1982 and the first living British recipient since 1965.

Private Beharry carried out two individual acts of great heroism by which he saved the lives of his comrades. Both were in direct face of the enemy, under intense fire, at great personal risk to himself (one leading to him sustaining very serious injuries). His valour is worthy of the highest recognition.

In the early hours of the 1st May 2004 Beharry's company was ordered to replenish an isolated Coalition Forces outpost located in the centre of the troubled city of Al Amarah. He was the driver of a platoon commander's Warrior armoured fighting vehicle. His platoon was the company's reserve force and was placed on immediate notice to move. As the main elements of his company were moving into

the city to carry out the replenishment, they were re-tasked to fight through a series of enemy ambushes in order to extract a foot patrol that had become pinned down under sustained small arms and heavy machine gun fire and improvised explosive device and rocket-propelled grenade attack.

Beharry's platoon was tasked over the radio to come to the assistance of the remainder of the company, who were attempting to extract the isolated foot patrol. As his platoon passed a roundabout, en route to the pinned-down patrol, they became aware that the road to the front was empty of all civilians and traffic – an indicator of a potential ambush ahead. The platoon commander ordered the vehicle to halt, so that he could assess the situation.

The vehicle was then immediately hit by multiple rocket-propelled grenades. Eyewitnesses report that the vehicle was engulfed in a number of violent explosions, which physically rocked the 30-tonne Warrior.

As a result of this ferocious initial volley of fire, both the platoon commander and the vehicle's gunner were incapacitated by concussion and other wounds, and a number of the soldiers in the rear of the vehicle were also wounded. Due to damage sustained in the blast to the vehicle's radio systems, Beharry had no means of communication with either his turret crew or any of the other Warrior vehicles deployed around him. He did not know if his commander or crewmen were still alive, or how serious their injuries may be. In this confusing and dangerous situation, on his own initiative, he closed his driver's hatch and moved forward through the ambush position to try to establish some form of communications, halting just short of a barricade placed across the road.

The vehicle was hit again by sustained rocket-propelled grenade attack from insurgent fighters in the alleyways and on rooftops around his vehicle. Further damage to the Warrior from these explosions caused it to catch fire and fill rapidly with thick, noxious smoke. Beharry opened up his armoured hatch cover to clear his view and orientate himself to the situation. He still had no radio communications and was now acting on his own initiative, as the lead vehicle of a six Warrior convoy in an enemy-controlled area of the city at night. He assessed that his best course of action to save the lives of his crew was to push through, out of the ambush. He drove his Warrior directly through the barricade, not knowing if there were mines or improvised explosive devices placed there to destroy his vehicle. By doing this he was able to lead the remaining five Warriors behind him towards safety.

As the smoke in his driver's tunnel cleared, he was just able to make out the shape of another rocket-propelled grenade in flight heading directly towards him. He pulled the heavy armoured hatch down with one hand, whilst still controlling his vehicle with the other. However, the overpressure from the explosion of the rocket wrenched the hatch out of his grip, and the flames and force of the blast passed directly over him, down the driver's tunnel, further wounding the semi-conscious gunner in the turret. The impact of this rocket destroyed Beharry's armoured periscope, so he was forced to drive the vehicle through the remainder of the ambushed route, some 1500 metres long, with his hatch opened up and his head exposed to enemy fire, all the time with no communications with any other vehicle. During this long surge through the ambushes the vehicle was again struck by



The Victoria Cross ranks with the George Cross as the highest award for gallantry.

The first British medal to be created for bravery, the Victoria Cross was instituted in 1856, with the first recipients being personnel honoured for their gallantry during the Crimean War two years earlier.

The Victoria Cross is designed in the form of the Maltese Cross, in its centre a lion guardant standing upon the Royal Crown, "For Valour" inscribed below. The medal is cast from the metal of Russian guns captured at Sevastopol during the Crimean campaign. Inscribed on the reverse are the date on which the act of bravery took place, with the name, rank and unit of the recipient.

It is awarded "for most conspicuous bravery, or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy".

A total of 1354 Victoria Cross' have been awarded in 150 years, and only 11 since 1946. Warrant Officer Keith Payne was the most recent of 97 Australians who have received the award, for his actions in 1969 during the Vietnam War.

Australians are no longer eligible for the Imperial Victoria Cross but may be awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia, established in 1991.



HE DROVE HIS WARRIOR DIRECTLY THROUGH THE BARRICADE, NOT KNOWING IF THERE WERE MINES OR IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES PLACED THERE TO DESTROY HIS VEHICLE

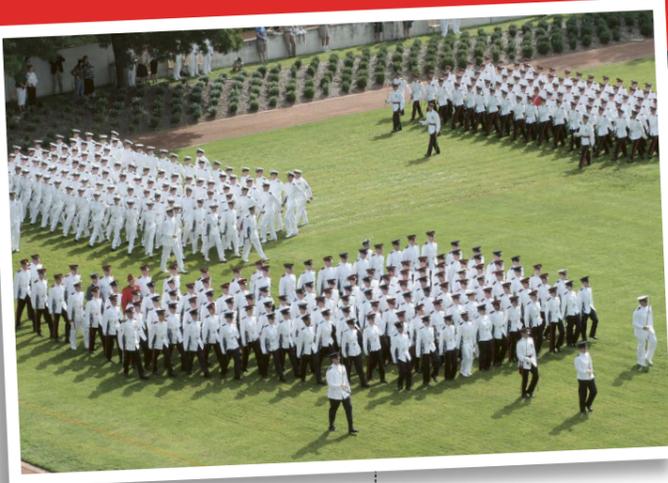
rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. While his head remained out of the hatch, to enable him to see the route ahead, he was directly exposed to much of this fire, and was himself hit by a 7.62mm bullet, which penetrated his helmet and remained lodged on its inner surface.

Despite this harrowing weight of incoming fire Beharry continued to push through the extended ambush, still leading his platoon until he broke clean. He then visually identified another Warrior from his company and followed it through the streets of Al Amarah to the outside of the Cimic House outpost, which was receiving small arms fire from the surrounding area. Once he had brought his vehicle to a halt outside, without thought for his own personal safety, he climbed onto the turret of the still-burning vehicle and, seemingly oblivious to the incoming enemy small arms fire, manhandled his wounded platoon commander out of the turret, off the vehicle and to the safety of a nearby Warrior. He then returned once again to his vehicle and again mounted the exposed turret to lift out the vehicle's gunner and move him to a position of safety. Exposing himself yet again to enemy fire he returned to the rear of the burning vehicle to lead the disorientated and shocked dismounts and casualties to safety. Remounting his burning vehicle for the third time, he drove it through a complex chicane and into the security of the defended perimeter of the outpost, thus denying it to the enemy. Only at this stage did Beharry pull the fire extinguisher handles, immobilising the engine of the vehicle, dismounted and then moved himself into the relative safety of the back of another Warrior. Once inside Beharry collapsed from the sheer physical and mental exhaustion of his efforts and was subsequently himself evacuated.

Having returned to duty following medical treatment, on the 11th June 2004 Beharry's Warrior was part of a quick reaction force tasked to attempt to cut off a mortar team that had attacked a Coalition Force base in Al Amarah. As the lead vehicle of the platoon he was moving rapidly through the dark city streets towards the suspected firing point, when his vehicle was ambushed by the enemy from a series of rooftop positions. During this initial heavy weight of enemy fire, a rocket-propelled grenade detonated on the vehicle's frontal armour, just six inches from Beharry's head, resulting in a serious head injury. Other rockets struck the turret and sides of the vehicle, incapacitating his commander and injuring several of the crew.

With the blood from his head injury obscuring his vision, Beharry managed to continue to control his vehicle, and forcefully reversed the Warrior out of the ambush area. The vehicle continued to move until it struck the wall of a nearby building and came to rest. Beharry then lost consciousness as a result of his wounds. By moving the vehicle out of the enemy's chosen killing area he enabled other Warrior crews to be able to extract his crew from his vehicle, with a greatly reduced risk from incoming fire. Despite receiving a serious head injury, which later saw him being listed as very seriously injured and in a coma for some time, his level-headed actions in the face of heavy and accurate enemy fire at short range again almost certainly saved the lives of his crew and provided the conditions for their safe evacuation to medical treatment.

Beharry displayed repeated extreme gallantry and unquestioned valour, despite intense direct attacks, personal injury and damage to his vehicle in the face of relentless enemy action."



## ANNUAL PARADE

Hundreds of first-year Navy midshipmen and Army and Air Force officer cadets celebrated their induction into the Australian Defence Force on the annual Chief of Defence Force parade at ADFA in February.

In total, 277 inductees were among 780 midshipmen and officer cadets and ADFA military staff, who paraded before dignitaries, family and friends to mark the successful completion of their initial military training program at ADFA.

CDF General Peter Cosgrove was formally received on parade and, in keeping with the tradition, inspected the ranks.

"I wish these fine Australian men and women every success for their future in the ADF and congratulate them on their determination and the commitment they have made to serve our country," General Cosgrove said.

In their first six weeks of military life, the inductees learned about leadership,

physical training, adventurous training, military law, weapons handling, first aid, field craft and equity and diversity.

The officers-to-be have now commenced university studies in conjunction with further military and physical training and sporting commitments.

## WEDGETAIL RANGES OVER SYDNEY

RAAF's new Boeing 737 Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft toured Australia in March during a visit to coincide with the International Airshow at Avalon.

"The visit by Wedgetail to Australia shows the progress and maturity of this key project," Defence Minister Robert Hill said.

Australia will acquire six aircraft, and associated support and systems, with the last four to be modified at Boeing Australia's facilities in Amberley, Queensland.

The current schedule will see the first two aircraft officially handed over in November 2006.

Wedgetail is named after one of the largest eagles in the world – Australia's Wedgetail Eagle – which has extremely acute vision, ranges widely in search of prey, protects its territory without compromise and remains aloft for long periods.

When introduced, Wedgetail will provide a significant boost to Australia's combat command and control capability.



## SHAMROCK SHORES

Commander of the Irish peacekeeping contingent in Monrovia, Liberia, Commandant Brendan O'Shea brings a little bit of home to his men on Saint Patrick's Day by handing out sprigs of Shamrock. Ireland has Defence personnel committed on peacekeeping missions in the Middle East, Cyprus, Western Sahara, Kosovo, Ethiopia and Eritrea and, pictured here, members of its 92nd Infantry Battalion in Liberia.

## CONTACT COMPETITION WINNERS

### TOP GUN

By John Bell  
And the winner is...

Opportunities to ride in a real jet fighter don't come along too often, so when CONTACT joined with TopGun Flights to offer a rip-snorter ride in the sexy LC39, we knew it would be high on our readers' wish list.

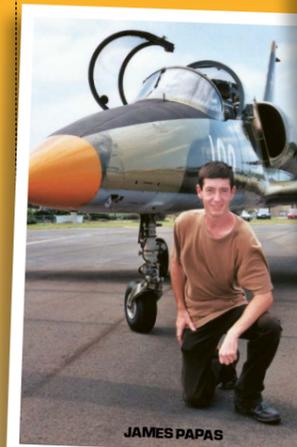
Sure enough, the entries flooded in and, at the end of it all, we had a winner in James Papas from Sydney.

The big day arrived and James made his way down to Albion Station, Wollongong, where TopGun conduct the majority of their flights.

First thing up was a pre-flight briefing, conducted by Glen Gregory, a pilot with 10 years aerobatic experience and a total 2000 hours flying to his credit. TopGun are real sticklers when it comes to safety and the briefing makes sure participants are well orientated with the aircraft and what to expect when they are in the air.

James is kitted up in a full flight suit and the jet engine begins to roar into life. As the revs build so does the adrenaline.

From where we stand we can hear the power come on and see the jet thundering down the runway. As it shoots past our viewing area it just gets airborne, retracts its landing gear, and continues on this low-level run gaining even more velocity before Glen pulls back on the stick,



JAMES PAPAS

sending the plane – and James – rocketing skyward at close to 200m/second.

For us earth-bound creatures, that's the last we see of them until, 30 minutes later, James returns to earth sporting eyes the size of dinner plates and a smile like a piano keyboard.

And James' last word on the subject? "For anyone contemplating becoming a fighter pilot or just contemplating a ride in a fighter jet... Just Do It!" (and he wasn't even wearing Nike's).

### TATTOO A REAL WINNER

By Jakob Marciniak

What a fantastic show – an artistry of colour, sound and movement all put into an excellent extravaganza. A truly Australian feel with that international spice which make it what it is.



From the opening massed pipes and drums through to the New Zealand band (a personal favourite with their ingenuity and of course their Haka) to the closing lone piper and fireworks.

The Royal Australian Air Force drill team performed flawlessly with spot-on precision, as did all other acts in the Tattoo.

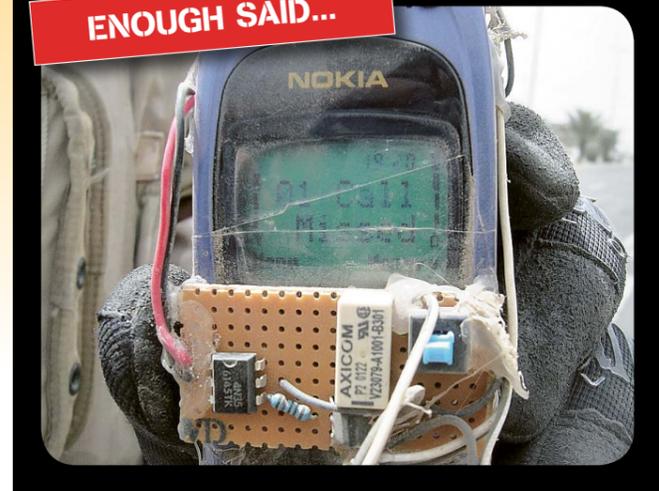
Chief of Defence Force General Peter Cosgrove was a surprise guest of honour,

making this an even more prestigious event.

There is honestly too much to say. All-in-all it was a great show – loud, surprising, funny and jaw dropping. A must see if you ever get the chance.

Thank you CONTACT for the tickets – they were great seats, a few rows from the front. Also one big hell of a thank you from my girlfriend, who loved it, and got about a million pictures.

### ENOUGH SAID...



## UNMEE CONTRIBUTION ENDS

Australia's contribution to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) has ended, with the final contingent of Australian Defence Force personnel returning to Australia in April.

Defence Minister Robert Hill said the Australian Defence Force has worked in UNMEE headquarter positions on Operation Pomelo since 2001 doing a range of important tasks such as training mission personnel and mapping.

The mission has involved monitoring of the cessation of hostilities in the region, troop deployments and the temporary security zone between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

## VIETNAM MIA IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced in March that the remains of a US Navy pilot, missing in action from the Vietnam War, had been identified.

Commander Thomas E.

Dunlop of Neptune Beach, Florida, was subsequently buried in Arlington National Cemetery on 21 March.

On April 6, 1972, Dunlop took off in a Corsair from the USS Coral Sea on a bombing mission in Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam. He was shot down by surface-to-air missile.

Of 88,000 Americans missing in action from all conflicts, 1836 are still registered as missing from the Vietnam War.

## ALBATROSS AUS/INDO BREAKS ICE

The first combined military exercise with Indonesia since 1999 saw Royal Australian Air Force AP-3C Orion crews complete a week of maritime surveillance missions and ground-based activities with their Indonesian counterparts and the Indonesian Boeing 737 Surveiller Maritime Patrol.

Missions conducted throughout the week exercised and demonstrated the interoperability between the

two air forces, providing an extended surveillance picture of maritime surface traffic in the area and affording an opportunity for Indonesian aircrew to fly with the Australian A-P3C Orion crews.

## MEDICAL BOOST

The ADF's deployable health capability will receive a \$58 million boost through the purchase of a package of new medical equipment.

Defence Minister Robert Hill said this would be a major

boost to medical teams deployed on operations, such as those recently deployed to Indonesia as part of Operation Sumatra Assist.

"The project will provide additional medical equipment for casualty evacuation and treatment, such as air conditioned sterile shelters to carry out surgery in the field as well as life stabilisation equipment for Aero Medical Evacuation," Senator Hill said.

"The investment will also improve health care,

including disease prevention and diagnosis, casualty treatment and evacuation. It will provide dedicated aero-medical evacuation equipment that can be fitted to military and civil aircraft."

## DON'T SHOOT YOURSELF IN THE FOOT

Defence Health has issued a timely reminder in relation to Lifetime Health Cover, a Federal Government initiative that requires health funds to apply a premium

loading to persons over 30 years of age when they first take out hospital cover.

To avoid paying a loading, individuals must take out hospital cover by the first of July following their thirty-first birthday. Otherwise they will pay an additional 2% loading for every year they delay.

More importantly, the loading will apply for the rest of their lives.

So, put the safety catch on and avoid this penalty by talking to a health insurer now.

## AL MUTHANNA TASK GROUP

In a sign of the ever-changing times we live in, 450 Australian soldiers are today working side by side with their Japanese contemporaries in Iraq.

Drawn heavily from Darwin's 1 Brigade, the Aussies are expected to provide area security for a well-equipped and well-armed Japanese engineering contingent – under the title Japanese Iraq Reconstruction Group (JIRG) – rather than any form of close protection.

First elements of the ADF deployment that make up the Al Muthanna Task Group (deriving its name from the southern Iraqi province in which they are operating) deployed from Darwin in mid April with advance elements established by ANZAC Day.

The task group is based at Camp Smitty in the Al Muthanna Province of Iraq and is responsible for providing a stable and secure environment for the JIRG as they undertake essential humanitarian, engineering and rebuilding tasks.

Up to 10 new Bushmaster vehicles and 40 ASLAVs, drawn primarily from 1 Brigade in Darwin, were deployed with the task group to provide additional transport and protection for ADF personnel.

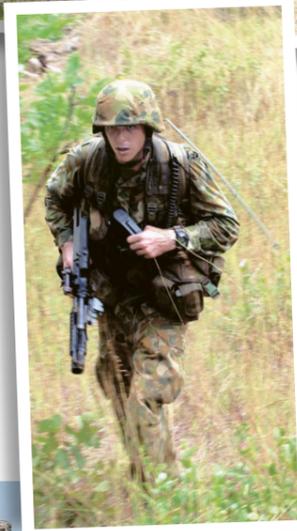
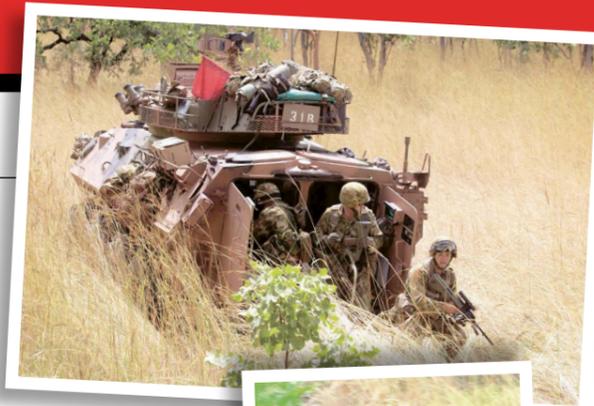
This will be the first operational deployment for the Bushmaster, although two early prototypes were used in East Timor.

The AMTG is commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Roger Noble, Commanding Officer of Darwin's 2 Cavalry Regiment, with Colonel Andrew Nikolic posted as the senior Australian military officer in southern Iraq working with the British headquarters in Basra.

HMAS Tobruk was used on a first-time deployment to the Gulf to transport the heavy equipment and vehicles.

Commander Nick Bramwell says Tobruk's heavy-lift capabilities make the ship ideally suited to this task.

"The ship's company worked tirelessly to ensure that the ship was fully

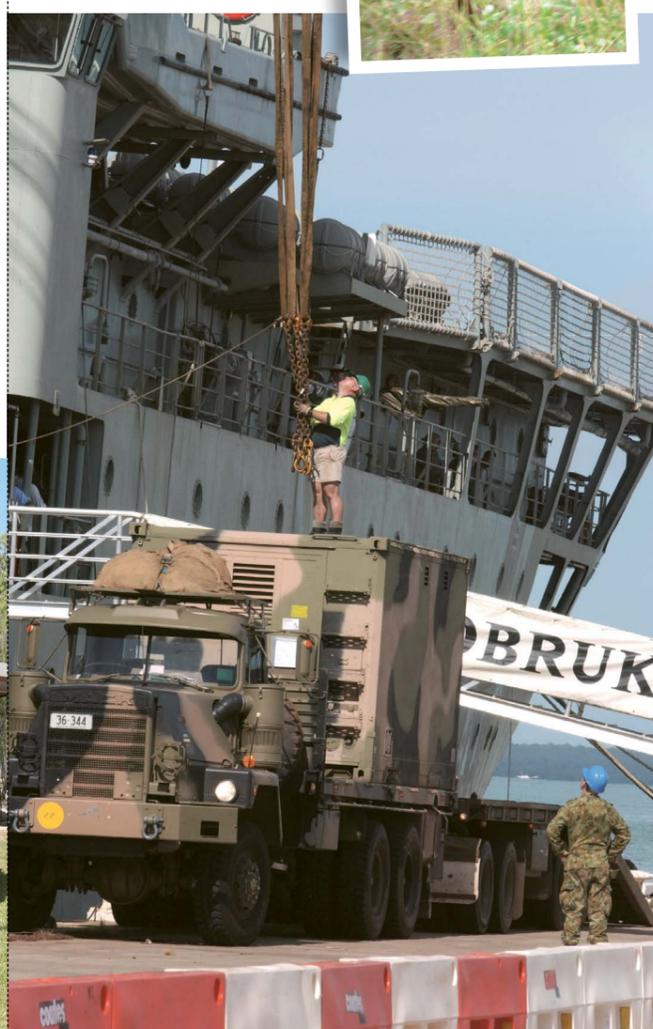


prepared for 1 Brigade's mission-essential vehicles, equipment and personnel."

Defence Minister Robert Hill says the government is committed to a 12-month operation, with six-monthly rotations of ADF personnel.

"However, the government will continually review the situation," he says.

Operation Catalyst currently comprises approximately 1370 personnel now that the AMTG has deployed.



## PIGGY-BACK TO YEMEN

Western Australia's port of Fremantle was privy to a very unusual sight in February when 10, 37.5 metre naval patrol boats were loaded, piggy-back on to a heavy-lift freighter.

The boats, built by Austal and destined for delivery to Yemen, took about two weeks to deliver.



<b>Length:</b>	37.5 metres
<b>Beam:</b>	7.2 metres
<b>Draft:</b>	2.2 metres
<b>Crew:</b>	3 officers 16 sailors
<b>Armament:</b>	1 x 25 mm twin barrelled naval gun 2 x 12.7 mm heavy machine guns
<b>Engines:</b>	2 x Caterpillar 1305 kW
<b>Propulsion:</b>	2 x fixed pitch propellers
<b>Maximum speed:</b>	29 knots
<b>Range:</b>	1000 nautical miles



## NEW CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE

Air Marshal Angus Houston will become the first Air Force man to serve as Chief of Defence Force when he replaces current CDF General Peter Cosgrove, who is retiring after more than 40 years' service.

Upon appointment, the new CDF will be promoted to Air Chief Marshal.

Air Marshal Houston has served in the RAAF for 35 years. He started as a cadet pilot in 1970.

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## YEAR OF THE HORNET



In October 1981, Australia signed a contract for the provision of 75 F/A-18 Hornet aircraft, of which 18 were two-seat aircraft configuration.

The first two aircraft were produced in the United States, with the remainder being assembled by the Government Aircraft Factories (GAF) in Victoria, Australia.

The Royal Australian Air Force received its first Hornet at RAAF Base Williamtown's No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit (2OCU) in May 1985.

2OCU commenced Hornet Pilot Training shortly after, in August 1985. As such, this year the RAAF celebrates 20 years of successful F/A-18 Hornet Operations.

To mark the occasion, F/A-18 Hornet A21-26, a single seat RAAF Hornet aircraft has been painted in a special Year of the Hornet anniversary paint scheme.

The commemorative paint scheme was decided by



holding a Hornet squadron/unit design competition, the winning design submitted by Sergeant David Turnbull, a current member of 3 Squadron located at RAAF Base Williamtown.

Painting of the aircraft was undertaken in the Aerospace Coatings facility at the Boeing Aerospace Support Centre (BASC), RAAF Base Amberley in February 2005.

Now completed, the paint scheme was officially launched and accepted at the Australian International Air Show at Avalon by Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Angus Houston.

## THIRD NZ CT UNIT

WORDS KIWI MAC PIC NZDF

As the number of trained counter terrorist operators leaving the country climbs, the NZ Army announces it is forming a new CT unit.

New Zealand's third counter-terrorist squad is looking for a few good men and women to form the country's third counter terrorist unit – the Counter Terrorist Tactical Assault Group (CTTAG).

The country's existing counter-terrorist capability is provided by the Army's Papakura-based 1 New Zealand Special Air Service Group (1NZSAS Gp) and the police's Special Tactics Group (STG).

STG was originally a part-time unit made up of selected Armed Offender Squad members but since 9/11 the STG has become a full-time unit with squads based in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

The role of domestic counter terrorism has

predominantly been a police responsibility, however statements by Army chiefs indicate change is in the wind.

Ads placed in service magazines say CTTAG will be based alongside 1NZSAS Gp to provide the Army's second counter terrorist team, concentrating on domestic threats.

The defence force said the need for CTTAG came about after repeated deployments to Afghanistan had left coverage of domestic counter terrorism stretched.

The number of NZSAS operators is a closely guarded secret but is thought to be between 80 and 150 people.

Former SAS operator 'Barry', who now works in the private security industry in Iraq, told CONTACT that the NZSAS had been at critical manning when he left in 1998. He said the need for reinforcement of the NZSAS had been



apparent for quite some time especially since the events of 9/11, but it would be wrong to blame operational deployment as the reason for so many resignations.

"An SAS trooper comes in on \$55,000, then he's offered \$158,000 by security firms to work in Iraq or Afghanistan – it's no wonder they're leaving."

CONTACT understands that over one recent three-month period, a third of the NZSAS operators resigned

– among them several senior instructors and one recent commanding officer.

Retention incentives of about \$15,000 had not been enough to retain staff and it is feared unless some clever manoeuvring is done, CTTAG will just provide private firms with another avenue for recruitment.

Special forces retention is not a problem unique to New Zealand, however.

One SNCO serving in Special Forces in the United States told CONTACT he had just signed a service extension of six years after being offered US\$160,000.

Australia's answer to the increased operational tempo and the resignation of up to 40 members of the SASR has seen the creation of its own new unit, the Tactical Assault Group (TAG).

In addition, the innovative Special Forces Direct Entry Recruitment Scheme has seen almost 200 new members enlisted directly from the civilian sector to fill the gaps.



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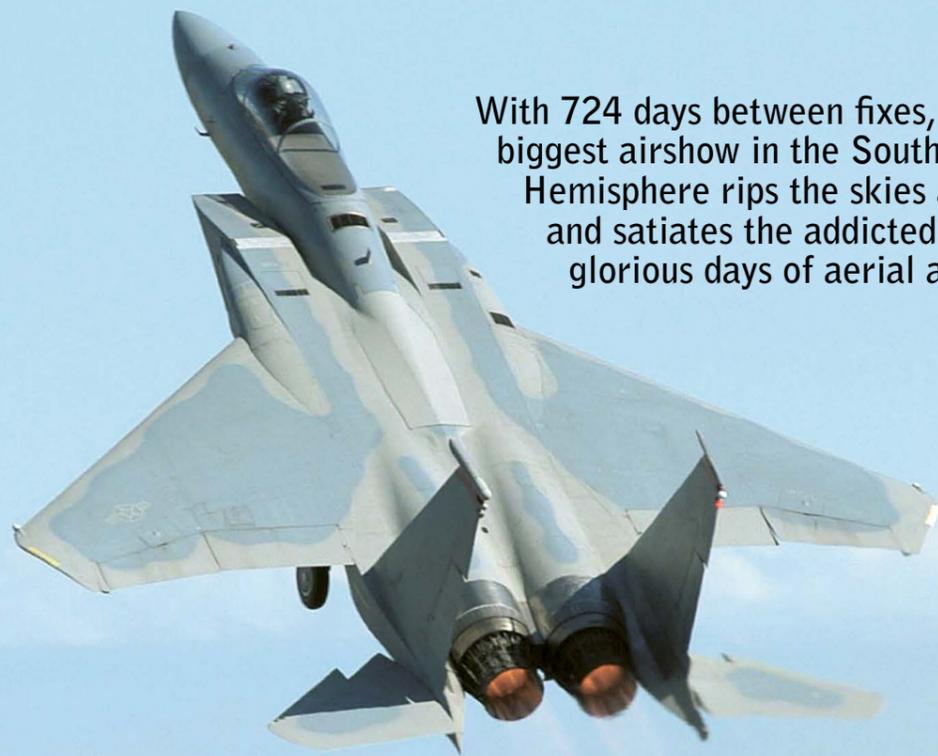
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# AIRSHOW DOMINION

WORDS AND PHOTOS BRIAN HARTIGAN

With 724 days between fixes, the biggest airshow in the Southern Hemisphere rips the skies apart and satiates the addicted for six glorious days of aerial action.



**B**illed as the fourth largest airshow in the world, the Australian International Airshow at Avalon, Victoria, is the biggest such event many of us are likely to experience – and grateful we are for the opportunity.

Coming around just once every two years, the airshow never fails to satisfy those with aviation fuel in their veins.

And 2005 was no exception.

Boasting a huge array of civil and military aircraft types from the past, present and even the future, this year's show was subtitled "The Shape of Things to Come".

It also, for the first time, featured a ground component that is very likely to grow in size and importance as weapons, vehicle and other equipment manufacturers come to realise the opportunity attendance can afford them.

Designed and billed as an important industry expose, the Australian International Airshow is as much about the business of military and civil aviation as it is about crowd pleasing.

While the first four days of the show are designated 'trade only', the crowds through the gate are none-the-less impressive. Then, as the gates are thrown open to general public admission from 2pm on Friday – let's just say it's just as well that we're all standing along the apron of one of Australia's longest runways.

Friday night at Avalon is now a spectacular tradition with the 'Night Alight' show, where aircraft of all shapes and sizes contribute to an evening of lights, pyrotechnics and, of course, sound.

From the ever-popular F111 dump-and-burn to the silence and grace of powerless, glider flight, Friday night is as spectacular as it is popular.

Then, as the sun-drenched weekend rolls on, throngs of moms, dads, kids and grandparents, strain their eyes skyward against the glare of the mid-day sun and follow hours of aerial ballet across the Victorian sky.

But with such an array of civil and military, powered and unpowered craft in the air throughout the day, each was worth the eye strain for very different reasons. From the silence and grace of sailplanes, parachutes and microlites, to the ear-piercing, baby-scaring thunder of the military jets, there was something to please everyone.

From my point of view, as a military-jet lover since childhood and this being my third attendance at Avalon, the performance that stands out the most was the mad-as-a-cut-snake aerobatics of Jurgis Kairys in his Su31. Appropriately called "Kuzoku", the Japanese word for "monster", this 400 horsepower monster, in the hands of the master, can literally hang, helicopter-like, from its propeller and fly sideways down the runway, just inches from the ground. I've never seen a plane of any shape or size do the things he forced this thing to do, and I probably never will again unless Jurgis comes back to Avalon. And I for one sincerely hope he does.

With more than 300,000 people filing through the gates at Avalon Airport in the five days of the International Airshow, exhibitors, salesmen, food and drink vendors, the Victorian economy and, of course, the event organisers are surely and justifiably happy about the continuing success of the biggest airshow in the Southern Hemisphere.

Roll on 2007.



F16

While Australian crowds were enjoying the sights and sounds at Avalon, the US Air Force was taking possession of its last F-16.

While the Lockheed Martin Aero plant in Fort Worth, Texas, will continue to produce Fighting Falcons for international customers, the aircraft delivered on March 18 is the last of 2231 F-16s produced for the Air Force. The first was delivered in 1978.

Brigadier-General Jeff Riemer, Director Operations, Air Force Materiel Command, flew the jet to its new home at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina.

"Having flown the very first F-16B while stationed at Edwards AFB, California, I am delighted to have had the opportunity to fly the last F-16 produced for the Air Force," he said.

Dan Mahrer, F-16 production program manager said, "Originally designed as a lightweight, daytime interceptor, the F-16 Fighting Falcon has been transformed over the past 20 years into a multi-role, all-weather, air-to-air and air-to-ground attack weapon system. Today's F-16 has significant combat capabilities."

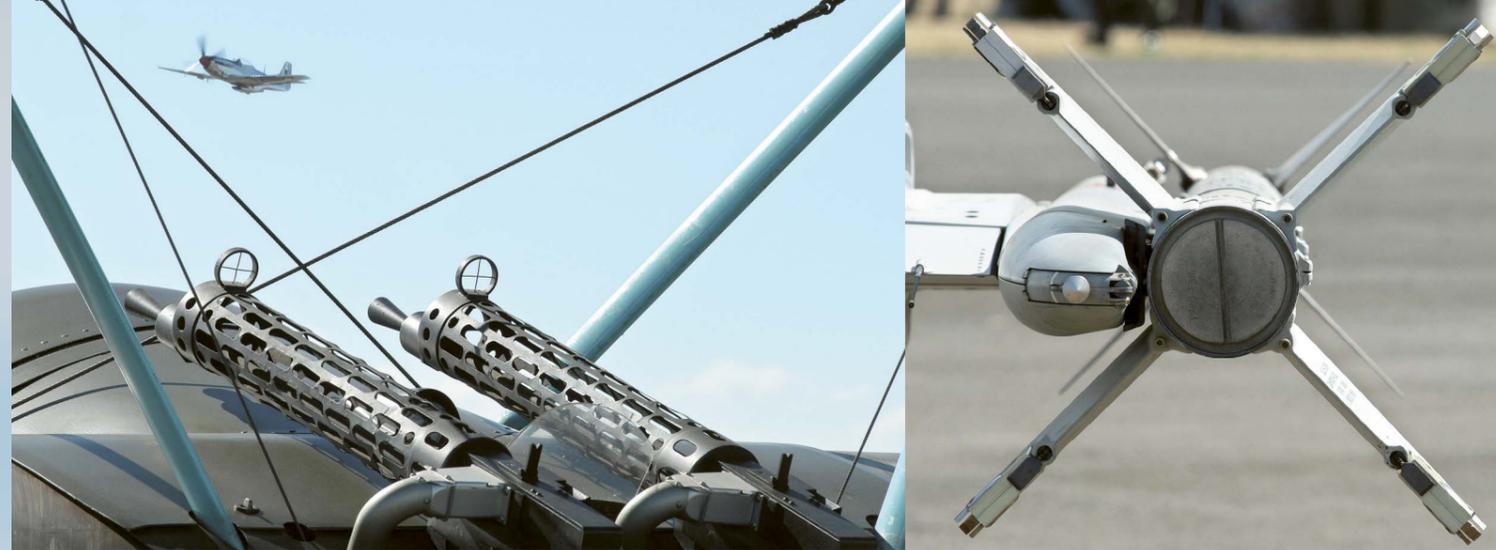
Although this is the last new Fighting Falcon expected to be produced for the Air Force, the F-16 Systems Group continues to upgrade the remaining fleet of more than 1300 older jets.



## F15



**Primary function:** Tactical fighter  
**Contractor:** McDonnell Douglas  
**Power plant:** Two Pratt & Whitney F100-PW-100  
**Thrust:** 23,450 pounds each engine  
**Wing span:** 42.8 feet (13 metres)  
**Length:** 63.8 feet (19.44 metres)  
**Height:** 18.5 feet (5.6 metres)  
**Speed:** 1875 mph (Mach 2.5 plus)  
**Maximum takeoff weight:** 68,000 pounds (30.8 tonnes)  
**Ceiling:** 65,000 feet  
**Ferry range:** 3000 nautical miles with external tanks  
**Crew:** F-15A/C – one; F-15B/D/E – two  
**Armament:** M-61A1 20mm six-barrel cannon with 940 rounds; four AIM-9L/M Sidewinder and four AIM-7F/M Sparrow air-to-air missiles, or eight AIM-120 AMRAAMs



## CATALINA

**A restored Catalina Flying Boat made a flying tribute to the unsung heroes of Australian military aviation with aerial and static displays at the Australian International Airshow 2005.**

The aircraft in question is the only airworthy number of its type currently flying in Australia.

During wartime, the aircraft's exceptional range ensured it forged a very special place in aviation annals. The Catalina carried almost 7000 litres of fuel giving it a marathon 20-hour operational endurance.

The 'Black Cats', as they are affectionately known, carried out a variety of dangerous operations far from their Australian bases in Darwin and Bowen in north Queensland.

Much of their work was carried out at night over Japanese bases throughout South East Asia and the South Pacific.

Their primary role was long-range reconnaissance and coastal surveillance which included mine-laying in enemy shipping lanes.

The aircraft also figured in numerous rescue operations, plucking downed fliers from the Coral Sea. Many Allied airmen owe their lives to the bravery of the Catalina crews.

The Catalina appearing at Avalon is owned and operated by HARS – the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society. It sports the colours of Number 43 Squadron.

For those who crewed or serviced Catalinas during WWII, it was surely a very special flight down memory lane, while for the rest of us, the appearance of this ungainly looking, yet gallant aircraft was a rare insight into a very heroic chapter of the Battle for Australia.

Among other historic warbirds making a welcome appearance were Spitfire, Mustang, Boomerang, DC3 and even a German tri-plane of WWI vintage.



## Helicopters of all shapes and sizes strutted their stuff at the Australian International Airshow 2005.

The Australian Defence Force was well represented with more than a dozen aircraft, including Iroquois, Black Hawk, Chinook, Kiowa, Seasprite, Sea King and Seahawk on display on the ground and in the air.

Confined to ground display for the duration, the Army's new Tiger ARH and MRH90 helicopters attracted a lot of attention. But it was in the air, however, the military rotary-winged stable really shone.

In a well choreographed daily battle scenario, two Kiowa light reconnaissance helicopters from Townsville's 162 Recce Sqdn led the charge, pathfinding for the assault to come. First, two Black Hawks from 5 Avn Regt inserted the ground troops needed to seize and hold the ground. Then, everybody's sentimental old favourite, Huey, stormed in to pick up casualties, before the mighty Chinook delivered not only a 105mm artillery piece, but enough men to operate it as well – the enemy didn't stand a chance.

After the battle, probably most impressive of all, however, was the close choreography of the Navy's 723 Squadron Helicopter Display Team – dubbed The Pirouettes. Their routine comprised a pair of Squirrel helicopters in close aerial ballet which, impressive at any time, was enhanced by the setting sun on the airshow's traditional Friday evening "Night Alight" programme.

Also on display were two Super Puma helicopters from the Republic of Singapore Air Force. These helicopters are based at the Army Airfield, Oakey, Queensland where the Singaporeans run a military flying school, far from the congested airspace of their island home.

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## For the first time at Avalon, major displays of land-based equipment and ground defence technology formed an important part of the Australian International Airshow.

A large area of the airshow site at Avalon was set aside to showcase a vast array of land-based systems and military hardware, a collection of armoured vehicles and troop carriers, artillery pieces, rocket and missile launchers and even a huge, glass-fronted dive tank complete with Navy frogmen.

Airshow CEO Ian Honnery said that broadening the event's philosophy to include land warfare assets was a natural progression.

"Many of our major aerospace exhibitors are also involved in the development of ground-based hardware, so it's only natural these high-tech items should be included in displays", he says.

An impressive array of leading-edge equipment currently used by the Army fascinated many people, and the operators of the vehicles, artillery and other land systems were on hand to explain their equipment to members of the public.

Mr Honnery said the equipment on show gave an insight into the past, present and future of land warfare systems and technologies and further enhanced the airshow's theme 'The Shape of Things to Come'.



**AVALON AIRSHOW**



**B52**

A majestic B52 Stratofortress made an all-too brief visit to the airshow making just one pass down the centreline of the Avalon runway before completing a wide sweep to slip back to Darwin where it was overnighing.

B52s are destined to have an operational lifespan like few other military aircraft. Having first flown in 1954 and after serving in Vietnam in the 1960s, Kuwait in the 1990s and Afghanistan and Iraq in the 2000s, they are earmarked to remain in service beyond 2040.

The dimensions of this durable warhorse, like its weaponry, are awesome.

It weighs in at a massive 220 tonnes at takeoff. It boasts a 56-metre wingspan and a 48-metre long fuselage.

Strato fortress is a true long-range bomber and can fly more than 16,000 kilometres without refuelling. It has a maximum speed of mach .9 (957 kilometres per hour) and an operational ceiling of 55,000 feet.

The massive thrust required to keep the aircraft aloft comes courtesy of eight Pratt and Whitney turbofans mounted in pairs.

From a total of 744 B-52s built by Boeing between 1954 and 1962, 91 remain in service today and could be 90 years old when they finally retire.

**C-17 GLOBEMASTER III**

C-17 Globemaster III is the newest, most flexible cargo aircraft to enter the airlift force. It is capable of rapid strategic delivery of troops and all types of cargo to main operating bases or directly to forward bases in the deployment area. The aircraft is also capable of performing tactical airlift and airdrop missions.

**FEATURES**

The C-17 measures 174 feet long (53 metres) with a wingspan of 169 feet, 10 inches (51.75 metres). The aircraft is powered by four, fully reversible, F117-PW-100 engines (the military designation for the commercial Pratt & Whitney PW2040), currently used on the Boeing 757. Each engine is rated at 40,440 pounds of thrust. The thrust reversers direct the flow of air upward and forward to avoid ingestion of dust and debris.

The aircraft is operated by a crew of three (pilot, co-pilot and loadmaster).

Cargo is loaded through a large aft door that accommodates military vehicles and palletised cargo. Maximum payload capacity is 78 tonnes, and its maximum gross takeoff weight is 265 tonnes. It has an unrefueled range of approximately 2400 nautical miles and cruises at approximately 450 knots.

C-17 can take off and land on runways as short as 3000 feet (914 metres) and only 90 feet wide (27.4 metres). Even on such narrow runways, it can turn around using a three-point turn and its backing capability. Although it is used primarily as a strategic transport aircraft to established bases, it also has the ability to operate from unprepared strips.

**BACKGROUND**

C-17 made its maiden flight in 1991, and the first production model was delivered to Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina, in June 1993. The US Air Force was originally programmed to buy a total of 120 C-17s, but this has since increased to 180 aircraft. The UK also operates four C-17s, which are on lease from Boeing.

Unit cost of the C-17 Globemaster III is more than US\$200 million.



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# PRINCE OF WALES AWARDS

WORDS AND PICS LIEUTENANT ANDREW WARTON



Not content with nine-to-five, some in our society choose to serve their nation as well – and a few manage to marry both lives so that everyone's a winner.

In the course of a normal working life, most individuals are content to work nine-to-five or equivalent shift hours, earning the dosh necessary to go home and concentrate on "real life".

But for many in our society, one job is not enough. Some choose to work a main bread-winning job and join a branch of the Defence Reserves for a bit of fun on the side. One or the other job will usually occupy the major focus of their hearts.

A few others manage to invest equal passion in both. And for a very select, lucky few, both passions are so mutually complimentary, demarcation so blurred, as to bring both professions into singular focus.

Both the civilian and Defence employer benefit from this dedication and professionalism. In recognition of this, the Prince of Wales Awards were established to reward individuals of excellent calibre.

Under the patronage of Prince Charles, the award recognises the efforts of individuals in their dual careers. Recipients

of the award win an opportunity to travel and study in the UK, US or Canada to broaden their experience and gain specific knowledge in areas relevant to both their civilian and service employment.

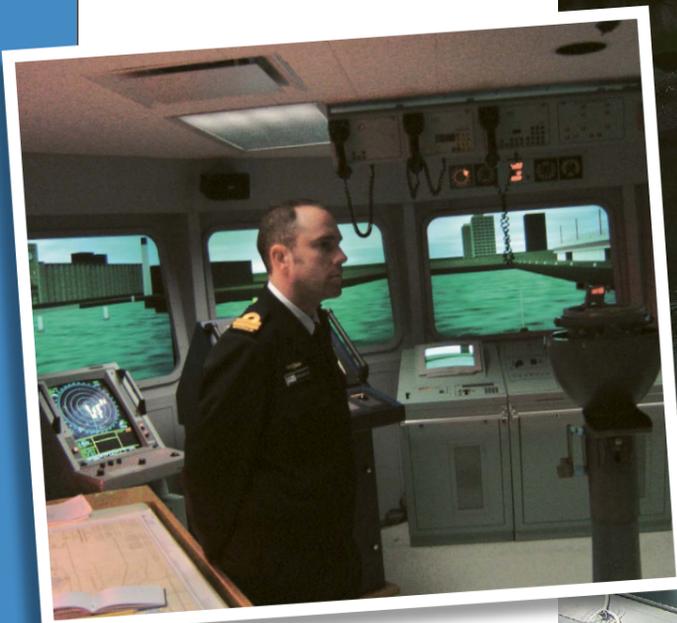
Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence Danna Vale says, "Our reserves play an integral role in the defence of Australia, both at home and overseas. Not only are the Prince of Wales Award winners leading representatives of the military, but they also excel in their day-to-day professional lives and are a credit to their nation".

Winner of a 2002 Prince of Wales Award, Navy Lieutenant and Australian Federal Police Federal Agent Andrew Warton recently returned from Canada after

choosing that country for his POWA visit and to further professional relationships that will benefit his role in both organisations.

In a required qualifying submission to the Prince of Wales Awards committee Lieutenant Warton observed that, "People smuggling sees the AFP working closely with the Royal Australian Navy both at the operational and policy levels".

Writing his report not long after the Tampa and Children Overboard incidents, Lieutenant Warton observed that, "Over the past three years, Australia has experienced an unprecedented rise in the number of unlawful arrivals of people from overseas by boat.



**UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF PRINCE CHARLES, THE AWARD RECOGNISES THE EFFORTS OF INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR DUAL CAREERS.**

**POW AWARDS**

"In Australia, the AFP bears primary responsibility for the apprehension and investigation of those individuals involved in people smuggling incidents.

"However, a myriad of other government agencies, especially Navy, bear further enforcement responsibilities at various stages of the people smuggling enterprise under what is now referred to as a whole-of-government approach."

On his POWA-sponsored visit to Canada in January and February this year, Federal Agent Warton spent the first two-and-a-half weeks focused on the law-enforcement side of his profession. Hosted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), he spent much of this time in briefings and touring with border-patrols including land-, sea- and air-patrol elements.

Being a qualified barrister and solicitor as well as Federal Agent and Navy Legal Officer, Lieutenant Warton was also keen to see how the law-enforcement elements of Canada's border patrols interact with the court system and was duly accorded comprehensive tours of local, provincial and supreme courts.

Changing hats from Federal Agent to Naval Officer, the second half of his Canadian tour found Lieutenant Warton on the west coast of this vast country on sea-going patrol aboard HMCS Whitehorse, a 55-metre maritime coastal defence vessel.

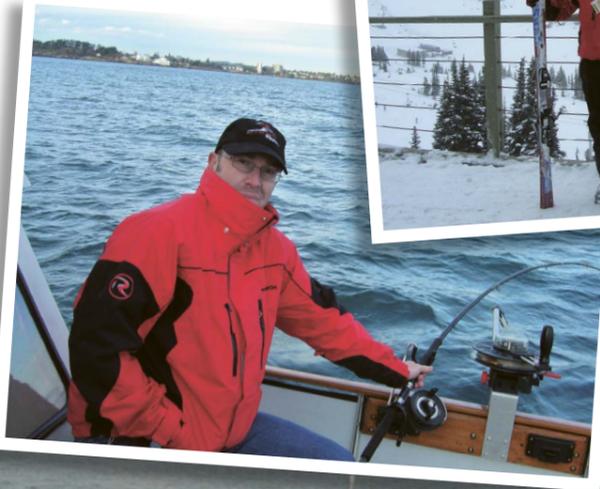
The voyage, through spectacularly picturesque, pristine coastal islands and bays, included live-fire, man-overboard and damage-control drills and an opportunity to perform officer-of-the-watch duties on the bridge – at 0300hrs.

The trip wasn't all work and no play, though. Andrew had a couple of days and a few scattered hours to enjoy some R&R, including a day skiing on Mt Whistler – "My number-one priority and a life ambition" – that did not disappoint. Indulging another life passion, he also wet a fishing line or two and sampled a variety of high-quality seafood restaurants and nightlife on both Canadian coasts.

After completing a unique working tour, highly beneficial to both sides of his professional life, Federal Agent/Lieutenant Andrew Warton rates the trip a major success from all viewpoints.

"This has been a fast-paced and incredible life experience," he says.

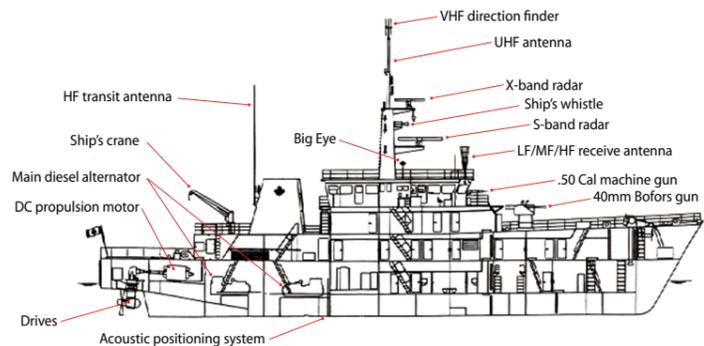
"I have made many valuable professional and personal contacts and have had such a diverse range of experiences – it will be a trip hard to top."



**HMCS WHITEHORSE**



<b>Length</b>	55.31m
<b>Breadth</b>	11.30m
<b>Draught</b>	3.05m
<b>Displacement</b>	934 tons
<b>Propulsion</b>	2 x 1150kw DC motors
<b>Speed</b>	15 knots
<b>Range</b>	5000 nautical miles
<b>Complement</b>	35 officers and crew
<b>Armament</b>	1 x 40mm rapid fire gun 2 x .50 cal HMGs



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# THE KING'S TROOP ON GUARD

PICS GARY RAMAGE

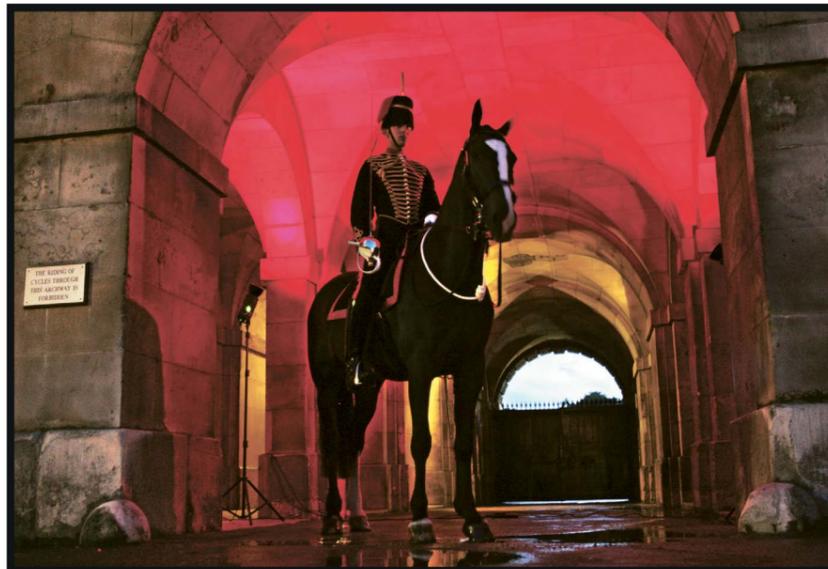
Whitehall, London – thousands of tourists gather each day to witness the spectacle that is the changing of the Queen's Life Guard.

Not just a spectacle for the tourists, however, this daily ritual is an important and long-standing tradition in times of change.

In this second photo essay, former Australian Defence photographer Gary Ramage captures the pomp and ceremony as the members of The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery mount duty at Horse Guards, Whitehall.

After WWII, King George VI requested the restoration of a saluting battery in London to take part in major ceremonial duties. Originally known as the Riding Troop, The King's Troop gained its name in October 1947 when the King declared it his troop following an inspection. Today, it retains the name by decent of the Queen in recognition of her father's special interest in the troop.

When on other major parades, the King's Troop takes precedence over all other Regiments and has the honour of parading on the right of the line.

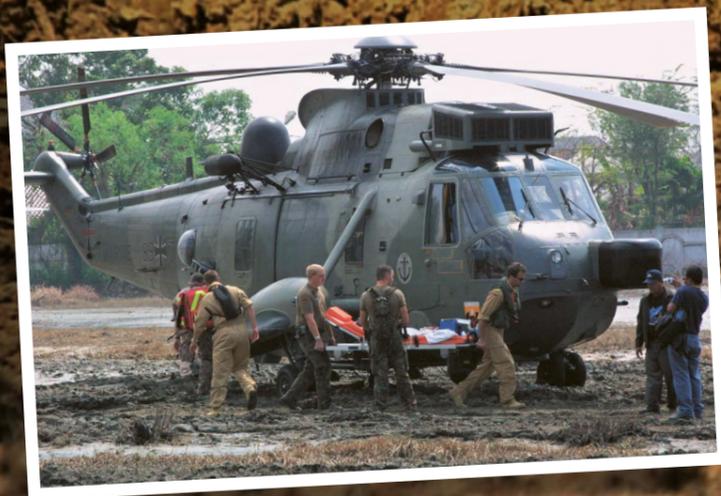


# A TRULY HUMAN EXPERIENCE

RELIVING A VERY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

IN INDONESIA'S TSUNAMI-DEVASTATED

PROVINCE OF BANDA ACEH



WORDS CORPORAL CAMERON JAMIESON PICS ADF



Inside the crowded dimness of the RAAF Hercules I look again at my watch, hoping another hour has passed. The dim green glow of the watch's light advises me it's only 15 minutes since I last had a look. With a sigh of resignation I settle back into the red nylon seat, which seems designed to deny the occupant any decent sleep, and think about my destination.

Before December 26, 2004, I doubt many people could have pointed to Banda Aceh on a map without help. Now nearly the whole world knows where it is – and for a reason that leaves many numb.

The 2004 Boxing Day earthquake and tsunami was an event that united the world in grief. The death and destruction was on an unimaginable scale, and the images relayed on television could only hint at the reality of the mud, rubble and rotting flesh that assaulted the senses of those who had survived and those who came to help.

Before I left Canberra, people said I was off on an adventure and they wished they

were going. They were very, very wrong. The price of entry into this adventure would be to witness human suffering and the destruction of property on an unprecedented scale. This was a trip into the darkness of human existence, where the horrific had become the norm.

Although I want the flight to be over, I'm in no hurry to see Banda Aceh. By mid-January, the death toll has passed six figures, and is steadily climbing as I fly across the Northern Territory on the first leg of my mission to report on the humanitarian relief work being done by ADF personnel in Indonesia as part of Operation Sumatra Assist.

In Darwin, I meet the NCOs and airmen in the operations bunker and air movements terminal who have been recalled from leave and who are working horrendous hours to ensure the aid flights are made.

It has been a somewhat thankless task for them, as the world's attention is focused thousands of kilometres away in south-east Asia. Yet there is no bitterness in their voices

– they know the importance of their task. They are the small cogs that help make the big wheels go round, and their minds are fully focused on the task. They know that lives depend on their work, and they're determined not to let anyone down.

The same can be said of the personnel working from the RAAF logistic node in Butterworth, Malaysia, except that many of them had experienced the earthquake that triggered the disaster.

The Army personnel of Rifle Company Butterworth had immediately volunteered to help the small RAAF contingent of 324 Combat Support Squadron based there, and from that, a major logistic node has evolved to support the operation. Now there is a force support element located there, assigned as part of the operation's joint task force, and together with the RAAF personnel, they work long hours to ensure the troops in Indonesia have what they want when they need it.

It is here I first meet people who have been into Indonesia and met the survivors

evacuated from Aceh province. Their stories send chills down my spine as they tell of the orphans, widows and silent figures who step from evacuation aircraft.

Soon it is time to board another Herc and fly to Medan in northern Sumatra. Banda Aceh is calling.

The reality of the task force HQ is a bit hard to take at first. Located in the function room of a large Indonesian hotel, I have to remind myself I am on an operation.

The slick glitz of the hotel foyer and the function-room furnishings are only a veneer though – the HQ personnel are oblivious to the comforts of their surroundings as they work long hours in a room with no windows. In effect, it is a 24-hour command bunker that just happens to be located in a hotel because it makes accommodation, catering and communications easier.

The next morning I board a 173 Squadron Army King Air and enjoy the novelty of forward-facing seats that are comfortable. As the plane descends into Banda Aceh, I catch my first glimpse of the devastation.

The coastal region of the city has been largely flattened. Many of the buildings in the central section are still standing, but are inundated with the debris and the mud from coastal houses and paddy fields. The rear third of Banda Aceh is almost untouched, creating a surreal environment in which normal life is returning.

I was to travel through these three zones many times during my stay, and each one would evoke a different reaction.

Even the rear section of the city is charged with emotion, for it's here that the mass grave is located, near the road to the airport. The stench of decaying bodies and the sight of trucks laden with plastic-wrapped corpses entering the gravesite is an everyday part of life that one quickly becomes accustomed to.

Much has been done at the Zainal Abidin Hospital, where the Anzac Field Hospital is located, when I arrive there.

The thick mud from the paddy fields has been cleared from the pathways and some of the buildings, but the only way to

remove the smell of the mud and the dead is to desensitise oneself.

My workspace is alongside the hospital morgue, and some nights I sleep in the room where the coffins had been stored. It's preferable to the amenities room in the hospital headquarters where I slept on other nights – the Indonesian translator who works for the PR officer has refused to sleep in there because of the ghosts.

All the Australians I meet are very polite, but distant, as if the desensitising process has also removed some of their ability to relate to living humans. But I soon find myself behaving the same way – a natural response to unnatural surroundings.

The common expression for the coastal region of Banda Aceh is – Ground Zero. Resembling the after-effects of an atomic bomb blast, there is little left standing and some structures lean away from the force of the tsunami.



### A JOB WELL DONE

Following both the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami and the March earthquake, the Department of Defence proved to be an important part of the Australian Government's humanitarian relief assistance to Indonesia.

Defence's support for the tsunami relief effort was known as Operation Sumatra Assist, its support for the earthquake relief effort – Operation Sumatra Assist Phase Two.

Fresh drinking water, tentage, medical supplies, blankets and other emergency provisions, logistic support and the 'ANZAC Field Hospital', jointly operated by ADF and NZDF medical personnel.

Sadly, nine ADF members lost their lives in a helicopter accident on 2 April during Phase Two. ADF Achievements included...

#### Operation Sumatra Assist:

- > 1200 tonnes of aid supplies distributed by air;
- > 70 aero-medical evacuations;
- > 2530 people transported by air;
- > 3700 medical treatments (AFH);
- > 4.7 million litres of clean water produced;
- > 9000 cubic metres of debris cleared;
- > 1000m of road cleared;
- > 1700 large drains cleared; and,
- > 6 large fishing boats salvaged.

#### Operation Sumatra Assist – Phase II:

- > 133 tonnes of rice delivered;
- > 5000 litres water provided;
- > 570 patients treated ashore by medical staff;
- > 13 Surgical and further treatments conducted on board HMAS Kanimbla;
- > 7 Sea King aero-medical evacuations;
- > town water pump and generator repaired;
- > 138 tonnes of stores moved by Hercules; and,
- > Operation Kindergarten Cops entertained hundreds of children in Lahewa, teaching them to play cricket and Aussie Rules.

It is here that I find the Australian engineers, clearing away debris from the streets and the drains. The look on their faces speaks volumes of the waiting horror, of undiscovered bodies and body parts, that lie beneath the surface.

Other engineers man water purification plants dotted across the city. They too look like they have seen too much.

But no one complains – they know the hardship is unavoidable. So they continue. And gradually the city comes back to life, one step at a time.

The worst experiences are the flights along the western coast of Aceh with the Iroquois helicopters of A Squadron, 5 Aviation Regiment. Sitting in the open doorway, camera in hand, the reality and extent of the wider destruction is laid bare. I see the biggest ocean-going barge I have ever seen, along with its attending tug, lying stranded across the main

western road. A large freighter lies on its side, smashed against its concrete wharf.

Time and time again the main road vanishes, or the bridges are washed away. In one place, a multi-span bridge simply empties into the sea.

And then there are the foundations of hundreds of homes that lie like a tile mosaic streaked with mud. Entire villages have disappeared, along with most of their inhabitants. The destruction is so complete it makes human existence seem trivial.

But the Indonesians are not defeated. Many are still in shock, but their resilience is plain for all to see. Despite losing so much, they are determined to rise from the wreckage of disaster. They remain polite and smile and wave.

They appreciate the assistance they are receiving, and understand the sincerity of the Australians who have come to help.

That, perhaps, is the greatest reward of all – the look in their eyes when you say hello. They know we are here to help – and they are grateful.

The flight back to Australia is long, but this time the duration doesn't seem to matter. I know I am returning to a fortunate land, where my home and family are safe.

I have spoken to many people, written numerous stories and filed dozens of pictures. I have also seen things that are beyond belief – that I hope never to see again. Now I can sleep in the Hercules' uncomfortable red nylon seat as it drones towards home. Compared to what the people of Banda Aceh are experiencing, my discomfort is nothing.

*Reproduced, with permission, from Incoming – the magazine produced by Army newspaper.*

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THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

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 SERGEANT WENDY JONES  
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 LIEUTENANT JONATHAN KING  
 SQUADRON LEADER PAUL MCCARTHY  
 FLIGHT LIEUTENANT LYN ROWBOTTOM  
 PETTY OFFICER STEPHEN SLATTERY



# KILLED HELPING A NEIGHBOUR

WORDS BRIAN HARTIGAN PICS ADF

Leading Seaman Scott Bennett, Lieutenant Mathew Davey, Lieutenant Matthew Goodall, Sergeant Wendy Jones, Lieutenant Paul Kimlin, Lieutenant Jonathan King, Squadron Leader Paul McCarthy, Flight Lieutenant Lyn Rowbottom, and Petty Officer Stephen Slattery, lost their lives on the Indonesian island of Nias helping a neighbour recover from a series of devastating natural disasters.

In true Aussie spirit, nine men and women from the Australian Defence Force died in a tragic helicopter crash while helping a neighbour through difficult times.

Reeling from the devastation of the Boxing Day tsunami, western regions of the Indonesian archipelago welcomed the influx of Aussies bent on helping them cope with what was one of the worst natural disasters in history.

With their work done, the Aussies were homeward bound when Mother Nature struck a second cruel blow to a country that had seen too much death already. The earthquake that hit on 28 March, took a heavy toll on an already battered nation and, almost within sight of home port, the Australian service men and women aboard HMAS Kanimbla were turned around and sent back to help once more.

But in a cruel twist, tragedy struck the helpers while freshly engaged on their mercy mission and took the lives of nine of our finest...





...Two weeks later, their countrymen and women bowed heads in silent prayer and remembered their friends.

Addressing a huge crowd in the Great Hall, Parliament House, Prime Minister John Howard recalled meeting some of the young men and women whose lives were being honoured.

"Everything about them was so beautifully Australian," he said. "They were direct, they were friendly, they were tough, they were courageous, but they were also compassionate. They were doing something in our name for the poor people of Indonesia. They were doing good deeds in the name of Australia and that, of course, is what is so heartbreaking about the event that we mark today.

"The example of these young men and women is the most reassuring message and resonance that we can have, that the soul and the character of modern Australia is good and decent.

"They epitomised everything about our way of life that we believe in and we treasure their commitment, their decency, their love, their compassion, their cheekiness, their cheerfulness – all of those things that are so beautifully Australian.

"We thank them for what they have done in our name."



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WORDS SHANNON JOYCE PICS ADF

# FROM OUT OF THE SHADOW

“Better to let *them* do it imperfectly than do it perfectly yourself, for it is their country, their way – and your time is short”

Lawrence of Arabia –  
The Seven Pillars of Wisdom  
by T.E. Lawrence



A couple of men with AK47s bundle out of a rusty, red Opel sedan 100 metres down the road from the New Iraqi Army (NIA) training facility at Al Kisik in northern Iraq. With their faces wrapped in cloth to conceal identities, they scramble for a clear firing point about the vehicle. The ex-Kurdish Peshmerga hired security manning the facility's gate scuttle about the perimeter, as a spray of gunfire rattles in their direction. The rounds are not accurate, well-aimed shots, but they don't need to be. The message is clear.

In a scream of insulting, muffled tongues and victorious arm gestures, the gunmen scramble into the battered, ancient car, and speed back towards the local township ahead of a plume of black exhaust.

Impressions of a disorganised rabble of fighters on the run would prove far from lasting, however, as the first Australian Army Training Team - Iraq (AATT-I) members deploying to northern Iraq would soon experience firsthand. They were just 25 minutes off being casualties of the struggle themselves, when two truck bombs ripped through their mess and recruit-training headquarters on their Iraqi training base.

The Australians had not long finished lunch at the mess and were in their lines preparing for the afternoon's lessons when two near-by explosions indicated someone had attacked the base.

Not clear on what had happened, the Australians immediately prepared for more, gearing up in Kevlar and patrol-order equipment. Outside, recruits started to gather, unsure what had happened or what to do next.

Thirty seconds later, mortars from positions outside the base began to rain down, with 127mm Katyusha rockets

striking the perimeter from various directions in a co-ordinated attack that seemed almost all encompassing.

One of the safest places in the minds of the new army recruits was quickly proving flawed and, with 10 of their colleagues dead at the end of the strike, an exodus from the base began that afternoon. Many of 10 Battalion's recruits, and up to 90 per cent of interpreters, simply walked out the front gate of the base.

For determined new recruits arriving for basic training across the country, deadly attacks at recognised gathering places were becoming a daily event. The interim government was preparing to take control of Iraq, and insurgents were stepping up their activities.

Coalition forces and foreign contractors were always attractive targets, but the kidnappings, ambushes, IEDs and mortar attacks weren't causing the heart of the coalition to falter.

Insurgents knew they couldn't defeat the foreign forces militarily, so their only hope for success would have to come through a prolonged war. The new government and symbols of the country's officialdom would have to be disrupted as much as possible. And if a religious and ethnically diverse New Iraqi Army, capable of securing its own country, couldn't be kept together, then insurgents would clearly be closer to an unstable Iraq.

But it wasn't just the soldiers and recruits at bases and training facilities that were being targeted. Insurgent checkpoints at various towns such as Fallujah were commonplace. Iraqis caught with papers identifying them as NIA, would be taken away and a photo of their butchered remains sent to their families. There were few Australian trainers in the contingent

that didn't know of at least one Iraqi they had worked with at some stage of their deployment that simply disappeared and was never heard of again.

Sergeant Dean Birse, 8/12 Medium Regiment, had worked closely with one Iraqi Brigade Intelligence Officer, who went off base to pick up embellishments for his uniform – and never returned. Days later, photographs sent to the battalion, told a sickening tale.

"Insurgents had caught up with him in town," Sergeant Birse says. "They executed him in the worst possible way, took his four body pieces and placed them on each point of an intersection before photographing their handiwork."

Competing with such a brutal terror campaign, the first 44-member Australian Army Training Team, who arrived in Iraq in May 2004, had an important and challenging task ahead of them.

For the trainers, they felt the onus to provide those Iraqis who remained through the threats and intimidation, the best preparation they could give them for future operations.

But there was no real precedent for this kind of role that they could draw upon.

Following in the footsteps of a very proud tradition, the Australians had been named in honour one of our longest operationally serving units – the Australian Army Training Team-Vietnam – but the experience of the earlier team was of little use for what their contemporaries faced in Iraq. E-mails of support from veterans to their latter-day namesakes were always morale boosting, but there was little by way of tangible similarity between the two situations.

So how do you start building an aircraft mid-flight?



The once-proud Iraqi military society of the early '90s had numbered close to one million. But there was no real Defence Force structure anymore as the US had already disbanded the old regime's 350,000 troops who had remained in-barracks and didn't resist the invasion.

With a goal set to train 30,000 to 40,000 troops for three Iraqi divisions within two years, the US and its allies were starting nearly from scratch.

Although recruitment systems for the NIA were up and running, and manning for the 4th Motorised Infantry Brigade was organised before the AATT-I's arrival in country, there was much yet to be done.

To fill senior positions in the new army, experienced soldiers were recruited from the old regime and from among the Kurdish Peshmerga from the north.

But before the NCOs (non-commissioned officers) and officers of the NIA could get to work training with the recruits at the northern base, five weeks had been set-aside for them to train with the Australians to learn how to function as a force of leaders.

The first location Australian trainers deployed to was an old Iran/Iraq war border fort. The nearby town was considered a mounting base for insurgent operations – many equipped themselves in the town before moving south to Baghdad, but some elements would remain and cause trouble for the coalition forces in the area.

Before reveille on 26 June, insurgents were preparing a mortar base plate in a creek line 1500 metres northwest of the fort. The first impacts were heard falling long of the target, and were followed by an immediate cry of, "Incoming!"

## IN BIG FOOTSTEPS

Australian troops assisting with the training of the Iraqi armed forces had a name change early in their tour and are now known as the Australian Army Training Team-Iraq (AATT-I) in honour of their Vietnam War predecessors.

Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy says the Australian Army is built on a long and proud history and its soldiers are inspired by the deeds of those who have served before them.

"Therefore it is fitting that we acknowledge the soldiers of the Australian Army Training Team-Vietnam (AATT-V) by renaming their modern-day counterparts, the Australian Army Training Team-Iraq."

Originally known as the Iraqi Army Training Team, they were deployed to help develop a complete Iraqi Army Brigade – from the development of its officers and soldiers to mentoring the Brigade as it trains the new Iraqi soldiers.

The Australian training team currently consists of 50 Army officers and soldiers. The training they provide includes the full range of professional military and practical skills, implementing orders and instructions, fitness, weapons training and protection and has established a strong foundation for an Iraqi Army Brigade.

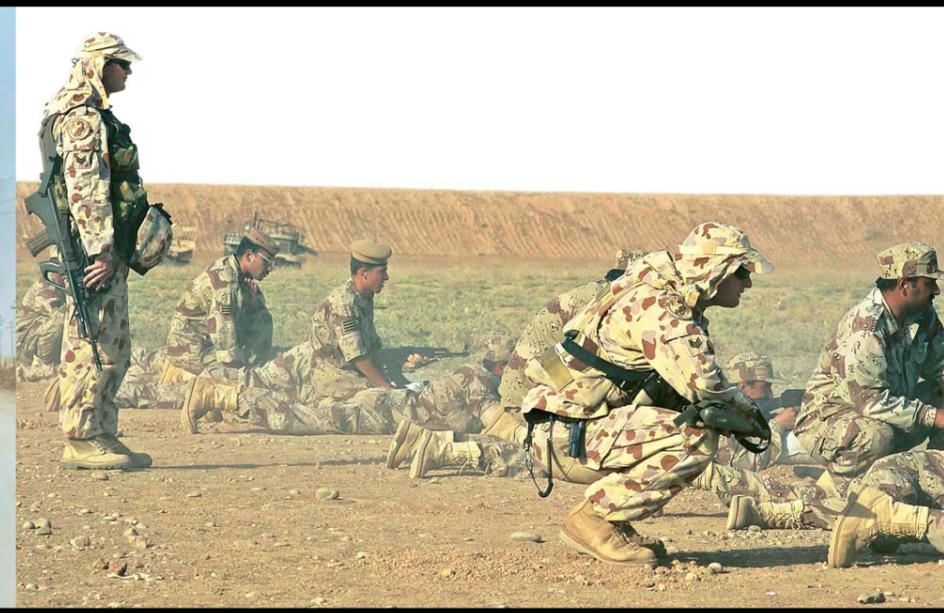
The original Australian Army Training Team-Vietnam was a small elite team that is one of the most highly decorated units in the Australian Army. They personified the Army's values of courage, initiative and teamwork and are an important part of the history of the Australian Army.

AATT-V was raised and sent to Vietnam in 1962 and remained until the end of 1972. From an original team of 30, it expanded to 100 personnel in 1965 and reached a peak of 200 members. It consisted mainly of officers, warrant officers and sergeants who were experts in jungle warfare. The unit continuously served for more than 10 years, making it the longest-serving Australian unit of any service in any theatre of war.

The team was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation, US Meritorious Unit Commendation, a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm. Individual members of the team were awarded four Victoria Crosses, a number of Military Crosses and numerous Mention in Dispatches.



**WITH A GOAL SET TO TRAIN 30,000 TO 40,000 TROOPS FOR THREE IRAQI DIVISIONS WITHIN TWO YEARS, THE US AND ITS ALLIES WERE STARTING NEARLY FROM SCRATCH**



### CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

ADF personnel serving on Operation Catalyst receive a comprehensive package of support and benefits as part of their conditions of service.

ADF members deployed inside Iraq receive a daily allowance of \$150 in recognition of service in war-like conditions and the current heightened threat situation in Iraq.

Other ADF personnel deployed elsewhere in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) receive a \$125-per-day allowance.

In addition, ADF members on war-like service in the Middle East remain entitled to:

- g tax exempt ADF salary and allowances;
- g additional War Service Leave;
- g full coverage under the Veterans' Entitlements Act and the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act;
- g free travel to Australia for leave during a six-month or longer deployment; and
- g the Australian Active Service Medal (AASM).

Some members will also be eligible for enhanced home-loan assistance and help for family members to relocate closer to extended family for support during the deployment.

Personnel still in bed rolled out and geared up in Kevlar to proceed to designated shelters. It was a drill they had practiced for just such occurrences a number of times and, though this was with live rounds, the reality was no different from the training – except perhaps with an added level of adrenaline.

Once all members were accounted for, planned actions-on were quickly restated between contingent members should a counterattack be required.

The mortars were getting closer with each round, as firing solutions were adjusted toward the fort. One of the final rounds was dropped into the compound, causing significant damage to the building and injuring six Iraqis – one a priority one evacuation case.

AATT-I adviser Major Neil Sweeney from ADFA says the Iraqi casualties were mainly caused through a lack of urgency in their take-cover drills and through a certain ignorance of the devastating effects of a mortar attack.

"It was an incredibly frustrating situation," he says.

Though observation on approach to the fort was excellent, the four designated points taken up by local defence personnel proved fruitless. There was no coordinated ground assault and no visual acquired on any mortar base-plates. Nor were there response assets available to engage the mortars had they been pin-pointed.

Major Sweeney admits he did feel a degree of helplessness during the attack, but rationalised that remaining unhurt and being prepared to continue with training was the best way he could think of to fight

back against the threat and to best serve the New Iraqi Army.

Attacks like this were often short and sharp – few lasting more than 10 to 15 rounds fired in any one engagement.

As an Artillery officer and former battery commander with 101 Medium Battery, Major Sweeney says it was a very different experience being on the receiving end of an indirect-fire attack.

"As we waited through the engagement, mortar-qualified AATT-I personnel like Sergeant Birse found themselves critiquing the fire mission," he says.

"And while the seriousness of the situation wasn't lost on the trainers, it would never be enough to dampen morale and discourage them from their job."

With the injured treated on scene by Corporal Sarah Longshaw along with US and Iraqi staff and medivac'd by US helo, there was little time to muck around. Lessons went back to normal straight away.

One of the first goals for the AATT-I was to break the old regime's command system and teach a more functional way of operating, before a united front could be presented to the brigade's recruits.

In the old army, an officer's power was his knowledge. They wouldn't allow an NCO to know how to give drill, or become fully proficient in weapons handling. All the power and authority was kept at officer level, to a point where drill lessons were taken by captains or majors.

NCOs weren't promoted because they earned it, were competent or excelled in their responsibilities, but because they had been around long enough. Being an officer

in the old system, likewise had a lot to do with status. It meant you had money and connections in the Ba'ath party.

But in the new army, corruption and nepotisms couldn't be allowed to determine command anymore. The New Iraqi Army needed the right person in the right job. And so a new code of conduct was developed for the new army.

Sergeant Birse says the brutality of the old regime could not be tolerated in the new army either, so a code of conduct was drawn up for Iraqis by the Iraqis – with a little guidance from the Australians.

"We quite clearly told them that any brutality would not be acceptable and would result in instant discharge," he says.

Cultural and religious differences between the Australians and Iraqis impacted immensely on the style and tempo of lessons at the fort. But, to progress with training, there had to be an understanding and acceptance of the cultural differences between them.

The Iraqi soldiers weren't the easiest people to motivate, and a lot of that had to do with culture. Company Sergeant Major, 1RAR, Warrant Officer Class 2 Dale Dekock, who also deployed as a trainer with the AATT-I, says it was hard to get used to the Iraqi tempo and the way they wanted to train. "Our culture is more hands-on – get in there and get it done – whereas there's was more laid back," he explains.

Working over the cultural hurdles, though, paled in significance to the lack of equipment, rations and basic teaching stores. Most convoys that set out for the fort simply didn't make it, with an average of one out of four ever getting through.



The road journey to the fort was dangerous, especially without military escorts, and it wasn't uncommon for equipment to arrive completely shot to bits. But the basic human need of the local drivers to feed their families always guaranteed there were plenty of volunteers prepared to make the risky journey.

As a result of these logistic difficulties, ration supplies were affected at the fort and meals were cut down to a bare minimum.

AATT-I trainer Sergeant Paul Clemence from 8/12 Medium Regiment says ration supplies got to a point where the team and the recruits were eating a tiny piece of

crumbed fish that looked like it had been dehydrated about 20 times and left out in the sun for three weeks.

"We did get a little bit of rice and tomato with that," he laughs.

"But the key thing was that, although the Iraqis weren't happy, the fact that we were eating the same as they were kept them from getting really upset."

The second major phase of training began at the northern base where recruits of the new brigade were preparing to take instruction from the Iraqi NCOs and officers newly-trained at the fort.

AATT-I trainers knew that a hardened Kapooka-style approach to the basic training wasn't going to be a successful system here, given the cultural differences of the recruits. Observing where the Americans seemed to be having difficulties with their more authoritarian approach, Australian trainers were able to adjust their attitude to training and mentoring.

"If you start to get aggressive and rant and rave at these people, they'll just shut down, think you've lost it and just walk away," Sergeant Birse says.

So the Australian approach was to give complete control of the training to the Iraqi NCOs and officers, and with critiquing and counselling done in private away from the recruits. Australian trainers chose to act in only an advisory role, assisting and supplementing training as assistants rather than teachers. This approach not only gave the Iraqi NCOs and officers immediate credibility with their soldiers, but also earned the respect of the Iraqis and increased the standard of instruction.

Distrust between different elements of the army could still sometimes rear its head



during such lessons as weapons' training, however.

"Sometimes you would see one weapon being used between a whole platoon," Maj Sweeney says

"This was because of a level of distrust the officers still had for the soldiers in the old regime.

"Similarly, some men had never fired live bullets in the old army, or if they had, it was with very limited ammunition.

"In one of the range practices we conducted, one Iraqi NCO said he had fired more ammunition that day than he had in his 15-year career in the old army.

"This is where we made significant changes, showing the Iraqis the value of quality training."

Unfortunately, the size of the northern training base and its increased recruit activity made for a more attractive target to insurgents than the old fort. And it wasn't long before the AATT-I had to deal with their first strike against that facility as well, when three Katyusha 127mm rockets struck the compound.

The recruits inside, true to form, began to scatter rather than taking cover from

the shrapnel. Sergeant Clemence recalls trying to organise some kind of order among the chaos.

"The first thing you try to do is preserve all these blokes. So I'm trying to call them back under some sort of cover and stop them from bugging off, when the Iraqi officer in charge of them is the first one bolting for the hills, ripping his uniform off," Sergeant Clemence says.

"A lot of them sort of stopped, not knowing whether to follow the officer or follow me. But eventually we called most of them back down, and they sat in three ranks under the shade.

"The officer still stood up the back of the hill, looking at me, not knowing what to do."

Because of a belief that it's Allah's decision whether they should live or die, the Iraqis tended not to bother doing everything within their means to save themselves, reasoning (or otherwise) that it didn't really matter whether you run or hide; if Allah decrees it's your time to die, then you will die.

By contrast, however, their actions during drills and lessons, was by the book.

their rifles above their heads in a very Arab kind of way.

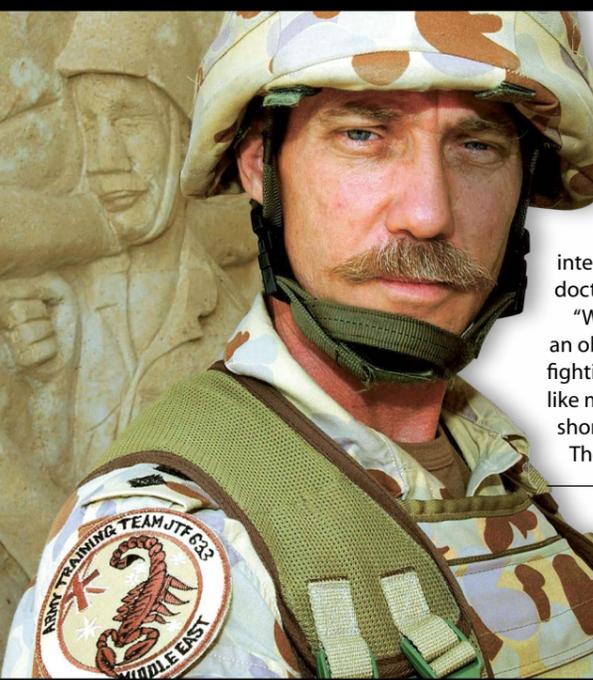
"Some senior ranks would come past during the training and tell the soldiers that that's not the way to do it anymore. But, I guess, as soon as they're getting shot at for real they'll be able to make a more informed decision," he muses.

**S**ergeant Birse and the rest of the first AATT-I are now back in Australia, and the third rotation of trainers are currently teaching logistical skills to the new army.

Some of those who have returned have been assisting in the training and preparation of the Al Muthanna Task Group's deployment to Iraq, with some of Sergeant Birse's own troop redeploying in support of 2 Cavalry Regiment.

Surprisingly to the team, a lot of Iraqis had heard of Australia and knew a fair bit about Australians well before the contingent had deployed.

Maj Sweeney says the trainers were able to give the Iraqis the good oil – and perhaps a Furphy or two – on life down under. Australian tourist magazines were in high demand as were books



But these life-saving actions were frustratingly not repeated in their actions under live fire.

The new doctrine, though, based primarily on the US teachings, would need a little getting used to for the new army.

"Some soldiers weren't interested in much else but old Iraqi doctrine," Sergeant Birse says.

"When conducting an assault on an objective, for example, rather than fighting through and conducting a re-org like modern war fighters, they would stop short of the objective and then rush it.

Then they would all stand up waving

about Australian flora and fauna.

While trying to pinpoint exactly what uniquely Australian traits the AATT-I had left with the Iraqis, Maj Sweeney says it is the intangible qualities, quintessential to the Aussie Digger, that their army will most benefit from for years to come.

"I believe we instilled initiative, a sense of a fair go, and mateship," he says.

No one will hide the fact that Iraq is, at the very least, a decade off resembling a secure country, but the way they get there will have a lot to do with the integrity and mentoring of AATT-I – and the Iraqi's own courage in difficult times.

**"IN ONE OF OUR RANGE PRACTICES, ONE NCO SAID HE HAD FIRED MORE AMMUNITION THAN HE HAD IN HIS 15-YEAR CAREER IN THE OLD ARMY"**

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# OFF FOREIGN SHORES

WORDS KIWI MAC PICS RNZAF AND ADF



gotten into gun range, Melbourne locks on to the wrong target and 647's pride is restored.

Tasman Ex is an annual exchange between the Australian and New Zealand navies. This year's exercise involved 12 vessels and aircraft from Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

Several other scenarios tested crews throughout the exercise – an aircraft attack coordinated by an RNZAF P3 Orion saw five leased Lear Jets carry out a simulated missile attack on the vessels.

As Te Kaha's 20mm Phalanx CIWS engages a target, the crew man .50 cal machine guns to defend their home.

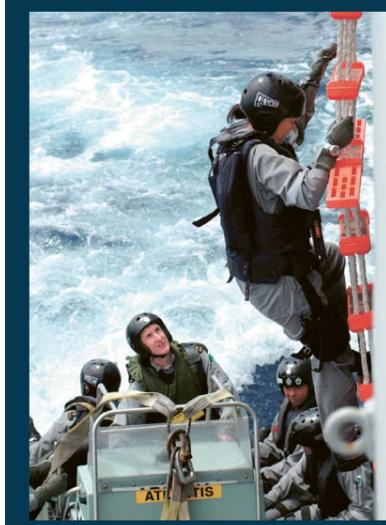
"It's a nonsense really," says one veteran matelot. "We've got Skyhawks and Air Maccis mothballed in Woodbourne with the Government scrapping the air force's strike wing and here we are leasing civilian aircraft.

"Ironically the Skyhawk was so popular because it had the same attack profile as an incoming cruise missile," says the CPO.

Several other evolutions were practised by the crews while CONTACT was aboard.

Replenishments at sea were done at night while, for the first time, boarding parties were able to practice their skills on real Merchant Navy vessels plying their trade along the coast.

Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander John Butcher saays both ANZAC navies recognised the importance of not losing the skill base established while on recent operations in the Arabian Gulf.



"With 30 per cent of our crew coming aboard since Christmas, the cooperation from the Merchant Navy allows us to introduce this important role to newcomers in a timely fashion.

"It's a task that's taking on more and more significance these days, so being able to carry out real-time searches aboard merchant vessels is a definite plus for us," he says.

Coastal tanker Taiko and her crew were guinea pigs for this particular evaluation.

With HMNZS Canterbury joining the Task Group for anti-submarine duties as part of her final farewell tour of the country, Task Group 647.01 now comprised three different classes of frigate. The Perry-Class Melbourne, the three ANZAC Class Te Kaha, Te Mana and Parramatta and the ageing Leander Class Canterbury.

Opposition was to be provided by the Collins Class submarine HMAS Farncomb but a hydraulic systems failure meant the sub had to limp back to Devonport for repairs. Simulators took her place.

Tasman Ex concluded with a fleet entry into Auckland on 3 March followed by an open day at Devonport Navy Base on 6 March.



Skimming just metres above the waves, the missile locks on to its target. On-board threat warning systems activate, sirens wail and close-in weapons systems attempt to intercept the incoming Javelin. But it's too late – the missile strikes amidships, just above the waterline. The once-proud man-o-war lists heavily to port before being devoured by a hungry sea...

**N**ot the sort of scenario you want put to you at 0230hrs, but exactly the dilemma faced by Commander Keith Robb, captain of the Royal New Zealand Navy's ANZAC Class frigate HMNZS Te Kaha one brisk morning in March.

"Good morning, sir. We've just been bounced by Melbourne", is the first message I received," Commander Robb says.

"It's not the sort of thing you want to wake up to, and I certainly put on a gruff exterior when I asked the on-watch weapons officer what happened?"

Te Kaha was the flagship of the three-vessel Task Group 647.01, tasked with leading her sister ANZAC Class frigates HMNZS Te Mana and HMAS Parramatta in the hunt for their elusive Avalonian foe played by the guided missile frigate HMNZS Melbourne.

Task Group 647.01 was to seek out and destroy Melbourne before she could reek havoc on the 'heavies' – the landing ship HMAS Tobruk and tanker HMNZS Endeavour.

"Melbourne used a better combination of speed and stealth coming up the east coast

of the North Island," Commander Robb says. "Our intention was to get in amongst the islands around Great Barrier in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf, masking us from her missiles to get in gunnery range."

But, it's long before Te Kaha has a chance to seek revenge.

Before sunrise her Maverick-missile-armed Sea Sprite lifts off, hugging the islands to get in range for a shot.

Missile launched, the chopper quickly turns for home – but word comes in she's been downed by a SAM. All is not lost though, as Te Mana and Parramatta have



**R**unning simultaneously to Tasman Ex was the 2005 Fincastle Competition contested by anti-submarine squadrons from the RNZAF, RAAF and RAF.

Fincastle is the longest-running ASW (anti-submarine warfare) competition in the world and is contested annually between the air forces of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK. Regrettably the Canadians were a late withdrawal this year.

Hosted by the RNZAF's No5 Squadron, Fincastle was based out of Auckland's RNZAF Whenuapai and saw the Kiwis and Aussies in P3 Orions and the Brits in their Nimrod go head-to-head hunting down the 3300 tonne Farncomb, back from repairs.

CONTACT tagged along with the crew of an RAAF 11 Squadron P3 Orion for a seven-hour mission – the first casualty of which was this intrepid reporter who discovered airsickness was not a myth.

Flight Lieutenant Steve Davis explained that just getting to the competition was hard going for the Adelaide-based squadron.

"We had to get past title holders 10 Squadron first who put up a stiff fight," he said.

"ASW skills are something all the crews are concentrating hard to recapture after long tours in the Arabian Gulf on surveillance duties. It's something that has to be really worked on and is easy to lose."

Also placing a heavy emphasis on the need to maintain skills was the 5 Squadron RNZAF commanding officer, Wing Commander John Lovatt.

"We've also been heavily involved in the Gulf and, as ASW is our bread and butter, it's important to relearn the basics and maintain our skill levels," Wing Commander Lovatt says.

Watching the 12 man crew at work on board the Orion as it goes through a systems calibration, I think to myself how much clearer the jargon-filled Tom Clancy novels were, as Flight Sergeant Michael Bogan explains the different sensors.

"With radar, magnetic anomaly detection (MAD) and radio-active detectors, it's hard to accept that one of the most effective weapons on board is still the MK1 eyeball," he says.

Halfway into the flight and it's our turn to test our systems against a real foe as the Farncombe snorkels near the surface.

Sonar buoys are launched after a thin white wake is spotted in the distance.

The smooth ride is over as simulated attacks are carried out and CONTACT's



finest retreats to the men's room to restore what little dignity he has left.

Seven hours is up and we're back on dry land with a far healthier respect for the job performed by the Orion crews.

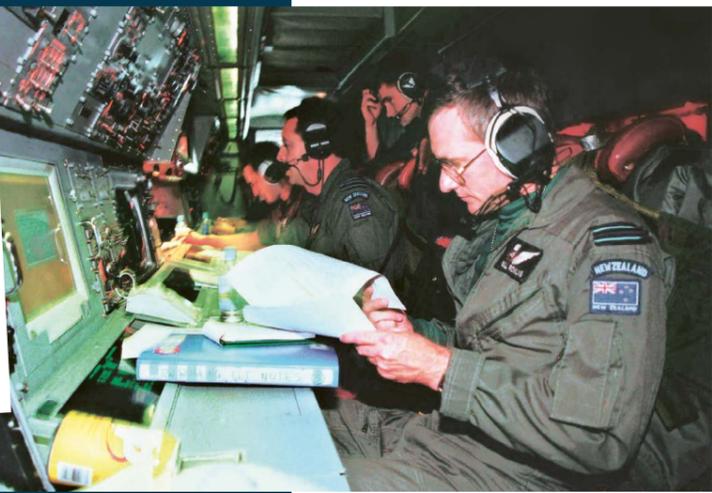
For the record, the 25-strong RAF team from CXX Squadron based in Kinloss, flying a 1969 Nimrod aircraft, took out the Fincastle Trophy as well as the Lockheed Martin Fincastle Maintenance Trophy.

Squadron Leader Mark Gunn, Officer Commanding, A Flight, CXX Squadron says Fincastle is one of the greatest traditions of maritime aviation and the squadron was thrilled to have won it ahead of such strong competition.

The Kiwis of 5 Squadron who, not only competed for the trophy, but carried out two successful real-time, no-duff search and rescue missions during Fincastle took out the Fellowship Trophy for camaraderie.

The Fincastle Trophy has been competed for since being presented by the late Mr and Mrs Aird-Whyte in 1960 in memory of their son Sergeant Nairn Fincastle Aird-Whyte who was killed in action serving with RAF Coastal Command during 1943.

Originally a bombing accuracy competition, in 1970 it was expanded to include a broader range of anti-submarine warfare skills.



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**WE LOOK AT THEIR SKILLS AND DRILLS AND HOW THEY APPROACH THE PROBLEMS PUT IN FRONT OF THEM**



WORDS AND PICS LAURA KERR



# BRITISH AT ITS BEST

## COPEHILL DOWN URBAN WARFARE TRAINING

If training is the key to success in urban conflict then Copehill Down is one of the reasons why.

It is hard to remember a conflict in living memory that has not involved the need for fighting in built-up areas (FIBUA), so intensive training before going into theatre has become essential.

Copehill Down is the United Kingdom's leading urban warfare training establishment. Situated on the windswept and notoriously wet Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire, it is ideally placed to carry out its sole purpose – to train all three services in the skills and drills of fighting in built-up areas.

FIBUA, the combined art of artillery, engineers and armoured support vehicles is taught at this purpose-built village. Constructed in 1989 in the style of an old Eastern Block town, it is composed of 90 buildings, all of which you would usually associate with urban living, including a post office, pub, playground, houses and a church complete with graveyard.

None – including the graves – have ever been occupied.

With the continuing relevance of urban warfare such as has been seen in Iraq, the

need for training in this environment is essential.

British Forces could be dishing out humanitarian aid and peace support one moment and finding themselves involved in full-scale, high intensity, high-arms fighting the next.

As Major Tim Hutchinson, Officer Commanding, says, "We are here to broaden the knowledge of the soldier. The urban warfare environment is complex and we do our best to take those on our programme through as much as we possibly can in the

time allocated and make them aware of all the variables in conflict."

The 13 instructors at the facility are a close-knit team and passionate about their speciality. Coming from a variety of military backgrounds they bring their own experiences with them and are able to pass their wealth of knowledge on to the troops. Every trainer has passed the FIBUA Instructors Course and, when they eventually leave Copehill Down, take back valuable skills to pass on to their home units.

Second in Command, Captain Marcus Elliott-Square from the Grenadier Guards says, "We look at their skills and drills and how they approach the problems put in front of them. Here in the safety of Copehill Down they can learn from their mistakes"

A typical training programme is short and intensive and lasts for one-and-a-half days focusing on high-intensity war fighting. Lessons learnt in the classroom are put into practice with battle exercises on the ground, where the soldiers carry out increasingly demanding missions under the watchful eye of their trainers.

With pyrotechnics at their disposal, the Copehill Down instructors are able to simulate artillery and mortar fire very effectively. This is essential because in an urban environment you become very focused on what you do.

External factors very much come into play – sound is amplified and there is smoke, dust, noise and confusion.

The Company Commander needs to take a step back and come up with a plan.

Line of sight is vastly reduced and so the passage of information becomes vital and front-line troops become his eyes and ears.

Sergeant Tony Muligani, an Infantry instructor from the Staffordshire Regiment says the training is dictated by the types of operations the troops are due to deploy on.

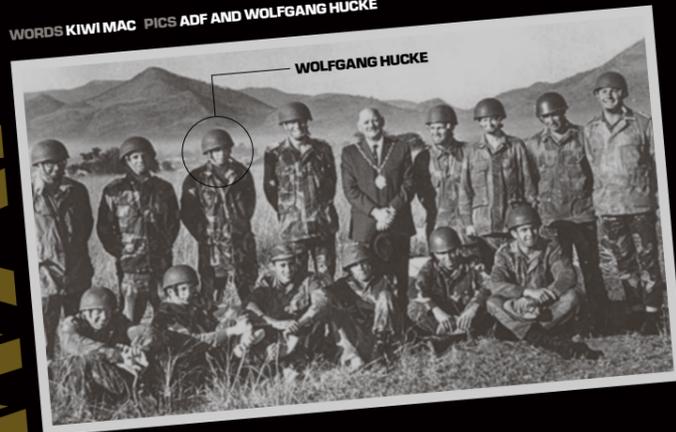
Right now it is very much Iraq focused. "I've been in the Army for 18 years and an instructor for 15 months. My time here has been fantastic! When I return to my unit I'll have lots more to offer them from my experiences here," Sergeant Muligani says.

"Because we are a small team the workload is intensive and I find that professionally rewarding, especially when we hear back from units that have put into practice what we have taught them and found that it was of positive benefit."



# WOLFIE'S SETTLE WARS

WORDS KIWIMAC PICS ADF AND WOLFGANG HUCKE



**T**he former professional soldier of German extraction reflects on the sixtieth anniversary of the Allied Victory in Europe and counts himself lucky his first experience of combat wasn't also his last.

Wolfgang Hucke was born in 1935 in Germany's northwest in a small village about 11km outside the Rhur Valley city of Dortmund. He recalls seeing allied aircraft fly over his home on their way to bomb the city and remembers, at age nine, being set to work helping dig survivors out of the rubble.

The previous year, 1943, when he was eight, Wolf was given special permission to join the Jungfolk (young folk) which, much like cubs are to scouts, was the early stage before the Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth). He was allowed to join early because his father was a Fallschirmjaeger (paratrooper) officer in the Luftwaffe.

Sitting over a beer, quietly mulling past adventure, is common to thousands of men and women in the south-west Pacific on the twenty-fifth day of April each year. While ANZAC Day commemorates a single fateful date 90 years ago, it also affords fighting men of all ages an opportunity to take stock of memories good and bad. Engaged in quiet reflection at the bar of the Hobsonville Returned and Services Association Club, New Zealand this year, CONTACT's Kiwi Mac had his own memories trumped by a stocky old gent sitting at his elbow as the man recounted with nostalgic pride, seeing action in seven different theatres – but always on the losing side."

"My father dropped into Crete where he fought against both the Kiwis and the Aussies. Later, commissioned in the field, he fought the Kiwis again at Cassino."

Wolf's first combat encounter came at the tender age of 10. As WWII drew to an end, his village was abandoned by Wehrmacht troops, offering only token resistance in the hope of allowing the British and Americans to take the region before the dreaded Russians did.

"Our troops had pulled back to avoid the village being destroyed and all the homes had white sheets of surrender hanging from them," Wolf recalls. "My mother was hiding with others in our basement, but I'd snuck out in my black uniform with an old .22 short rifle and, as the first American tank came into view, I drew a bead on the tank commander standing in an open hatch.

"They weren't expecting any trouble and, fortunately for me – and the rest of the town – I missed and he quickly disappeared.

"The turret traversed left and right, frantically looking for a target – it could have ended up a real disaster," he says remorsefully.

Then suddenly, two American jeeps and a second tank, this one with speakers mounted on it, pulled up. An American speaking fluent German ordered the shooter to come out.

"My mother must have heard the call and darted out to grab me. Of course the American then knew straight away that it was me. The sergeant I had just shot at – remember I was only 10 – looked huge to me. Well, he took the leather belt off my uniform, put me over his knee and gave me a good old-fashioned thrashing.

"In hindsight I know I was very lucky – the whole town could have suffered – but I had a strong dislike for Americans for a long time after that.

"My pride wouldn't allow me to accept food from the Americans who, once things had settled down, gave the locals what left-overs they had. But that didn't mean I wouldn't steal what I needed," he jokes with an evil glint in his eye.

After the war Wolf's father returned from internment obtaining work in the post-war West German government. But war had taken its toll on the family. Eleven members were lost on various fronts.

Always wanting to be a soldier Wolf's ambitions were thwarted by the fact West Germany wasn't allowed to raise an army at the time.

"It was 1953, I wanted to join the army, but the Bundeswehr wasn't created until 1955. I didn't know what to do."

One day returning from a girlfriend's birthday party in a neighbouring town, Wolf was waiting for a train home. In a fateful snap decision, he caught an express train going in the wrong direction rather than wait an extra 20 minutes for the right one, and thought, "I'll join the Foreign Legion".

Arriving in the French zone in the middle of the night he was detained by the Gendarmerie. They laughed at his new plan to join the Legion and told him to come back in the morning.

"So I slept under a bridge and when I did come back in the morning, one Gendarme took pity on me and tried to dissuade me. But I persisted and was eventually sent to Landau, a recruit collection point."

Enlisting as an 18-year-old, Wolf signed up under his own name. He believes his decision to join up was a product of negative media publicity surrounding the French Foreign Legion's involvement in Indochina at the time.

He says many of the myths surrounding the Legion were just that – myths. "You signed on for five-year contracts, no more

no less, so it's rubbish to suggest that once you sign on you can't get out. You just complete your contract then you can leave.

"Another romantic myth is that murderers and other criminals join the Legion to escape justice. This just wasn't the case. In fact, the French Secret Service were there screening all prospective recruits and, while the Legion wouldn't hand anyone over to Interpol, it was a happy coincidence that many a bad guy was caught up with as they left through the main gate."

But there was one Legion myth Wolf concedes was genuine – the number of men who signed up after trouble with women.

The Legion had become home for a diverse range of men from combat backgrounds.

"We had a Sergeant who was a Ukrainian White Cossack and fought for the Germans. Another was an ex WWII Italian Folgore para while there were a number of Spanish 'Blue Legion' veterans who distinguished themselves on the Eastern Front against the Russians.

"The only American I came across was a Navaho Indian who'd fought in the war. We had an ex British Commando sergeant major who was commissioned and ended up as a major. But at war's end he was reduced back to sergeant major, so he quit and came to the Legion."

But by far the largest percentage of legionnaires were German WWII veterans and, "In the unit I was eventually posted to, 1er Bataillon Etranger de Parachutists (1BEP), Germans comprised more than 90 per cent of unit strength," Wolf says.

After recruit training, Wolf was sent from Marseilles to the Legion's traditional home of Sidi-Bel Abbe's in Algeria, and began a three-month basic training course at the Saida training camp.

**"YOU, THE MOTHERS, WHO SENT THEIR SONS FROM FARAWAY COUNTRIES, WIPE AWAY YOUR TEARS; YOUR SONS ARE NOW LYING IN OUR BOSOM AND ARE IN PEACE, AFTER HAVING LOST THEIR LIVES ON THIS LAND THEY HAVE BECOME OUR SONS AS WELL."**  
GENERAL MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATURK

"It was hard and fast, but everything was straight and you were promoted on your abilities. But we weren't put straight into the front line, it was a very tough build-up period."

After two months of extensive training, volunteers were called to replace casualties in 1BEP. Hungry for action, Wolf stuck his hand up straight away. Just then a good friend, Ralph, entered the tent and, seeing Wolf's hand in the air, put his hand up too.

Next day, being Sunday, was a rest day, but Wolf was awakened early by Ralph, who was all dressed up in parade uniform. "Didn't we volunteer for guard duty?" he enquired.

Wolf recalls that Ralph eventually became a very good soldier and he was to run into him again while a mercenary in the Congo.

On another occasion, Wolf was told to put his gear on the back of a truck and form up with webbing and rifle. As he placed his gear in the back of the truck, it drove off, leaving Wolf and his contemporaries to follow on foot across 30km of desert – and so began commando training.

In 1954, Wolf was eventually posted to 1BEP in Indochina. The unit was in a rebuilding stage after its final desperate battle at Dien Bien Phu, before returning to Algeria.

"I really became blooded in that unit, during the campaign against the FLA as a member of a small specialist group carrying out snatching and recce operations. This is where I also began a deep involvement with military medical techniques."

In 1956 Wolf was part of the 1BEP element that landed from the sea at Port Said during the Suez crisis, eventually joining up with the British 3rd Parachute Battalion.

Finishing his five-year contract in 1959 Wolf was disillusioned with De Gaulle's handling of the Algeria situation, and became involved with the Organisation Armée Secrete (OAS) that opposed the French leader for granting Algeria its independence.

He does, however, remain fiercely loyal to the Legion Etrangere.

"I can be anywhere in the world – in a pub in Germany or a market in the Ivory Coast – and if I get into trouble all I have to yell out is 'Legion Armor' and if a legionnaire is within earshot – even if on two crutches – he will help me."

Working on a fishing trawler in 1960, Wolf heard on the Legion grapevine that the Congo province of Katanga had declared independence under Colonel Moshe Tshombe and was hiring 200 mercenaries to train a fledgling army. The United Nations backed the Communist Patrice Lumumba in the civil war against the Katanga and by 1961 the 200 mercenaries were up against a 20,000-strong Congolese and UN force.

Some of the more famous mercenary names Wolf worked alongside include Mike Hoare of 5 Commando and "Wild Geese" fame, Black Jack Schramme and later

leader of the Comoros Islands Bob Denard.

In a surprise move in 1964, Tshombe returned from exile and was made Prime Minister of the Congo and General Seke Seke Mobutu Chief of the Congolese Army.

Amidst CIA alarmism, a 1000-strong mercenary army was raised to lead the corrupt Congolese army against a Cuban- and Chinese-led coup in the east of the country.

"I flew into Phillipville from Belgium and then on to Stanleyville to work as one of six Europeans fighting in the 12th Katanganese Commando, fighting communist-backed Simba rebels.

"We would clear out the Simbas from an area and then begin rebuilding local infrastructure – schools, clinics and such like."

In the Congo, Wolf developed a healthy distrust of journalists. "We had one journalist and a photographer in our AO, who complained that things were too quiet

German – the mercenaries in the Congo were soldiers of fortune.

"Often we were never paid. You could always tell when one of Tshombe's backers had donated some money because we'd get some of our earnings – but then the flow would dry up again.

"We fought for a cause, an ideal. Often we fought for no money. I, like many others, was there to fight communism."

After the Congo, Wolf worked for a while in South Africa before answering the call to arms once again, fighting the communist-backed insurgency in Rhodesia in 1968.

"I jumped on my motorbike and rode up to Cranbourne Barracks, home of the Rhodesian SAS. I spoke to the unit's adjutant, Captain Phillips. I was 34 at the time and he asked if I could handle the SAS selection. Of course, I reckoned I could. I was the oldest man to pass selection."



and asked our troops to shoot a few locals so they could get a few "fresh" combat shots. They were told the only fresh combat shots likely around there would be them if they didn't get the hell out!"

Returning home to Germany on leave in 1965, Wolf learnt Tshombe had been ousted from power by Mobutu and mercenary leaders were planning to rescue him from imprisonment. Wolf made to return to the Congo but was stopped at Brussels airport and advised by members of Belgian Intelligence not to board the aircraft.

"Mobutu had decided he no longer needed the mercenaries expertise and it was thought we would be killed on arrival. "Tshombe eventually died of a so called heart attack while in prison," Wolf says.

One myth put about by international media of the day still irks the 70-year-old

Specialising on the medical side, Wolf stayed with C Squadron throughout the war, apart from a few stints instructing at the army medical school, but even then, taking part on operations.

"Our operational jumps were called hop-and-pops. We'd jump from 300-400 feet and called ourselves meat-bombs. There was no time or need for reserve chutes."

On one cross-border raid, Wolf became caught up in a tree but was rescued by an Aussie corporal who had to climb up his body to cut him down.

The perception that the war in Rhodesia was a racial one angers Wolf. "A large portion of the Rhodesian Army was black. Our most senior regiment was the Rhodesian African Rifles who had distinguished themselves in Burma in WWII and later in Malaya."

Wolf believes the prime ministers of Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand made a serious miscalculation when they thought Joshua Nkomo would win the elections.

"No-one – not even us – imagined the systematic terror campaign Mugabe would carry out to take that election. I still have horrific images in my mind of what took place."

Wolf's first wife Janice was a New Zealander he met when she was holidaying in Rhodesia on her way home from a trip to Ireland. Staying in touch after returning to New Zealand, Janice eventually returned to marry Wolf in Kariba. She eventually returned to New Zealand with their two sons in 1978, while Wolf stayed to serve out his remaining contract. He was invited to extend his service but he had, "Signed up to fight communists, not bloody serve them," he says.

Leaving Rhodesia, Wolf hit a snag in Australia trying to reach New Zealand – Australia refused him a visa to transit through the country. It took the personal intervention of the then immigration minister who granted the soldier a four-hour transit visa.

"Then I flew in from Johannesburg – straight into an airline strike. I only had four hours and Air New Zealand didn't want to know. Then I saw the UTA French Airline's desk.

"I told them I was a stranded ex-legionnaire and, 10 minutes later, I was escorted to a first-class seat to New Zealand.

"Say what you like about the French, but they do look after their own."

Settling in New Zealand, it wasn't long before Wolf thought he'd try the New Zealand Army.

Former recruiting Sergeant Mike Subritzky recalls this old guy with a strong European accent walking into his office one day in 1980.

"I asked if he had had any previous military service and he said he had, in Germany. Then he added that he'd been in the legion. I had to ask, what legion?"

"He looked at me rolling his eyes and said the French Foreign Legion of course, then added that he'd also served in the Congo as well as in Rhodesia – in the SAS, of course," says Subritzky.

Thinking he had a right Walter Mitty on his hands, Subritzky told the old man to come back the next day with all his documents, thinking that would be the last time he'd see the "crazy old bugger".

"Imagine my surprise when not only was he waiting for us to unlock the next morning but he had all his paperwork with him as well.

"After some quick phone calls I signed



In the cold of the pre-dawn, 1300 yards off Gallipoli's beaches, the silhouette of Her Majesty's Australian Ship ANZAC slipped into position for what was reported to be one of the biggest and most poignant ANZAC Day Dawn Services ever.

They came in their thousands from far and wide, the crew of HMAS ANZAC fittingly swelling their ranks, to mark 90 years since Australia and New Zealand were baptised as nations in the blood of their young sons.

Lest we forget.

KILLED AT GALLIPOLI

TURKISH	86,692
BRITISH	21,255
FRENCH	9,798
AUSTRALIAN	8,709
NEW ZEALANDER	2,701
INDIAN	1,358
NEWFOUNDLANDER	49

him up as a Staff Sergeant in our medical corps."

Working as an instructor at Hopuhopu Camp outside of Ngaruawahia until 1983, Wolf then transferred to RNZAF Te Rapa, the Air Force's main stores depot outside Hamilton, working in the police section – with the Gulf War starting, Wolf felt there was one last chance to heed the call.

When asked why he wanted to go to war when others far younger could do the job, the old warhorse looked his inquisitor straight in the eye and said, "Mac, I have been in seven bloody wars and never on the winning side!"

With Te Rapa's closure in 1991, Wolf packed away his uniform for the last time. He set up a café in Hamilton for a while before heading to the north of Auckland where he now works as a school caretaker in the little village of Kumeu.

On Saturday 24 October 2004, at a surprise ceremony at the Rhodesian Army Association's NZ Branch RV celebrations, Wolf was presented the Croix du Combattant Medal for service with 1BEP in Indochina and Algeria by the Commanding Officer of the 6 Hauraki Battalion Group, Lieutenant Colonel John Dick who said it was an honour to be able to present the award to such a distinguished and long-serving soldier.

Joining his Rhodesian comrades for an ANZAC Day ceremony, as he does every year at the Hobsonville RSA, Wolf reflects on how the nature of warfare has changed in the past 50 years.

"Y'know what the first thing they should do in Iraq is? Shoot everyone with a camera first, sort out what needs to be sorted and then maybe, just maybe, let the cameras back in."

# CROSSROADS

The operation in Somalia had begun with an incredible intensity for the 1000 troops who had embarked from Australia just weeks before. In the few weeks since we had learned of our mission to the horn of Africa we had been caught up in a whirlwind of preparation, pre-emption and premonition. It seemed like such a short time between being recalled from Christmas leave in Townsville and finding ourselves in the middle of the holocaust in Somalia.

WORDS WAYNE COOPER PICS WAYNE COOPER & ADF

We had left Australia amid a maelstrom of media hype, political self-righteousness and public moral outrage at the catastrophe taking place in Somalia. The contingent was the biggest combat force to leave our shores for war-like operations since Vietnam. For those taking part it was the biggest event of our lives, and the expectation of the Defence Force and the nation weighed almost as heavy as our own on our inexperienced shoulders.

In many ways the expedition to Somalia had brought the ADF to a crossroads. Questions would be answered about our ability to effectively mount a campaign so far from our own shores, and the validity of our training and tactics. More importantly for we soldiers, the question was whether this generation of diggers were tough enough to do the job as well as our predecessors – those who had made the Australian soldier famous.

The first week of our active duty in Baidoa had been intense, but we were slowly catching our breath. Those of us who didn't know each other were quickly able to assess the other with all the honesty demanded of those caught up in a stressful situation. My driver Pete was obviously a very capable soldier, but there were early signs that our relationship was uneasy and we too were at a crossroads.

Pete and I had not known each other at all before we were billeted together as a crew. It was always a steep learning curve, both professionally and personally, when a new crew is established. With

the rapid deployment to Africa, and the subsequent high level of activity we encountered on our arrival, that curve was even steeper.

Although, at that time, Pete was junior to me in rank, he had been a bombardier in Artillery before corps transferring to Armour, and I could tell he was having a problem being driver to a younger crew commander. This situation was further aggravated by the fact that I was a new NCO, acutely aware that Pete had been an NCO before me and I was determined not to let any junior soldier intimidate me, whether he had been an NCO before or not. In hindsight I guess we were a pigheaded pair, but we had to learn to get on.

For those who may have experienced the military system in other arms corps, Armoured Corps may have seemed a little unusual. The nature of our work demanded a more flexible relationship between the ranks in a vehicle-crew environment. Working in such confined space meant that every member of the crew depended on every other member. This in turn meant that, although there was still discipline, there was a different type of relationship between the ranks than might be found in an infantry section or gun line.

Pete and I were struggling to find that line between getting on as people and keeping the appropriate level of detachment required between the ranks. Being a very direct person, Pete could be quite curt, and though he wasn't blatantly insubordinate, he was not overly friendly toward me either. Initially I didn't see that our relationship was in any real danger of festering into a problem – I had naively

thought that things would sort themselves out in time. I was wrong, and the matter came to a head in rather unfortunate circumstances.

We were into our third week of operations and 23 Section was living up to its self-titled nickname as the Baidoa Vampires by continuing a regime of night patrols through the city. We were all starting to get tired as the intensity and tension of night patrolling began to take its toll. Things had been a little tense between Pete and I, but as we drove our APCs over to the Bravo Company tents to pick up a platoon for the night's activities, I had no inkling that he was about to erupt.

The section's four vehicles pulled up side by side across the road from the Bravo Company lines. As we were safely inside the secure area of the Baidoa airfield I told Pete to switch off the engine and lower the ramp to wait for the Peads. As the ramp

My confusion and indignation at being spoken to by my driver in this manner fired my temper, and I stood up in the turret and proceeded to give Pete both barrels.

"I don't give a shit what you think about how I talk to you Trooper Reeves. You will do what I tell you, when I tell you!"

Just as I was beginning to get on a roll and the grunts began to chuckle at the impromptu show, lightning struck. Moose had seen enough. He had jumped off his vehicle and in two well-practiced steps, was up on the engine bay of our car, glaring at both of us like a disapproving headmaster.

"You pair of bitches shut your mouths and get the grunts mounted up. Sort this shit out later," he hissed.

End of conversation. Pete and I were both instantly deflated. We were suddenly conscious of everyone looking our way and the bemused look on the faces of the other members of our section.

to conduct the control point until nightfall. Pete and I were alone again in the privacy of our M113 and it was time for round two.

"Trooper Reeves, you ever talk to me like that again and I'll have you on a charge!" I snarled at him as he slipped out of the driver's compartment.

Pete's stormy face got even darker but he held his tongue. He must have realised he had stepped well over the line. We glared at each other from either side of the vehicle.

Moose arrived at the back door and told me to step outside.

"What was that about?" he asked.

Though I was relieved to see that his anger had been replaced by concern, I was still embarrassed that he had reason to pull us into line.

"I don't know," I answered honestly.

"Well find out and get it sorted. We are here for a long time and I don't want this to get out of hand. Fix it up," he stated

I was surprised to hear this as I thought I was pretty easy to get along with and, though I was a new NCO, I had been a crew commander for a couple of years and had never a problem with any driver before. As Pete continued to explain himself it became clearer what the real issue was.

"You forget that I was an NCO once. You don't have to treat me like I don't know anything."

"I know you were an NCO, but that doesn't change the fact that you are a digger and I am a corporal, now does it?" I asked rhetorically. "I don't care what you were before, that was then and this is now and I'm not going to let any digger, ex NCO or not, talk to me the way you just did."

Pete didn't reply at first. "Just don't talk to me like I am an idiot," he said again calmly.

If I was to be truly honest, I had probably gone out of my way to show him I wouldn't be intimidated by his history. Moose was

we would have our ups and downs, we would slowly build an enduring friendship.

In the mean time the business of bringing law and order to the Baidoa Humanitarian Relief Sector was not waiting for a couple of stropky school boys to settle their differences and we were soon heading off on a new phase of the operation. The 1RAR Battalion Group had established itself in Baidoa and it was decided to venture further afield and make our presence known – the serious business of dominating the landscape had begun.

In line with this policy, 1 Troop had recently carried a company to Buurhakaba, a town on the main supply route (MSR) between Baidoa and Mogadishu. They had been there for several days, and 2 Troop was to relieve them. After two weeks of night patrols in claustrophobic Baidoa, we were happy to get out into the countryside for a change of scenery.

and an excellent place to monitor who was moving through our AO.

1 Troop was waiting impatiently for our arrival and after a quick exchange, they sped off toward Baidoa. Under a blazing midday sun we pulled into a compound and parked on the ruins of a big old shed. There was nothing left of it, but its cement base would serve as an excellent hard standing for vehicles and crew.

As we surveyed our new surroundings it became obvious that this town was in even worse state than Baidoa. There were only a few solid, western-type buildings still standing, most of the town being mud huts and lean-tos.

The infantry company we carried from Baidoa began to make themselves at home. The changing of the guard had attracted a lot of attention and soon the compound was surrounded by curious, gawking locals. Our discomfort at being treated as



thumped to the ground the engine died and I removed my helmet and watched in bemusement as Pete's helmet flew out of his driver's hole.

"Don't talk to me like I am an idiot," he growled at me as he raised his seat and glared from the driver's hole.

"What?"

"I'm not an idiot, I know when to switch off and lower the ramp," he protested.

Though I was confused as to what he was actually angry about, I took an instant dislike to his tone. My hackles went up immediately.

"What do you mean? It's my job to tell you when to switch off and lower the ramp," I spat back.

"You talk to me like I'm an idiot," Pete raised his voice a notch as he stood up on his seat to look me in the eye.

I was only vaguely aware that our passengers had arrived and were now beginning to look our way.

## WE HAD BROKEN RULE NUMBER ONE WHEN WORKING WITH INFANTRY – NEVER AIR YOUR DIRTY LAUNDRY IN FRONT OF THE GRUNTS

My face reddened with embarrassment as I sat down in the turret. The grunts filed into the back of the vehicle, we started and ramped up. This was far from over, but we still had work to do.

As we drove out of the airfield to establish a vehicle control point on a nearby road, I stewed over what had just happened. Moose had been right to tell us both to shut up. Though it was my job to discipline a junior soldier for being insubordinate, we had both broken rule number one when working with the Infantry – never air your dirty laundry in front of the grunts.

We pulled our vehicles into position to create a chicane on the dusty road. The infantry dismounted and set themselves up

emphatically before walking over to talk to the platoon commander.

I lit a cigarette and tried to work out what had happened. Pete had been out of line for sure, but something had set him off. Moose was dead right, we were in Somalia for five more months and I didn't fancy living with a belligerent crewmate for all that time.

Stepping back inside the vehicle I saw Pete making a brew for the two of us. I sat and smoked my cigarette as Pete handed me a mug of coffee. As I swallowed my brew I resolved to swallow my pride and asked Pete what the problem was.

Pete had cooled off, but he was still in a righteous mood as he told me that he resented the way I spoke down to him.

right again – we were a pair of bitches.

We stared at each other across the space of the APC. I realised something had to happen to break the tension.

"Just don't talk to me like I am an idiot... CORPORAL," I repeated sarcastically.

Pete's eyes narrowed angrily before he realised I was joking. He started to smile in spite of himself.

"Yes LANCE-Corporal Cooper," he replied with equal sarcasm, correctly emphasising that I was *only* a lance corporal.

"That's still corporal to you trooper. Now make my dinner!" I demanded, slamming my cup down in mock indignation.

"Make your own fucking dinner, corporal," Pete said with a laugh.

We would be ok. We had come to an understanding in typically retarded male fashion and that was a start. At that point I would have been satisfied if Pete and I were just able to learn to tolerate each other. But over the coming months, although

There had been a fair amount of bandit activity in and around Buurhakaba. 1 Troop and the company they were working with had already managed to capture a significant number of weapons, but no bad guys. It was only a matter of time until someone ran into one of the bandit clans. With this in mind, as we set off down the MSR from Baidoa, we were optimistic about our chances of bagging some baddies.

Buurhakaba was a medium sized town dominated by a huge rock outcrop. The town's buildings were assembled in a semi-circle around the base of the monolith to the south, with the MSR passing close by to its north. The huge rock rose several hundred feet above the town and was visible for kilometres in all directions.

The T intersection where the town's main road met the MSR was the crossroads of the world. Everything moving from Mogadishu inland had to pass through it. It was an important strategic vantage point

an impromptu zoo was soon abated as a young entrepreneur in the crowd yelled, "Pepsi cold, one dollar!"

We couldn't believe our ears. We hadn't even been able to get a warm goffa at our old base. Surely in this wasteland no one could produce a cold soft drink?

A few drivers went over to the wire to seek proof of this outrageous claim. After intense negotiation, it was established that the boy would produce 20 cold cans of Pepsi for \$20 US. He was dispatched forthwith and, good to his word, returned minutes later with a case of cold Pepsi.

With the rock looming large over us as we sat and savoured unexpected treats, we pondered the curiousness of this place. We would learn over the next five months that, even in the most desolate places in this forsaken country, with no power or infrastructure, someone could always get you a cold can of Pepsi. Maybe there was hope for this place yet.

# GHOST RECON 2

UBISOFT  
XBOX  
www.ghostrecon2.com/us/ghostrecon2/index.php  
www.ubi.com  
Reviewed by Sapper Gameboy

UBISOFT's Ghost Recon franchise, together with the counter-terrorist focused Rainbow Six games, has kept the publisher at the pinnacle of green- and black-role Special Forces gaming since the new millennium. While many others have tried to emulate the Tom Clancy-inspired games' success, no single title has



been able to match UBISOFT's attention to detail, gameplay experience or sheer immersion.

Ghost Recon 2, now available for Xbox and PS2 (UBISOFT recently announced the cancellation of the PC version in favour of concentrating on the third iteration of the title), has taken lessons learnt from several Rainbow games, tailored the controls and gameplay for the best console experience and smashed them together within a scenario set in North Korea in the near future.

Like its predecessor, the game focuses on a four-person 5th Group US Special Forces team known as the Ghosts in a series of demanding missions to save the world from nuclear devastation. This time however, Captain Scott Mitchell and his team are faced with a far more serious enemy. No longer are the Ghosts fighting cave-dwelling terrorists in the back hills of Central Asia – this time they are up against the full weight of the North Korean Army.

Since the original game's release in 2001, US Special Forces have been on constant operations. This operational focus has given new impetus to the development of individual weapon systems and other enhanced combat systems such as body armour and secure communications features.

Ghost Recon 2 has taken what is currently in the development pipeline and



placed the equipment in the hands of the operators giving players a unique insight into how soldiers may fight and interact on future battlefields.

The focal point of this new technology is the US Army's Land Warrior program which melds the XM8 Combat Rifle system into a helmet-mounted enhanced navigation, sighting and blue-force tracking display to give maximum situational awareness to the soldiers on the ground. Within Ghost Recon 2's 15 single-player mission campaign, three missions are dedicated to the Land Warrior system requiring the player to use everything the enhanced ensemble offers as they take Captain Mitchell on solo jaunts into the bad lands. While the ability to shoot around corners and airburst grenades is fantastic, these solo missions highlight just how important it is to have someone watching your back when operating in complex environments – if Ghost Recon 2 is any gauge, the days of the infantry section are far from over.

The remaining 12 missions of the campaign are a mix of standard Special Forces fare such as combat search and rescue, directing precision strikes or other advance force operations. The development team have also thrown in some missions to spice up life such as assisting in the defence of a field hospital and holding the line against a North Korean offensive. Without doubt it is these two defensive missions that have left the greatest impression on me. The depiction of danger-close, offensive fire-support coupled with fanatical charges by a determined enemy make for some of the most heart-thumping, adrenaline-producing gaming I've ever experienced.

The development team have also taken a leaf out of Rainbow's book and introduced a third-person viewpoint to the game. Purists have decried the move as dumbing the franchise down but having played the game through, I still wonder how I got through the original

without the increased situational awareness. Great controls mean it is very easy to jump into a first-person viewpoint when engaging the North Koreans but for movement and fine tuning fire positions the wider third-person view is a God-send – no more of the muzzle clearance issues when firing from cover that plagued the original.

Ghost Recon 2 is very complex, even at its simplest difficulty level, and judicious use of the 'save game' function will help get things moving past the first mission. The AI and damage modelling within the game have both received a large boost over its predecessor but that is not to say UBISOFT has reached Nirvana in this regard. Every now and then the game reminds you that it is indeed the product of coding as friendlies converge on targets or run through weapon arcs often resulting in an inadvertent fratricide incident. Support from team mates however is generally OK although I would have preferred them to be a bit

quicker on the draw at times. The enemy, while scripted, are extremely tough and use fire, movement and concealment to great advantage.

On the multiplayer side of the house, it is more of the same standard of excellence we've come to expect from UBISOFT. Ghost Recon 2 has three multiplayer options; up-to four gamers split-screen from one console, up-to 16 players system linked or joining with gamers all over the World via Xbox Live. Within these three basic options there are 15 multi-player game types that include co-operatively completing a mission through to defending or attacking a base. While the live scene isn't quite as large as the original title, nothing beats the co-op play with a couple of mates – it gives a whole new perspective to the game's missions and essentially eliminates the couple of AI bugs (if your team mates behave themselves and play responsibly).

Ghost Recon 2 is one of the most demanding games I've played on Xbox – one mistake can often mean death and mission failure. I just hope that unlike its predecessor this game isn't a premonition of real-life operations to come.

- > Players 1-4
- > System Link 2-16
- > Communicator headset enabled
- > Content download
- > Online multiplayer

Score 4.5/5



# DOOM3

ID  
www.idSoftware.com  
Reviewed by Brian Hartigan

The ruins of an ancient Martian civilisation have unlocked the gates of the unknown and only one man stands between Hell and Earth. Unfortunately, that man is not me.

When I bought my first computer, the hard-drive was smaller than the RAM I have today. Castle Wolfenstein and Doom came installed.



I loved them both and was so proud of myself to get all the way through to complete the missions.

When I saw Doom3 advertised in a media release last month, I was hit by nostalgia. I had to revisit youthful hours of completely senseless mayhem and was



even more excited by the prospect of playing it on a modern, kick-ass machine. The first disappointment was when I loaded it on my three-year-old laptop – the damn thing couldn't handle it.

Then I installed it on a newer PC and set out on my first mission in almost 20



years. And there-in lies the problem. I'm not a gamer and don't have time to learn. The technology has outstripped both my skills and my patience. And surely the loss is mine.

Doom3 certainly looks the goods with modern, 3D graphics that make the



original look grossly pathetic. But for me, the most I saw was base-level demons on level one – and even they were more than a match for me – several times.

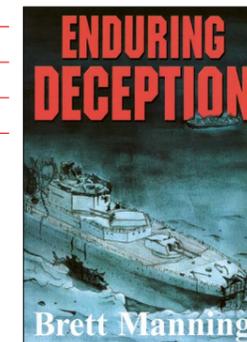
So, from now on, I'll stick to editing magazines and leave the gaming to experts like Sapper Gameboy.

## DOOM3 GIVEAWAY

Thanks to Activision, CONTACT has one copy of Doom3 for PC and one for Xbox to give away. Tell us in 25 (publishable) words or less what you'd like to do to the Doom3 monsters, and the best ass-kicking Doomsayer can have the game. Entry to editor@militarycontact.com

# ENDURING DECEPTION

BRETT MANNING  
17 Mile Well Publishing  
www.17milewell.com.au  
Reviewed by Brian Hartigan



If ever there was a book destined to stir the ghosts of the ANZAC spirit then it's this one – Enduring Deception.

It is a work of fiction based on the facts surrounding the sinking of HMAS Sydney off the Western Australian coast in 1941. But as a work of fiction and a conspiracy theory of devastating proportions, it voices what many Australians believe they "knew all along".

As the dust cover says, "Historians will ponder the possibilities, conspiracy theorists will be convinced, service personnel will sense the familiarity and politicians the world over will seek the sanctity of denial".

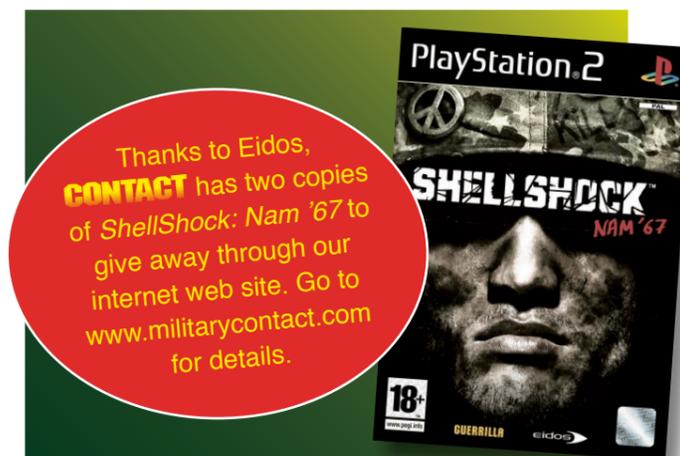
At least they will once this book gets out. It is self published by author Brett Manning and a business partner (both ex-RAAF) through their brand new stable, 17 Mile Well Publishing, and as such may be difficult to find (check www.17milewell.com.au for full list of stockists).

As a novel, I found it a very pleasurable read. Manning's descriptive narrative puts the reader firmly on the bridge of several ships, so convincingly that you can all-but feel the salt air and smell the marine diesel as the story rolls on.

I, as an Irish-born emigré, was almost completely ignorant of the Sydney's plight and certainly didn't know there was any lingering doubt surrounding the facts of her loss.

And as a recent member of the armed services of this country, I was completely shocked by the conspiracy Manning would have me believe.

But then, I ponder, how unbelievable could this theory be, spawned as it might be, by the same government that was prepared to fall behind the Brisbane Line.



Thanks to Eidos, CONTACT has two copies of ShellShock: Nam '67 to give away through our internet web site. Go to www.militarycontact.com for details.

The winners of our ShellShock: Nam '67 giveaway are Stephen Billett, Gungahlin, ACT, and John Claranden, Vaucluse, NSW.

Congratulations, your copy of this game is on its way, thanks to CONTACT and Eidos.

# LETTERS FROM THE FRONT LINE



Writing from his hospital bed in England, Henry explains to his mother that, although he is injured, his spirit is far from broken. Though Henry surely didn't know it at the time, he was writing a living history.

On the morning of August [illegible] we were lined up at 3am to make an attack on a portion of this hill, so we were told, but this is what happened. On this particular morning, about two thousand of us advanced with fixed bayonets. All went well until we had passed through a big ravine. We reached a flat piece of land that had been cultivated and had to cross this at the double, for dawn was just breaking, and the Turks had spied us and came at us in thousands. We were a splendid target. I will never forget crossing this cultivated ground about three hundred yards wide. They turned machine guns on us and our poor fellows were dropping like flies. We reached a place at the end of the ravine and dug in. The Turks were bringing up more reinforcements. This is just what our side wanted, for we were drawing the fire while a very large force of Tommies and Ghurkas made an assault of this big hill on the right, we being on the left. We soon found out what we had fallen into. We had been sent out to draw as many of the enemy as possible to make out that we were the main attacking party.

While the Turks were advancing on us, our big guns from the cruisers just blew them sky high. When the shells burst amongst them, we could see Turks, pieces of men, earth and bushes, all in a heap. The Ghurka is a splendid soldier; he likes best to fight with the knife and is very severe on the snipers and will search for them for hours, and snipers when caught want to be taken prisoner - [but] he has no chance.

The Ghurkas are good friends of the Australians. They are small men, but very strong and wiry.

When we got the Turks moving our way we received the order to retire, and to carry back all wounded on our way. The stretcher-bearers were working like Britons. I and another 14th man carried a poor fellow who was shot through the

stomach. We had to move ourselves too, over ridges, along gullies, through thick bush. There was no time to have a spell. We were being shelled, and John Turk was pumping the lead our way. He, no doubt, thought we were running away, but this was part of our plan for the Tommies and Ghurkas were doing great work on our right. We eventually reached a place of safety and got our man to a dressing station. The wounded were coming down in scores from this big hill, but others were going up with a determined look on their faces that boded ill for the Turks. It is rather a peculiar feeling when you first see a wounded man being carried past, but one soon gets used to it, and the more determined he is to avenge him. We made a line of trenches, and held them for a couple of weeks. During this time we had a very hard job getting water. Of course water was coming along as well as they could send it, but for thousands and thousands of troops it means a big thing. We dug down fifteen feet, and discovered beautiful spring water; from that day on we had plenty.

I will now pass onto the afternoon of August [censored]. We were to make a charge on the Turk's trenches. This was to be another big move for us. You no doubt read in the papers about the big landing of troops at Suvla Bay. This was the time that we moved. Now I will describe it to you, just as it appeared to me.

At 3pm we were lined up and told our job. We were to advance for three hundred yards and previous to our going our cruisers and land artillery bombarded the Turks for

a good hour. The first hundred yards were not too bad, but the last hundred was hell. We rested for a breather for this final spurt on a ridge. We had to run over the brow, down the other side, across a flat and gain another ridge. As soon as we started, the enemy worked machine guns, rifle fire and shrapnel at us. I saw dozens fall in front of me. One poor chap's equipment and clothes caught fire, I think a bullet struck his cartridges and set alight to the cordite. He screamed something awful. I had not gone far, when I got a nasty blow to my leg. I did not stop though, to do so was certain death.

Continued next issue...

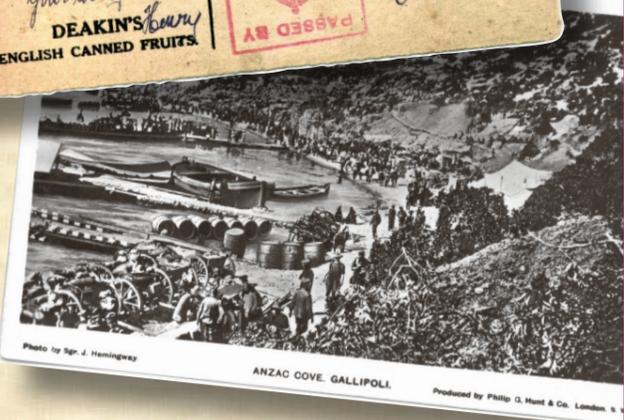


Photo by Sgt. J. Hemingway

ANZAC COVE, GALLIPOLI.

Produced by Philip G. Hunt & Co. London. s.

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WO1 FRANK WITTMAN

# DETERMINED TO SERVE

We Will Defend the Motherland to the Last Man and the Last Shilling.<sup>1</sup>

WORDS WO1 DARRYL KELLY PICS AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

When these fighting words were splashed across the front pages of newspapers by the Australian press, there was no shortage of men willing to volunteer to serve King and Empire; men from the city and the bush; men from rich and poor backgrounds; labourers, tradesmen and professionals – men of every size and shape answered their country's call.

In Melbourne, a young man took his place at the head of the queue. The recruiting sergeant stood to address the volunteer who could barely be seen over the desk. The sergeant looked down at the man and said, 'Sorry lad, you're a bit too short for us.'

Frank Wittman was born near the central Victorian town of Warragul. A bright lad, Wittman completed his schooling at Wesley College, where, as well as being a bright and diligent student, he also earned his school's coveted 'colours' for his first-class performance as a cox on the rowing team.

On completion of his studies he became a pharmacist and a podiatrist and operated successful pharmacies in Melbourne.

The minimum height for eligibility to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force was 5 foot 2 inches (1.55 metres) but Wittman stood a mere 3 foot 8 inches tall (1.12 metres). What Frank Wittman lacked in height, he made up for in sheer perseverance – he refused to be treated as undesirable because of his stature. He sought the assistance of a general and a colonel to support his case to be accepted into the AIF. His persistence paid off when, in May 1915, aged 26 years and 5 months, he was sworn into the Australian Imperial Force.<sup>2</sup>

After undergoing basic training at Broadmeadows, Frank was posted to the AIF Convalescent Hospital at Geelong. The wards were full of wounded soldiers who had been repatriated from the battlefields of Gallipoli and Frank listened intently to the Diggers' stories of life in the trenches and their accounts of innumerable clashes with the Turks.

After serving for more than a year on home soil, Wittman became impatient to be posted overseas. His requests to be sent

to the front were refused on the basis that, owing to his height – or lack thereof – he would not be permitted to serve outside Australia. Wittman was furious. He was a soldier and just as capable of performing his duty as the next man. He applied for and was granted his discharge from the AIF.

Paying his own way, Frank sailed for England and made application to join the British Army. Wittman's credentials spoke for themselves. He was accepted and assigned to the Royal Army Medical Corps and posted to India.<sup>2</sup>

When the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) entered the war in early November 1914, the War Office in London considered the possibility of other Islamic countries coming to Turkey's aid. The main concern was Mesopotamia (now Iraq), for if this nation chose to fight, it could place more than three quarters of a million men into the field.<sup>3</sup>

Troops of the British 6th Division, commanded by Major General Townshend, were hurriedly despatched to take Baghdad – a ploy to demoralise the Mesopotamian

forces. Landing at the southern town of Basra, Townshend established a forward operating base for his push north along the River Tigris. This protracted war weakened the Division, which lacked two vital elements to sustain its mission – communications and additional medical support.

To provide the much-needed medical support, the British Army transferred a large contingent of medical staff from its Indian outposts, including Wittman who was now a sergeant.<sup>3</sup>

Frank was a natural leader and was respected by superiors, peers and those he commanded. His staunch, charismatic style overshadowed any misconceptions that arose from his lack of height. Wittman reinforced this when commanding a draft of troops during their embarkation for the front. As he was giving directions to his men, he was all but swallowed up by the crowd of troops milling around him. An old school chum, noticing Wittman's plight, went to the rescue of the little soldier and lifted him up onto his shoulders. Without so much as a falter, Wittman continued to issue commands and the embarkation of his troops continued without incident.<sup>3</sup>

Conditions in Mesopotamia could best be described as appalling. Overwhelmed by the oppressive heat, flies and disease, more soldiers became victims of sickness than suffered combat wounds inflicted by the enemy. As the casualties mounted, the dedicated medics worked long hours to provide the best possible care for their patients. Wittman spent most of his day dispensing desperately needed drugs and medicines.

Frank Wittman served in Mesopotamia until 1919. After returning to England, he took his discharge and sailed for Australia, where he resumed his career as a pharmacist in suburban Melbourne.

On 3 September 1939, Britain declared war on Germany. As in the Great War of 1914–1918, Australia, a loyal member of the Empire, raised a volunteer force for service overseas. For two years, Australians did not feel particularly imperilled by a war halfway around the world. Then in December 1941, Japan declared its intention to rid Asia of European domination and control of its resources and suddenly Australia had every reason to feel threatened and vulnerable.

With the 6th, 7th and 9th Divisions of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force engaged in combat in the Middle East and the 8th Division fighting for its life in Malaya, the outlook was certainly bleak. Australia needed every able-bodied man in this, the country's darkest hour.

Frank Wittman, now aged 52 years and 10 months, again offered his services to his country. As in 1914, he faced the same prejudice – he was too short. In an impassioned letter to an influential public servant, Wittman wrote, 'I want to be of use in this war, and I'm sorry that my stature has so far been a barrier to an appointment with the AIF or even in a home-service capacity.'

He persisted in his efforts to be accepted for active service. His perseverance finally paid off and he was sworn in to the militia on 26 February 1942. Assigned to the Intelligence Corps, he was engaged in cipher work. In March 1942 Frank was promoted to sergeant and in September 1943 was promoted to staff sergeant. On 18 May 1944, Wittman transferred to the Australian Army Medical Corps to work as a pharmacist.

Wittman continued to serve in the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) during the post-war years. In 1947 he volunteered for service with the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF) in Japan, but was ruled medically unfit. In May 1948, he was

promoted to temporary warrant officer class one (WO1) and was given permission to enlist in the Regular Army Special Reserve, with the understanding that he would be released at a time of his choosing.

At the time of his application, he wrote to the Director of the Australian Army Medical Service stating, 'I have not taken one day's sick leave during the whole of my service. My acceptance in the army was never automatic. There were always obstacles to be overcome.'

On 17 March 1950, WO1 Frank Wittman tidied his desk for the last time. He paused at the door and turned for a final inspection of his pharmacy. He switched off the light and closed the door, thus ending his military career. At the stroke of midnight Frank, now aged 61, was automatically discharged from the Australian Army. He was placed on the retired list with the rank of honorary lieutenant.<sup>5</sup>

On 15 August 1970, at the grand old age of 81, the man who was the smallest ever to enlist in the Australian Army, but whose stature belied the measure of his courage and fortitude, quietly passed away.

**Author's note:** I would like to thank Melbourne writer Don Darbyshire, for providing information for use in this story.

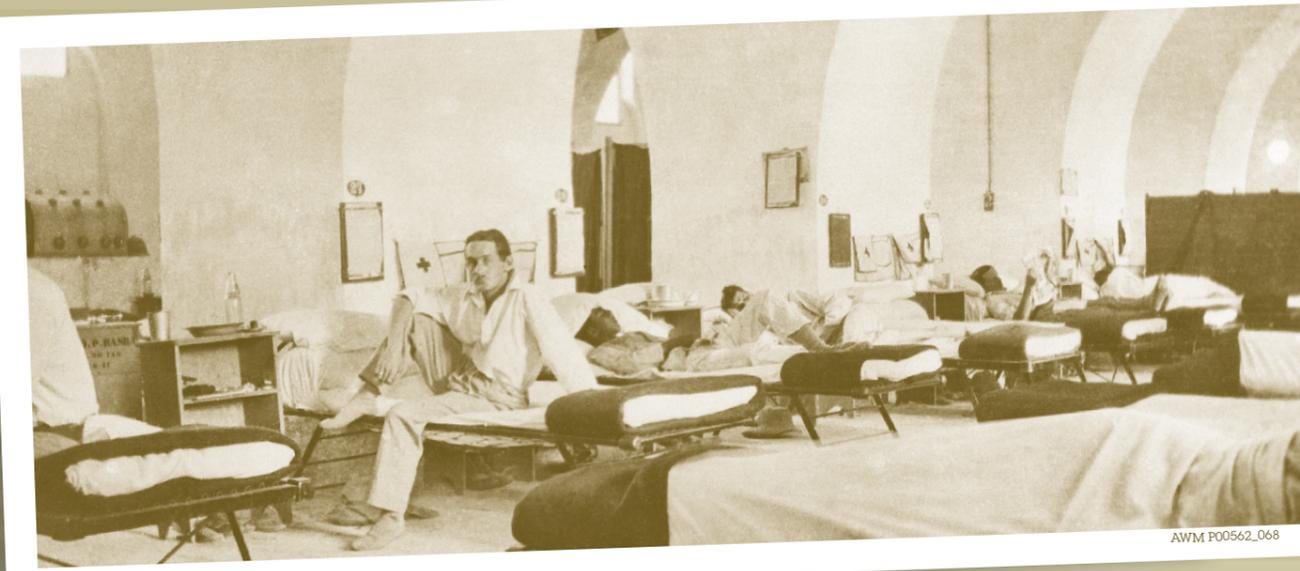
<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister Andrew Fisher, declaration of extent to which Australia would support Great Britain in the war against Germany, 4 August 1914.

<sup>2</sup> D Darbyshire, 'The Littlest Digger', Aussie Post, 18 April 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Burke, K (ed.) With horse and mose in Mesopotamia: the story of ANZACs in Asia, A&NZ Wireless Signal Squadron History Committee, Sydney, 1927.

<sup>4</sup> F Wittman, letter to Army Headquarters, Melbourne, 9 February 1949.

<sup>5</sup> Army Headquarters, Melbourne, letter to F Wittman, 20 March 1950.



AWM P00562\_068

# NOBBER GETS A SIGN

WORDS JONATHAN GARLAND ILLUSTRATION GREG@TWIST

The incident occurred at the conclusion of a field exercise. There had been a sudden and unexpected burst of rain, resulting in a platoon-strength patrol being caught on the wrong side of a swollen river at the end of exercise. The decision had been handed down that, rather than risk the river crossing, the soldiers were to be picked up.

Nobber had been detailed to take a coach via a distant bridge to an equally distant road junction to rendezvous with the platoon. The outward journey was without incident and Nobber was able to easily identify the isolated junction with its single, weathered stop sign. He surveyed the area, picked a spot to park, and launched into a three-point turn to pre-position himself for departure.

The dirt road was slick from the rain and, as Nobber backed the coach around, the wheels began slipping. With a judicious application of accelerator, the vehicle slowly pushed back a couple of metres more and then halted, wheels spinning. Nothing would induce it to move further – forward or back. Cursing under his breath, Nobber alighted to survey the situation. What he found staggered even him. He had succeeded in reversing over the only road sign for kilometres in any direction.

The metal upright had been forced downward until the top had finally slipped under the rear bumper of the coach. The pole had then sprung back against the underside of the vehicle, holding it fast.

Nobber attempted to force the pole downward and under the bumper without success. His strength and purchase was insufficient, even when he abandoned decorum and lay down in the mud under the coach, using all his weight and every profanity he knew.

After thinking on the problem, Nobber scouted the area, eventually turning up a branch sturdy enough to act as a lever. By sliding the branch between

the sign and the underside of the coach and applying all his weight and energy, he succeeded in lowering the end of the pole enough to clear the rear bumper.

The problem was that, as soon as his weight was removed from the lever, the road sign sprang back to its previous position. The coach was still held fast. Nobber decided the only solution was to put the coach in gear and let the wheels spin while he removed the obstruction.

At the coach door, he paused. His uniform was covered in mud after his early efforts beneath the vehicle. Nobber knew he had to clean the coach later so, he looked around carefully and, seeing no

**THE DIRT ROAD WAS SLICK FROM RAIN AND, AS NOBBER BACKED THE COACH AROUND, THE WHEELS BEGAN TO SLIP**

sign of life in any direction, stripped to his underwear. He put the coach in gear and hurried to the rear.

He applied himself to the lever and then several things happened in rapid succession. The road sign lowered, the wheels, which had been spinning aimlessly, began to find traction and showered Nobber with mud, the metal pole cleared the bumper, the coach, now unimpeded, began to move down the road, and the sudden absence of vehicle freed the lever to which Nobber was applying all his strength, propelling him into the mud puddle just vacated by the rear wheel of the coach.

Nobber raised himself to his elbows, shook some of the mud clear of his glasses, and watched the coach travel away from him towards the platoon that had just emerged from the scrub 50m up the road.

There were sudden oaths and then extended silence as the platoon watched the driverless coach approach, followed at speed by a running figure covered in little but mud. The scarecrow hauled himself through the door and into the driver's seat just in time to stop the coach next to the OC, who stared blankly at him through the still-open door.

After a brief pause, Nobber emerged, threw a scrappy salute and muttered something about opening the bottom of the coach for luggage.

The entire homeward journey was decorated with choruses of a popular TV jingle for recreational vehicles, espousing the value of "Mud, mud, glorious mud".



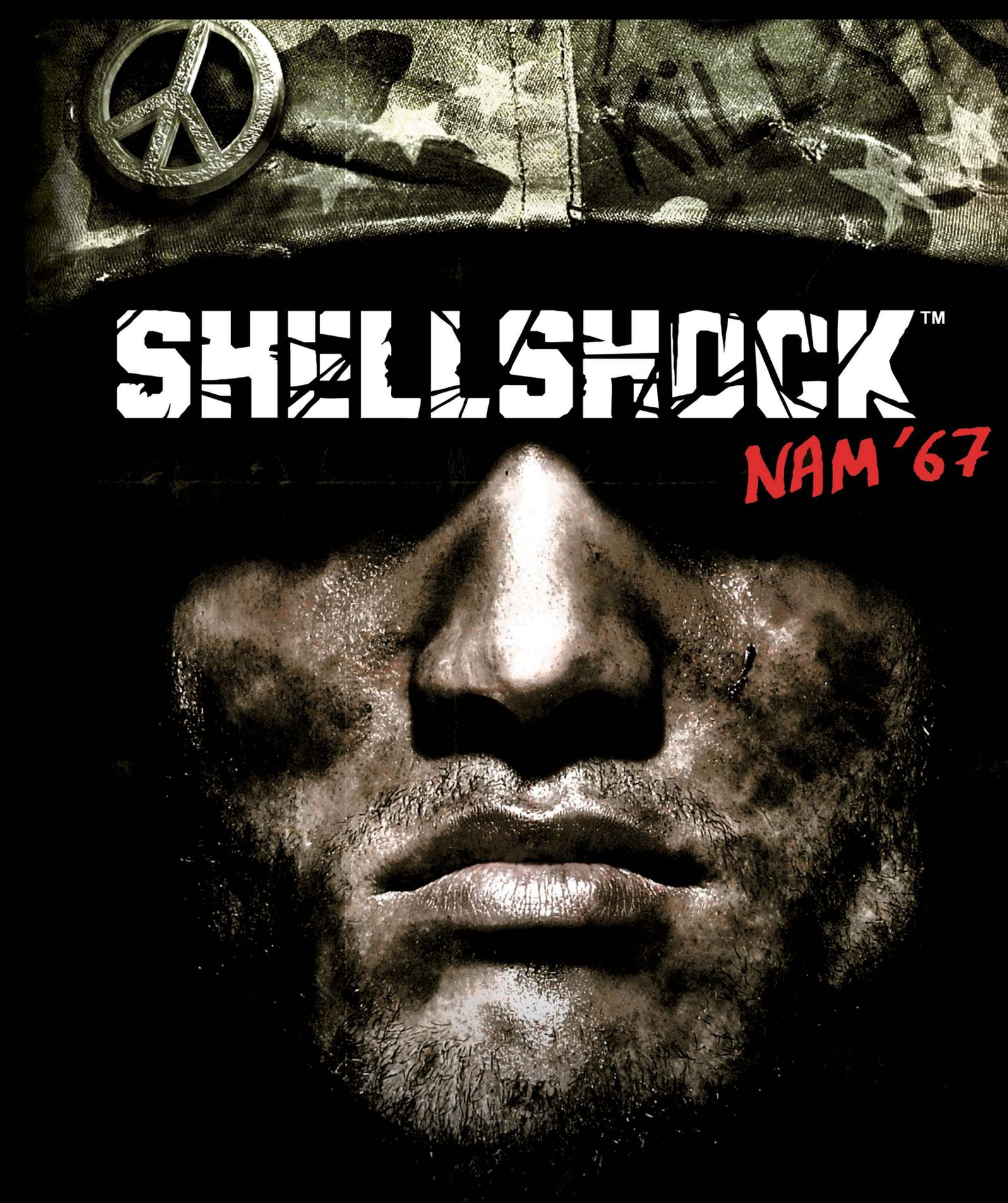
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